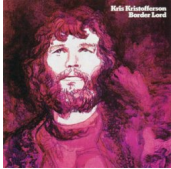


Kris Kristofferson – Border Lord (1972)

Written by bluelover

Saturday, 06 August 2011 08:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 09 March 2017 14:39

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01. *Josie* – 3:10 02. *Burden Of Freedom* – 3:19 03. *Stagger Mountain Tragedy* – 2:50 04. *Border Lord* (Steve Bruton, Donnie Fritts, Terry Paul, Kris Kristofferson) – 3:34 [play](#) 05. *Somebody Nobody Knows* – 3:34 06. *Little Girl Lost* – 3:07

[play](#)

07. *Smokey Put The Sweat On Me* – 3:07 08. *When She's Wrong* – 4:44 09. *Gettin' By, High And Strange* – 2:33 10. *Kiss The World Goodbye* – 2:59

Personnel: - Kris Kristofferson - vocals, guitar - Jerry Kennedy, Jerry Shook, Steve Bruton, Dennis Linde, John Bucky Wilkin - acoustic & electric guitar - Pete Drake - steel guitar - Donnie Fritts - keyboards, backing vocals - Billy Swan - bass, backing vocals - Jerry Carrigan, Kenneth A. Buttrey - drums - Tommy Jackson - fiddle - Farrell Morris - percussion - Terry Paul - bass, backing vocals - Benny Whitehead, Billy Swan, Steve Bruton - backing vocals - Charlie McCoy - harmonica, organ - Fred Foster – producer

Border Lord was a crucial album for Kris Kristofferson. After five years of scuffling in Nashville, he had broken through in 1970-1971 largely because of a series of song hits recorded by others, though his first two albums, Kristofferson (aka Me and Bobby McGee) and The Silver Tongued Devil and I had enjoyed healthy sales, the latter even spawning a Top 40 pop hit in "Loving Her Was Easier (Than Anything I'll Ever Do Again)." But he needed to consolidate that success and even increase it, especially as a recording artist. Yet, as is so often the case, he was afforded precious little time to craft his next work. Border Lord, which, like its predecessors, was an album of all-original compositions, was in record stores only seven months after The Silver Tongued Devil and I, and it was his third such collection in 20 months. He continued to draw upon the dwindling store of songs in his trunk, using the 1967 copyright "Burden of Freedom," as well as "Somebody Nobody Knows," published in 1968, while two others, "Smokey Put the Sweat on Me" and "When She's Wrong," were published by his first publisher, Buckhorn Music, suggesting that they may have been written well before their 1972 copyright dates. New or old, the songs on Border Lord often seemed like retreads of already familiar Kristofferson themes.

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His interest on lowlife characters, especially fallen women, was so pervasive it practically turned the disc into a concept album. Of the ten songs, six -- "Josie," "Stagger Mountain Tragedy," "Somebody Nobody Knows," "Little Girl Lost," "Smokey Put the Sweat on Me," and "When She's Wrong" -- treated the subject of women in debased conditions, several specifically described as prostitutes. And Kristofferson tended to reuse his allusions and imagery, especially references to the Devil (already the subject of earlier songs such as "To Beat the Devil" and "The Silver-Tongued Devil and I"), who appeared in no less than five songs. The songwriter was almost, but not quite, as interested in the Lord, who was name-checked here and there, and with whose Son Kristofferson identified in the philosophical "Burden of Freedom" ("Lord, help me forgive them, they don't understand"). Among the religious and roadhouse references, the only really new subject was life on the road, which was treated in such new songs as "Border Lord" and "Gettin' By, High and Strange," an indication that this always confessional songwriter was writing about his current life as a touring musician.

Though it consisted of material that was noticeably inferior by Kristofferson's standards, the album was full of poetic lines effectively performed by a road-honed singer and a touring band heavily augmented by Nashville pros; even second-rate Kristofferson was pretty good in 1972. Still, Monument Records had difficulty finding an obvious candidate for a hit single, finally settling on "Josie," which must have seemed to have some of the same qualities as "Me and Bobby McGee," but which only struggled into the lower reaches of the pop charts. With that, Border Lord proved a commercial disappointment, slowing the momentum of a career that had been accelerating over the past three years. No doubt Kristofferson and Monument would have been better advised to have waited until he had a collection of songs to match his early hits; instead, he quickly began work on yet another album, Jesus Was a Capricorn, which was out before the end of the year. ---William Ruhlmann, Allmusic.com

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