

Johnny Rivers - Shadows On The Moon (2009)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 18 June 2011 08:28 - Last Updated Tuesday, 22 May 2018 20:25

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1 *Beat Of My Heart* 3:32 2 *Somebody To Love* 5:33 3 *Hard Heart* 4:13 4 *Pure Love* 4:14 5 *Shadows On The Moon* 4:36 6 *Half A Million Angels* 4:32 7 *Learning To Dance* 3:10 8 *Come Home America* 4:03 9 *Slips Away* 4:05 10 *Walk In The Rain* 5:21 11 *Beautiful World* 4:11 [p](#)
[lay](#)
12 *Where Words End* 4:31 13 *The American Dream* 4:15
[play](#)

Johnny Rivers was once described in a Rolling Stone review for Slim Slow Slider as "...having a voice like softly curling cigarette smoke." Another way to think of him as an artist who never has a note out of place on any recording, the rockabilly cat of the Whiskey, transformed himself on *Changes and Rewind* then went full circle with the masterpiece of *Realization*. Lately *Last Train To Memphis* and *Reinvention Highway* proved Rivers was no "oldies act" living on the memories of his aging fan base. *Shadows On The Moon* is a totally new, fresh, vibrant sound. Don't expect to hear Chuck Berry covers here, instead a CD highlight is the 40 year too late collaboration with Jimmy Webb *Where Words End* a song that brings tears to your eyes if you've ever lost a loved one, plus sounds tinged with reggae, Indian, and guitar work to die for.

This is not just another typical reworking of familiar hits that so many older artists get caught up in but (see :Presley, Elvis) another chapter in the career of one of the most important figures in American Musical History, yes it's "new Rivers" but so was *Poor Side of Town*, so was *Rewind* (how did they turn out ?) the voice is the same, yet different, it's aged not badly but actually very, very well, try this you'll be better for it...too few may hear it, but all those who do will be better for it. One of THE best CD's of recent memory, Rivers fan or not...try it and you will become one. Magic, captured in a studio...and those who have followed his career will expect no less. Those who haven't followed his career will be in for a pleasant shock. Brilliant work.
---Pete Bowling, amazon.com

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Shadows on the Moon is matched by strong material from songwriters like Michael Georgiades (former partner of Bernie Leadon of The Eagles), Jack Tempchin (Peaceful, Easy Feeling, Slow Dancin Swaying to the Music, and Jimmy Webb (well, you know Jimmy Webb-I hope). The first six songs of the album are penned by Georgiades, a long underrated songwriter. These songs add a concept of cloaked messages about the passage of a generation and the pull toward spirituality. Most significant of these songs are Hard Heart, Somebody to Love and the title track Shadows on the Moon. Hard Heart powerfully addresses the excesses and insensitivity of the political, ethical and moral shortcomings of the Bush years in a clever way cloaked in a love song. Somebody to Love is a prayer for the need love in the world.

The last six songs focus on the personal journey through love, renewal and redemption. Songs like Walk in the Rain and Beautiful World, speak of daily personal joys, that become more precious as we grow older while the time passes. The beauty of songs like Slips Away and Where Words End by Jimmy Webb bring home the answer to the problems posed on the first six songs sometimes dealing with the disillusionment of the past. These songs point to the need to come home to our own lives, aside from a collective ideal, to find virtue and fulfillment there. A bonus track The American Dream, adds humor to the album and gives the listener a lighter look at the recent economic crisis.

While this album brings together a diversity of writing styles, instrumentation which clearly produces a feel of modern folk-rock, it never loses its pop sensibility of appealing arrangements and accessible production which can play as just a feel good listen or allow a deeper listen into the insights of the writing and the soulful vocal Johnny Rivers brings to each song in his own unique way.

Finally, the driving force and cohesive thread which runs through the album's concept, material and music is Rivers' distinct, familiar voice calling our memories back to the magic times we lived through but, never allowing us the comfort of nostalgia instead, through some fine acoustic music, skillful songwriting, and that one-of-a kind voice, challenges us to find our life and passion in today's turbulent world. ---folkworks.org

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