

6 String Drag - Roots Rock 'N' Roll (2015)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Drive Around Town* (3:22) 2. *Ooooooeeeeooo* (3:19) 3. *Give up the Night* (3:00) 4. *Kingdom of Gettin' It Wrong* (2:54) 5. *Precious Things* (4:24) 6. *Happier Times* (2:07) 7. *Choppin' Block* (3:54) 8. *Me & My Disease* (2:38) 9. *Sylvia* (4:10) 10. *Hard Times, High Times* (3:35) 11. *I Miss the Drive-In* (5:11) Matt Douglas - Sax (Alto), Sax (Baritone) Ray Duffey - Drums, Percussion Rob Farris - Fender Rhodes, Hammond B3, Piano, Vocals (Background) Rob Keller - Bass (Electric), Bass (Upright), Vocals Keenan McKenzie - Sax (Tenor) Jason Merritt - Vocals (Background) Scotty Miller - Guitars, Slide Guitar Kenny Roby - Guitars, Percussion, Vocals Paul Rogers - Trumpet Dave Wright - Fender Rhodes, Piano, Toy Piano, Trombone

Some bands that reunite after a decade and a half away from the spotlight have to deal with the legacy of the music they left behind in their first incarnation, but that's not so much of an issue for 6 String Drag, who cut one good independent album in 1994 and a very good effort co-produced by Steve Earle, High Hat, in 1997 before fading away a year later. Unless you're from South Carolina or were an obsessive alt-country fan in the late '90s, there's a good chance you never heard 6 String Drag in the first place, which means the group's 2015 reunion set, *Roots Rock 'n' Roll*, gets to stand on its own merits rather than serving as the long-lost and fiercely awaited follow-up to *High Hat*. That said, it's a fine thing to be able to say this is one reunion effort that works both ways -- while *Roots Rock 'n' Roll* lacks the hard-edged and punchy production Earle and Ray Kennedy brought to *High Hat*, instead aiming for a looser, live-in-the-studio sound, from a standard of songwriting and performance this edition of 6 String Drag sounds every bit as fine as the band did in the '90s, and their fusion of rock & roll, Southern soul, and Dixie-fried twang feels as relevant and effective as ever. If Kenny Roby sounded like an old soul in 1997, he still does in 2015, and that works to his favor as the loose-limbed boogie of "Ooooooeeeeooo," the horn-infused rock of "Kingdom of Gettin' It Wrong," and the suitably greasy blues figures of "Choppin' Block" roll as correct here as they did when Roby was almost two decades younger. (And it's a good bet that the younger Roby couldn't have delivered the rueful "I Miss the Drive-In" with the same authority he brings to this performance.) And the core of 6 String Drag -- Roby on vocals and guitar, Scotty Miller on lead guitar, Rob Keller on bass, and Ray Duffey on drums -- delivers the goods, sounding loosely

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tight in the great Southern manner, and knowing just when to lay back and when to hit the gas. In short, Roots Rock 'n' Roll should thoroughly please fans who remember 6 String Drag's all-too-brief day in the sun, and if you're not familiar with the band's earlier recordings, this should still connect as clever, heartfelt rock & roll steeped in American musical traditions. It rocks with a steady roll, and that doesn't happen nearly enough on plastic these days, from either veterans or young gunslingers. ---Mark Deming, Rovi

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