

Lee Rocker – Night Train to Memphis (2012)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 06 January 2019 16:08 -

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1 Rockabilly Boogie 2:48 2 Night Train to Memphis 4:58 3 Slap the Bass 1:56 4 Twenty Flight Rock 1:51 5 Wild Child 1:55 6 Honey Don't 2:36 7 That's Alright Mama / Blue Moon 3:35 8 Tear in My Beer 2:27 9 Lonesome Tears 1:59 10 Built For Speed 3:51 11 So Sad 2:38 12 All I Have to Do Is Dream 2:28

Lee Rocker made his mark singing, playing, standing on, spinning and rocking his giant upright bass in the band Stray Cats. The Grammy-nominated Stray Cats have sold nearly 10 million albums and garnered an astounding 23 gold and platinum certified records worldwide.

Rocker has performed with a variety of music legends including Ringo Starr, George Harrison, John Fogerty and The Rolling Stones. In 2011, he did a guest star turn with the cast of the Broadway's hit musical "Million Dollar Quartet." "Million Dollar Quartet" is inspired by the legendary recording session that took place Tuesday, December 4, 1956, in the Sun Record Studios in Memphis, Tennessee.

Rocker has released several albums. Musical instruments utilized in his music included banjos, harmonicas, dobro, mandolin, washboards and all types of folk American instruments.

Lee Rocker released "Night Train to Memphis," a disc of classic rockabilly music, in 2012 in honor of his 33 years of playing music. According to Rocker, "'Night Train to Memphis' is the soundtrack of my life. These songs are tattooed on my soul. Rockabilly music grabbed me, a kid from New York, shook me, spun me round and rattled my brains. I was never the same again."

---broadwayworld.com

Brian Setzer may get all the press, but Stray Cats bassist Lee Rocker has been quietly amassing his own impressive body of work — his latest, “Night Train to Memphis” (Upright Records), is of a piece with tributes like Setzer’s “Rockabilly Riot” and Chris Isaak’s “Beyond the Sun.”

Brian Setzer may get all the press with his glitzy orchestra and holiday extravaganzas, but Stray Cats bassist Lee Rocker has been quietly amassing his own impressive body of work — his “Racin’ the Devil” was one of the happiest surprises of 2009, merging rockabilly verve with Americana guts and gusto, including nine rollicking originals that proved his songwriting chops.

On “Night Train to Memphis” (Upright Records), Rocker plays things a little safer: Primarily a collection of covers, it’s of a piece with tributes like Setzer’s “Rockabilly Riot” and Chris Isaak’s “Beyond the Sun” — although it’s looser than the former and less perfunctory than the latter.

You can probably attribute both of those aspects to Rocker’s wild standup bass, which he slaps and plucks with typical abandon and which figures prominently into pretty much all the arrangements — from the moment it kicks in to start off the album-opening “Rockabilly Boogie,” it sounds almost other-worldly. It’s no mistake that Rocker’s one original on the album is called “Slap the Bass” — when you find yourself actually wishing for more bass solos, you know he’s done something right.

As for the covers, it’s an inspired selection, and Rocker acquits himself nicely when ambling through the likes of Carl Perkins’ “Honey Don’t” and Buddy Holly’s “Lonesome Tears.” He’s also ably supported by his backing band throughout, particularly by Buzz Campbell and Brophy Dale’s stinging guitar. “Twenty Flight Rock” has been covered umpteen times, but has rarely been this searing.

By the time Rocker shows his sensitive side, on the lesser-known Don Everly song “So Sad” and a loving cover of “All I Have To Do is Dream,” he’s got nothing left to prove in terms of his chops, rockabilly or otherwise. ---Peter Chianca, wickedlocal.com

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