

Bon Jovi - Lost Highway (2010)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Lost Highway* (4:13)
02. *Summertime* (3:18)
03. *(You Want To) Make A Memory* (4:37)
04. *Whole Lot Of Leavin'* (4:17)
05. *We Got It Going On (With Big & Rich)* (4:13)
06. *Any Other Day* (4:03)
07. *Seat Next To You* (4:23)
08. *Everybody's Broken* (4:13)
09. *Will We Ain't Strangers Anymore (Feat. Leann Rimes)* (4:44)
10. *The Last Night* (3:33)
11. *One Step Closer* (3:37)
12. *I Love This Town* (4:39)
13. *Lost Highway (Live)* (4:07)
14. *We Got It Going On (Live)* (4:23)
15. *Any Other Day (Live)* (5:52)
16. *I Love This Town (Live)* (4:55)

Musicians: Jon Bon Jovi - lead vocals, acoustic guitar Richie Sambora - guitars, backup
vocals, talkbox Hugh McDonald - bass, backup vocals Tico Torres - drums, percussion
David Bryan - keyboards, backup vocals

Serious country fans know that "Lost Highway" is a Leon Payne-written Hank Williams classic, but even though Bon Jovi's 2007 album shamelessly trades on iconographic country imagery in a bid for a genre-skipping crossover hit, it's designed for those country fans who don't much care about Hank's legend (never mind knowing anything about Leon Payne). Lost Highway has little to do with any country prior to Garth Brooks, a move that makes sense since Garth was the gateway drug to country music for old Bon Jovi fans in the '90s. In that regard, it makes perfect sense for Bon Jovi to refashion themselves as a modern country act, because their heartland anthems are as thoroughly middle American as any country artist, and in 2007 country was at the core of mainstream pop music; in other words, the band's fans already have made the

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crossover, so they wouldn't see this crossover move as crass, just as catching up. But when it comes right down to it, Bon Jovi's self-styled country album has little to do with contemporary country in 2007, either. Despite duets with LeAnn Rimes and Big & Rich, despite the occasional fiddle or steel guitar, Lost Highway recalls nothing so much as a latter-day Bon Jovi record in how it balances fist-pumping arena anthems with heavy doses of sentiment. Not long after the buried fiddles on "Lost Highway" fade from memory and enough time passes to excuse the bad Toby Keith knockoff "Summertime," it's virtually impossible to distinguish this album anything after 1992's Keep the Faith. Which isn't necessarily bad, mind you -- Bon Jovi has a flair for commercial craft, knowing how to hit the sweet spot between the mundane and melodic, and there are times on Lost Highway where the group does so again. Ironically enough, what hurts is when they really try to fit into the conventions of country -- usually on the rockers, as on the aforementioned "Summertime" and the even-worse Big & Rich duet "We Got It Going On," which manages to cram in every sports-bar cliché into an unpalatable mess, a talent that also emphasizes Jon Bon Jovi's unfortunate tendency to rely on hackneyed imagery -- but when they're just being the smooth, efficient pop crooners they are, Lost Highway is as good as, and no different than, any Bon Jovi album since Keep the Faith. Which may not make it as adventurous as it appears, but it should still be satisfying all the same to those loyal fans. ---
Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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