

Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell - Old Yellow Moon (2013)

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01 – *Hanging Up My Heart* 02 – *Invitation To The Blues* 03 – *Spanish Dancer* 04 – *Open Season On My Heart* 05 – *Chase The Feeling* 06 – *Black Caffeine* 07 – *Dreaming My Dreams* 08 – *Bluebird Wine* 09 – *Back When We Were Beautiful* 10 – *Here We Are* 11 – *Bull Rider* 12 – *Old Yellow Moon*

Personnel Emmylou Harris: Guitar (Acoustic), Primary Artist, Tambourine Rodney Crowell: Composer, Guitar (Acoustic), Primary Artist + James Burton: Guitar (Electric) Chad Cromwell: Drums Dennis Crouch: Bass Stuart Duncan: Banjo, Fiddle, Mandolin Larry Franklin: Fiddle Paul Franklin: Guitar (Steel) Vince Gill: Gut String Guitar, Vocal Harmony Marco Giovani: Drums Emory Gordy: Bass Glen D. Hardin: Piano (Electric) John Hobbs: Piano Jim Hoke: Accordion Jedd Hughes: Guitar (Electric) David Hungate: Arco Bass, Bass John Jorgenson: Guitar (Electric), Mandolin Lynn Langham: Piano Bill Payne: Hammond B3, Piano Mickey Raphael: Bass Harmonica Michael Rhodes: Bass Steuart Smith: Electric Slide Guitar, Guitar (Electric), Mandocello Tommy Spurlock: Guitar (Steel) John Ware: Drums Reese Wynans: Piano Brian Ahern: Bass (Acoustic), Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric Baritone)

Old Yellow Moon is the first official collaboration from Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell since Crowell joined Harris' Hot Band in 1975. The 12-track duets album features songs written by Crowell as well as interpretations of songs by Hank DeVito, Roger Miller, Allen Reynolds, and others. Among the world-renowned musicians on the album are Stuart Duncan, Vince Gill, Bill Payne, and members of the original Hot Band. "It hearkens back to classic recordings like Harris' *Elite Hotel* and Crowell's *Diamonds and Dirt*," says NPR Music, "and brings the best out of the two veterans." ---nonesuch.com

This album has been an unrealised ambition for Harris and Crowell since 1974, when Harris

was choosing tracks for her solo debut, *Pieces Of The Sky*. The producer overseeing *Pieces Of The Sky*, Brian Ahern, played Harris a track by budding Texan songwriter Rodney Crowell. It was called “Bluebird Wine”, and it became the opening track of the album.

“Bluebird Wine” is also the eighth track on the Brian Ahern-produced *Old Yellow Moon*. It’s not quite as purchasers of *Pieces Of The Sky* will remember it. Crowell has taken the lead vocal back and tinkered with the lyrics, turning the sloshed youthful idlers depicted in the original into more purposeful middle-aged workaholics. This revision is one of the more obvious manifestations of a theme that percolates gently throughout “*Old Yellow Moon*”, of attempting to apply the lessons learnt to the time there is left.

Old Yellow Moon is not, however, a sombre anticipation of mortality akin to the American Recordings series of Crowell’s one-time father-in-law Johnny Cash. The general tone of “*Old Yellow Moon*” is of faintly rueful happiness at being here, doing this. The opening track, the subtly swinging “*Hanging Up My Heart*”, first appeared on the Crowell-produced cash-in album *Sissy Spacek* made after her turn as Loretta Lynn in “*Coalminer’s Daughter*”. The original is an iteration of a well-worn country template: the too-many-times-bitten Romeo/Juliet announcing that they can’t be bothered anymore. In these two well-weathered voices – a compliment – it sounds like relief at having grown too old for all that nonsense.

Similar redemption is wrung from a stately version of Allen Reynolds’ “*Dreaming My Dreams*”; Crowell’s “*Here We Are*” executes the same sort of metamorphosis. This first appeared on George Jones’ 1979 duets album *My Very Special Guests*, sung by Jones and Harris, a weary waltz of on/off lovers who’ve resigned themselves to a semi-grateful collapse into each other’s arms. The “*Old Yellow Moon*” version is recalibrated as a slightly gloating acknowledgement of the terrible disadvantage suffered by the young: they don’t have any old friends. ---Andrew Mueller, uncut.co.uk

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