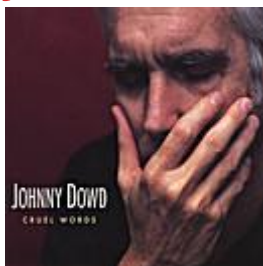


Mp3 Johnny Dowd - Cruel Words



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An American original; a singular musical vision distilled from the raw detritus of primal rock and roll, free jazz, swamp blues and greasy funk; anchored by a voice channeling Johnny Cash through Chet Baker. 14 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Rock, ROCK: Roots Rock Details: Johnny Dowd is an American original; a singular musical vision distilled from the raw detritus of primal rock and roll, free jazz, swamp blues and greasy funk; anchored by a voice channeling Johnny Cash through Chet Baker. Cruel Words is Johnny Dowd's 6th album (2nd for Bongo Beat). It follows a trajectory set in motion by the self-released Wrong Side of Memphis in 1998. Johnny was 50 years old at the time, working at the Zolar Moving Company (Ithaca, NY) by day and recording in their offices by night (it's ok, he's one of the owners) a pattern that hasn't changed much over the years, except for Cruel Words (recorded at Ithaca's Pyramid Sound with long time friend and engineer Alex Perialas). It's no surprise the Europeans were the first to embrace him. Here was a fully formed character who'd emerged literally out of nowhere. A guitar-toting white haired James Dean; flashing a sly grin as he casually hand-rolls a cigarette during the course of a song. Born in Ft. Worth, Texas, Johnny's childhood was spent in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. This is where my musical education took place. I had a pair of pointy shoes and a red shirt that I wore when I pretended to be James Brown. After his parents divorced, the family moved to Memphis where Johnny got his first guitar. Dowd's musical canon cuts a wide swath across the fringes of American music, twisting and prodding each form into something it shouldn't be; country funneled through free jazz; an Okie drawl crooning over swamp psychedelia. It all becomes a little clearer when you're told that his two favorite records as a kid were James Brown's Live at The Apollo and Hank Williams as Luke the Drifter; the yin-yang template that frames the Johnny Dowd songbook. Cruel Words raises the stakes considerably. The core trio of Dowd (guitar, vocals), Brian Wilson (drums, bass pedals) and Mike Stark (keyboards) are

joined by Mekons Sally Timms and Jon Langford on the standout Drunk. The album also marks the return of long-time Dowd back-up vocalist Kim Sherwood-Caso to the fold. There's an almost Kerouac sense of naive wonderment as Johnny chronicles the desperate measures of the marginalized characters in the songs, and his Brothers Grimm view of the forces conspiring against them (sometimes with their own complicity). You're not the father of the child that I carry taunts the woman of Unwed Mother while the wheelchair bound war vet of Praise God questions the price paid for loyalty. Long time live set closer, Johnny B. Goode, reprises that role here with the same jarring effect; when did THIS song become so threatening? Released in Europe in February 2006, Cruel Words arrives on our shores with 4 and 5 star reviews from every influential UK publication over there including Mojo(4 Stars, as much jazz as roots music, as much poetry as rock); Maverick(5 Stars, Johnny Dowd is a law unto himself); Classic Rock(8 stars, the songs are quirky but they rock); Time Out London(5 Stars, Gothic Folk Funk); Daily Mirror (4 Stars, wit and wisdom to match even the late great Warren Zevon); and The Independent (5 Stars, may be the greatest album of his career). Following a very successful European tour, Johnny is set to swing through the US and Canada starting in late July. The records can only prepare you so much for the live experience; Johnnys ramshackle music stand tottering under the weight of his lyrics book, the dry wit delivery of between song vignettes and a casualness maybe reminiscent of Dean Martin (believe it or not). But don't be fooled, there is way more craft going on than Johnny lets on (for example, he's a stunning guitar player no matter how casually he may downplay it). This was an easy record to make, says Johnny. We had been playing the songs live for almost a year, so our plan was to go into the studio, cut the songs live with a minimum of overdubs or other studio trickery. Recently Johnnys riveting performance in the British documentary, Searching For The Wrong Eyed Jesus (hosted, starring, and inspired by; Jim White) has gotten him considerable attention and led to a group collaboration with Jim White called Hellwood (album and tour to follow later this year). Cruel Words is a career defining work - the penultimate distillation of Johnny Dowd's America; a guided tour into the dark heartland of all that is uncomfortably familiar. North American tour starts late July Johnny Dowd is also currently collaborating with Jim White for a group effort called Hellwood CD has guest vocals by Sally Timms Jon Langford of The Mekons World Of Him was originally written for and recorded by Sally Timms typically bleak but compelling The Sun, UK

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