

Mp3 Stan Ridgway - Holiday In Dirt



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2002 release. Stan Ridgway brings on the dirt. Sonic stories of cinematic song psychosis. Poignant, melodic and profound. Liner notes by Stan. Another late night ride with the Wall Of Voodoo mastermind behind "Mexican Radio" 14 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Modern Country, ELECTRONIC: Soundscapes
Details: Stan Ridgway - "Holiday in Dirt -" New West Records 009674 for news tours rare cds:
stanridgway.com ----- Stan Ridgway -"Holiday In Dirt" New, Rare, Unreleased (New West / UltraModern (NW6033) Recent Reviews All Music Guide (Barnes and Noble): Stan Ridgway's lyrical voice is every bit as distinctive as the way he sings, and that's saying something -- the unmistakably dry but rubbery Southwestern twang of Ridgway's voice is the perfect instrument for his tales of lost souls and puzzled losers, and his songs chart a path that suggests a midway point between aural film noir and Ennio Morricone's spaghetti Western scores. A clearly underrated talent, Ridgway's post-Wall Of Voodoo solo work has never attracted the audience it deserved (partly due to a long string of bad luck with record companies both large and small), but anyone who doubts the strength of the music he's been making since the late '80s only needs to give a listen to Holiday in Dirt, a collection of B-sides, rare tracks, and outtakes that have been gathering dust in Ridgway's closet. While odds-and-ends compilations like this are usually made up of stuff that didn't make the cut because it wasn't up to snuff, that's not the case with Holiday in Dirt -- as a matter of fact, this is as strong a set as anything Ridgway has released since Mosquitos in 1989. Whether he's writing about teenage guitar manglers ("Garage Band '69"), low-level mob leg-breakers ("Bing Can't Walk"), or a washed-up long-in-the-tooth actress ("Beloved Movie Star"), Ridgway makes his characters human and worthy of compassion even at their most ugly and pathetic, and the dry Southwestern clatter of the music is both bracing and the perfect fit. And even though these tracks were assembled from material recorded

over the space of a dozen years, these 12 tunes (one appearing in two versions) fit together beautifully, which says a lot about the consistency of Ridgeway's vision. While Stan Ridgeway already has a strong career overview compilation (The Best of Stan Ridgeway: Songs That Made This Country Great), Holiday in Dirt shows that he's left more than a few gems behind as well, and this album is a treat for fans and not a bad introduction to his body of work. Mark Deming, All Music Guide ----- Though Stan Ridgeway first made his mark in the early 1980s with new wave synth-rockers Wall of Voodoo (one of the most distinctive bands of their era), his subsequent solo career has continually shown that his talents extend far beyond his former band's lone hit (the semi-novelty "Mexican Radio"). Over the years Ridgeway's recordings have marked him as a crafty songwriter with a gift for exploring the dark side of America via sardonic narratives that nod to Randy Newman and Donald Fagen. HOLIDAY IN DIRT is a collection of b-sides and other rarities from the extensive Ridgeway oeuvre, but Ridgeway's songwriting knack is such that none of these tunes feel like castoffs. As always, Ridgeway's melodic invention transcends genre in an often-successful search for original-sounding, distinctive musical frameworks nevertheless bound to conventional rock hardware. Though his penchant for film-noir creepiness and his sui generis voice will strike a familiar chord with Wall of Voodoo admirers, this eclectic, ambitious batch of songs is as worthy a part of Ridgeway's canon as any of his "proper" releases. - TOWER RECORDS

----- Roaming a psychedelic no-man's land where Tom Waits and Jack Kerouac might converge, Stan Ridgeway is an inimitable singer and precision essayist whose song characters wear life's grit under their fingernails. It's doubtful Ridgeway ever broke the legs of a no-goodnik named Bing, but gosh darn if you're not thoroughly convinced of it by the end of "Bing Can't Walk," one of a handful of creaky, ramshackle gems gathered together on the odds-and-sods Holiday in Dirt. He may scribble outside the lines musically, but Ridgeway's harp-goosed, art-rock vignettes are enormously detailed--witness the bloopy, futuristic "After the Storm," the eerily straight-faced midtempo rocker "Whatever Happened to You?" or the unlisted cover of Charlie Rich's "Behind Closed Doors," cheekily delivered in a character that might have been crafted by Bill Murray circa Caddyshack. Admittedly an acquired taste, Ridgeway repays diligence with cartwheeling, consistently unexpected, possibly true parables sucked straight out of the twilight zone that is contemporary America. If Jackson Pollack paintings had sound, they'd probably sound a lot like this. KIM HUGHES - AMAZON.COM

----- Stan Ridgeway's lone brush with stardom occurred in 1983, when his band Wall

of Voodoo had an unexpected hit with "Mexican Radio." The song and its accompanying video were inspired examples of avant-garde loopiness. MTV put it in rotation, and it was the kind of video you'd eagerly wait for -- it had the bizarre kick of something like *Un Chien Andalou*, Buuel's and Dali's classic surrealist film. The promo sheet that accompanied my review copy of Ridgway's new disc, *Holiday In Dirt*, puts some distance between him and Wall of Voodoo. "That was then. This is now," the sheet tells us. Fair enough. If Wall of Voodoo was bracing and strange fun, the music Ridgway has recorded on his own has been much more than that. Beginning with 1985's *The Big Heat*, Ridgway has produced a series of records of almost indescribable depth and strange beauty. He's retained the sense of fun that he exhibited in Wall of Voodoo, but added to it uncanny storytelling ability. Critics often compare him to Raymond Chandler, but his stories remind me more of Raymond Carver or Tobias Wolfe. *Holiday In Dirt* is a collection of rare and unreleased tracks, but it hangs together well. While there's no unifying concept to the disc, it's cohesive and has a strong sense of place. Ridgway is to Los Angeles as Lou Reed is to New York -- no place else could have produced him. He mixes the traditional with the new and has an openness to music as pure sound that comes, I think, from growing up in a city whose major industry is movies. Working in that atmosphere (at least one website indicates that Wall of Voodoo was formed to write music for low-budget movies) may have suggested to him the dramatic possibilities of sound -- a particularly important discovery for someone whose narratives are so complex. Whatever his influences, the salient feature of Ridgway's discs is their sonic richness. The quality of his recordings is especially impressive given that the last three have been independent releases produced, one assumes, on limited budgets. His discs have a lot going on in them, but everything's spread out across a wide soundstage in a kind of aural Cinemascope. For all the sonic detail Ridgway puts into his music, it rarely feels crowded. When a song does seem densely packed, as does "End of the Line" here, it sounds intentionally so. *Holiday In Dirt* contains two versions of "Beloved Movie Star" that shed some light on how Ridgway works. The first version, which opens the disc, is a lush arrangement that features a Duane Eddy-like guitar, drenched in reverb and tremolo, and a strummed harp. Synthesizers and other keyboards create a wash of sound that carries Ridgway's voice along. The second version is an earlier, demo recording of the track. It's much more spare. The harp still plays a prominent role and some of the keyboard touches that made their way to the finished track are hinted at in this version, but, overall, it's less focused. Ridgway says in the liner notes that he prefers the demo, which is a little longer. I disagree; his instincts

were correct when he revised the lyrics and altered his approach. He changed one verse and removed another altogether and sings in a less-inflected voice. The result is not just a tighter recording, but a stronger, more compassionate story. The vocals on the demo feel condescending, and the original verses needlessly restate some harsh observations about the perils of the movie business. What I found striking when I played the two versions side by side is how, even in a demo, Ridgway knows sonically what he wants to achieve. Certainly there are musical elements that are more developed in the final recording and details are added, but the overall feel is there at the beginning. As the music became more clearly defined, Ridgway toned down the vocals and cut some lyrics, in effect streamlining the story and allowing the music to evoke a deeper story than the words tell. One of the most enjoyable aspects of Ridgway's music is his willingness to bring in ideas from sources far and wide. If a surf guitar is what will put his idea across, he'll use it. A particularly strong influence appears to be film composer Ennio Morricone -- listen to the way Ridgway uses harmonica in a tune like "Time Inside." He doesn't recycle ideas, though. He borrows techniques in order to create an atmosphere for the story he's telling. In that sense, there's an almost cinematic quality to his work. The recordings for *Holiday In Dirt* come from several sources and they vary in quality from very good to DIY. Ridgway is so sure of his goals that he isn't going to let our notions of audiophile sound get in his way of creating an effect. For instance, one of the tunes, "Amnesia," was "sung through a three-inch, battery-powered speaker from Radio Shack. I really liked the sound." He's right; it sounds great. So goes the rest of the disc. SOUNDSTAGE - JOESEPH TAYLOR

----- STAN RIDGWAY *Holiday In Dirt* (New West/Ultramodern) "I wish I was in Tijuana/Eating barbecued iguana." Stan Ridgway could have had no idea when he penned those lines twenty years ago that they would be some of the most enduring lyrics from the New Wave era. Unfortunately, "Mexican Radio," the song from which they are taken, remains most folks' only exposure to one of modern rock music's most unique and underrated talents. First as the leader of Wall Of Voodoo and, since departing that act in 1983, as a solo artist (with infrequent outings with the outfit Drywall), Ridgway has compiled a body of work that defies category, garnering a cult following while only on occasion earning much airplay ("Drive She Said," "Don't Box Me In"). You don't so much listen to a Stan Ridgway album as "watch" it, full of four-minute film noirs. It's like stumbling into some remote cantina south of the border and striking up a conversation with some mysterious Harry Dean Stanton-type with stories to tell, and on *Holiday In Dirt* there's no shortage of tales. The twelve-song collection is actually

B-sides and unreleased tracks that hadn't made the cut for previous releases not because they lack merit but because, according to the liner notes (which, by the way, are more clever than the music on most albums), they didn't fit. Despite this cut and paste approach, it's a surprisingly seamless set that's bookended by two different versions of "Beloved Movie Star," a lazy, loping saga of vanishing dreams, punctuated (or perhaps mocked) by wife Pietra Wexstun's flourishes on harp. There's a lot of desperation and paranoia here (no surprise to anyone familiar with Ridgway's work). The jittery, sparse "Operator Help Me" is an eavesdropping session on a cowering urbanite facing home invasion and "End Of The Line" (which, musically, recalls Wall Of Voodoo's "Call Of The West") certainly sounds like it with the foreboding warning, "You'll have to even up with me at the end of the line." Meanwhile, on the cryptically titled "Bing Can't Walk" (consult the liner notes) he assumes the guise of a leg breaker, singing the words with gusto over a spastic melody which sounds almost gleeful. Although the material on *Holiday In Dirt* is darkly-tinged, it's not all dark. Much of it is delivered with wry bemusement as on "Whatever Happened To You?" (inspired by someone asking Ridgway the titular question). He captures innocence and hope on "Garage Band '69," with the grand dreams "powered up by love and electricity," and is heartbreakingly poignant on "Amnesia," one of two tracks featuring ex-Circle Jerk Zander Schloss. As for the lovely "Act Of Faith," it would seem a natural fit to be covered by Johnny Cash. Of course, be sure to stick around for the hidden track, a hysterical send-up of Charlie Rich's "Behind Closed Doors."

----- Like some troubadour of old, Stan Ridgway has bounced from label to label, never quite earning the widespread appreciation or recognition for his considerable talents. Perhaps that more than anything gives the songs on *Holiday In Dirt* such an authentic, well-worn feel. It's also reassuring to note that Ridgway always seems to surface again, and that's a comforting notion. Few contemporary artists do lonely as well as he does, while still leaving the listener feeling less alone. Tom Demalon

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