

## Mp3 John M Gray - Centreline Bare



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A kaleidoscope of styles and influences -- all wrapped in a unique musical voice. Songs driven by well-honed lyrics and sharp insights into life's highways, alleyways and undiscovered roads. 12 MP3 Songs in this album (54:08) ! Related styles: COUNTRY: Americana, ROCK: Roots Rock People who are interested in Bruce Cockburn John Hiatt Richard Thompson should consider this download. Details: Canadian Singer-Songwriter John M Gray Releases Centreline Bare A musical genome of the last 40-odd years. Centreline bare. Its a cautious green light for the wary winter traveller, a half-ways endorsement to get behind the wheel and challenge the black ice, always laying in wait. Avoid the snowy shoulder -- nothing but trouble over there, man. Keep the white line beneath the hood ornament and your foot off the brake. The uniquely Canadian expression deftly sums up Halifax singer-songwriter John M Grays outlook on navigating lifes challenging terrain with this impressive collection of all-original tunes. Centreline Bare seemed a fitting metaphor, says Gray, who penned all dozen tracks on his debut album. There may be dangerous road conditions ahead, but if theres one place where theres a sense of hope and safety, its down the centre. Gray has long fronted Halifax roots rockers The BBQ Kings, and recorded two albums with the band (Mixed Grill, Beyond Acceptable), but this project marks his debut as a solo artist. Hes a late-bloomer in the songwriting game. Restless from covering other writers tunes, Gray decided to seize the opportunity to start writing his own material five years ago. With a bundle of original songs busting to be heard, Gray decided the time was right to head into the recording studio. Gray brought in longtime musical buddy Kurt von Hahn to co-produce this project. With his technical mastery of the small studio set-up and a knack for big textural arrangements, von Hahn was a natural choice. Ive always liked Kurts eclectic sensibility. He brought a big box of sonic crayons to the project that allowed us to colour outside the lines. Basic rhythm tracks were recorded at Soundmarket studios in Halifax, with drummer Tom

Roach and bassist Jamie Gatti, two of Canadas most respected musicians. That was the solid foundation I was looking for, says Gray, who laid down most of the guitar tracks himself. (BBQ King Rob Hutten dropped by to contribute searing lead guitar on Loveless Motel and some haunting dobro work on Phantom Limb.) As each song revealed itself in the studio, Gray and von Hahn recruited guest musicians to help colour in the tracks. Singer Christina Martin added sultry backup vocals, and pedal steel ace Dale Murray (Cuff The Duke, Hayden) laid down fluid and road-weary lines on several tunes. Gray lucked into a serendipitous find when he went looking for a trumpet player. Drummer Roach mentioned some young Cuban musicians were visiting Nova Scotia in the dead of winter, and soon they had Havana-based trumpeter and flugelhorn prodigy Yasek Manzano on the phone. He was holed up on the outskirts of Dartmouth with some compatriots, and it was cold and snowy, recalls Gray. He invited Manzano to sit in on the session. I think Yasek was happy to break out and blow his trumpet. With his horn barely up to room temperature, the intuitive Cuban musician listened to a few bars, then blew gorgeous and soulful solos on Figure U+I and Looking for the Beauty. The dozen tunes on Centreline Bare are as varied as the influences that have impacted Grays songwriting. He ticks off his songwriting influences like a musicologist thumbing through crates of favourite vinyl Massive Attack, John Hiatt, David Sylvian, Richard Thompson, John Martyn This album is like the genome of all the music Ive absorbed over the past 40-odd years but with its own unique strands of DNA. From the insistent percussive drive and slippery pedal steel of Makes My Kettle Steam, and the rootsy pop of Drive Out Of View to the smoky Figure U+I, the album is a lyrical survey of Grays own musical leanings. New Car Smell is fueled up on a greasy Muscle Shoals groove -- a jumpy R&B tune blasted into gear by the sweaty valves of the Naugahyde Horns. The songs are carefully crafted with some precision writing clever turns of phrase that nudge the listener down a welcome detour off clich avenue. Gray pulls it all together on Looking for the Beauty, an eight-minute sonic prayer to the pursuit of passion. Moody and haunting, driven by chunky rhythm guitar and Manzanos throaty trumpet, the song floats skyward and finally breaks through the clouds with Chris Churchs soaring violin solo. Though the styles may swing like a loose trailer on a winding road, Gray figures theres a thread that runs through all the tunes. Theres a wandering spirit in many of the songs, he offers. Images of the highway, of cars, of hotels abound stories of people moving on. Theres a sense of passage, a hope of reaching a better place down the road. It may be a twisted slippery road, a little greasy on the shoulder. But no worries -- as long as the centreline stays bare.

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