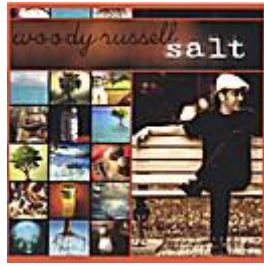


Mp3 Woody Russell - Salt



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A bold new recording of richly penned songs that merge Woody Russell's distinctly soulful Americana with his deep respect for jazz and roots music. 14 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, BLUES: Jazzy Blues

Details: *****Nominated for "Album of the Year" - 2006 Independent Music Awards***** "In Russell you'll find a rare musician with the versatility to wail in a true falsetto and then burst forth with a resonating purr that makes you want to hang your head and shuffle your feet in the dust as you walk alone down a long, gritty dirt road to nowhere. Russell writes his own songs, sings, plays the guitar among other instruments and even produces; the sound you hear is pure Woody, and that's a really good thing." - Lisa Utman Randall, Mercury Salt, Woody Russell's long awaited new album is a reinvention of sorts for the Austin, Texas based singer-songwriter and guitarist. Again, a self-produced effort, but this one shines clearly as an intended departure from his previous releases. Why? Well, people change. Lives and surrounding circumstances change. Russell has been focusing on ideas, sounds and varied styles which he says has been with him forever but has sometimes been difficult to address as a songwriter. "These songs needed to surface. I'd been experimenting with so many things as a songwriter and a guitarist that eventually the variations all began to fit in place where maybe they hadn't before. My world has changed, expanded, and I'm on the road living with these tunes quite a lot. It's all about the soul of it, anyway. If you're heart's in it, it'll work most of the time. And I know when a song works for me; I can't fool myself for very long. I know when I'm delivering the real deal. I can feel it and as a result, the audience gets it, too. People approach me about the songs after shows, so I'm honored to give them something that they can take home with them. The bottom line is that it's long overdue for me artistically and personally." On this new recording, Russell's heart and soul pour from every track like a thunderhead breaking open on a hot August afternoon in central Texas. The sound of the album as a whole stomps, weeps, waltzes and swings with

his distinct approach to the roots of country, jazz, blues and soul. The horns, gospel tinged vocals, ambient textures, drum loops, percussion and, oh yeah, the new band, make for a lush setting for Woody's "Thinking man's Americana." Most importantly however is the intelligent, crisp songwriting which shines through even the most embellished tracks on Salt. Never an easy achievement, but Woody gets the job done. "Some say that self-producing can be dangerous. But if you really want to learn and address certain angles in your work, you've got to step up to the plate," suggests Woody. "I have worked with producers in the past, but never felt compelled to commit to the idea that it's necessary for getting the best results. But, it is a lot to handle and to stay honestly focused on," he adds. "I did have some gigs in between that took me out of the studio for days at a time; forcing a much needed break, I'm sure." In true Woody Russell fashion, the ever bittersweet songs on Salt move from the mid-tempo opener, Count On Me - with it's subtly funky groove and excellent acoustic guitar riffs - to the jumping, Parts and Labor; the latter finding a humorous connection between one's spiritual well-being as it relates to auto maintenance. "I always suggest that we're moving into the gospel material at that point in the show," says Russell of performing Parts and Labor. "The title track really is the centerpiece, the nucleus," explains Woody. "It's a simple tune at its core and the production flourishes really anchor the sound of the album as a whole." He continues, "I think that if you hear this song by itself you can get a sense of what the record sounds like front to back. Salt is at the heart of the whole thing and I never thought of calling the project anything else. It's probably the most personal song of the bunch but that's most likely why people are drawn to it." The CD explores a song cycle that addresses all matters of love and loss. We May Never Know digs up philosophical questions that never get answered. In the Middle Of the Fringe journeys alongside a dreamer who sets out to find his soul-mate and the "big time," in a carnival sideshow life where he suggests the "work is much more fun." Additionally, the album offers up three brief instrumental interludes; each perfectly positioned to compliment the following track. The first is a Frisell-styled guitar bit and the second meanders through a scratchy "Island flavored doo-wop". A 30 second, vintage sounding, country blues sets up the CD's closer. Each of these short musical moments makes for a subtle, but welcome break in the program. The press continues to find reason to praise him for his voice; one that comes from somewhere deep and soulful which few of his contemporaries can match. Russell possesses a voice that reaches seemingly limitless textures and moods. You simply want to hear him sing his songs... and that he does. Throughout Salt, he even manages the gospel backing vocals in a fashion that

conjures up The Blind Boys of Alabama or even "doo-wop" styles from a bygone era. Additionally, he is joined by Megan Melara for some exquisitely beautiful harmonies. She breaks free on occasion to bring a stirring counterpoint to Woody's already memorable melodies. Working as a new trio this time around, lends a completely new voice to the sonic palette of Salt. His "Resolectric" is Russell's signature and primary guitar voice, but he also delivers some meaty acoustic playing as evidenced in the opening track. He continually weaves through the album with injections of his spot-on Tele picking, as well. But as a producer, Woody Russell chooses to feature lap steel guitarist, Danny Bennett, in ambient moods that are highlighted throughout the 14 tracks. Bennett steps up and solos with graceful steel playing the likes of say, David Lindley when he worked with Jackson Browne. Danny adds haunting additions to the mix and the mood in songs like Envy, Salt, We May Never Know and In The Middle of the Fringe. He then turns it on with some fine Dobro playing, trading solos with Woody in Short Trip. Gritty electric lap steel picking jacks up the mix in the Cash influenced closer, Get On With It. From top to bottom, upright bassist Tom Benton brings jazz and soul to the belly of all the songs on Salt. Benton's influence on the album creates seamless timing and melodic shifts. His playing helps move listeners easily from the blue-jazz angle ever present in Russell's style to the country vibes of certain songs as if just taking an easy stroll. Again, in the producer's chair, Russell sought to highlight the strengths of the musicians. He encourages them to infuse their own interpretations of his songs deep into the heart of the sound. Benton delivers a gem of a solo in Leaving, respectful of the seemingly fragile nature of the song. He is an ever present voice that never fails to make the right statement at the right time throughout the album. From beginning to end, Salt is a bold new recording of richly penned songs that merge Russell's distinctly soulful Americana with his deep respect for jazz and roots music. It clearly moves him toward recognition as one of only a handful of top-shelf tunesmiths whose work is undisputable for the "one-of-a-kind" magic that it is.

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