

Mp3 Jim Saco - No. 9



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Sixties-inspired Psyche/Alt-Country masterpiece that blends the early honky-tonk of Johnny Cash and Johnny Horton with the British Invasion pop sensibilities of the Zombies, the Move and the Tremeloes. Definitely worth a listen, or two, or three. 12 MP3 Songs POP: 60's Pop, COUNTRY: Alt-Country Show all album songs: No. 9 Songs Details: This is an ambitious effort as Jim Saco attempts to fuse the hardcore honky-tonk of artists like Johnny Horton, Roger Miller, and Chet Atkins; the British pop sensibilities of the Zombies and Move; and the garage attitude of the Standells and the Barbarians into a cohesive album. But what really makes this baby hum are his collaborations with engineer/arranger/multi-instrumentalist Brian McShane and keyboardist extraordinaire Matt Cunitz (All Ones). They handle everything Saco throws at them with flying colors, creating thoughtful, groovy arrangements. McShane holds down the fort by playing bass, drums and guitar and also contributes some great vocal harmonies. Cunitz utilizes no less than thirteen different keyboards to add color and sonic breadth, including Wurlitzer, Fender Rhodes and Hohner electric pianos, Hammond C-3 organ, Minimoog synthesizer, and Mellotron. This CD definitely falls in the Psyche/Alt-Country cross genre, but the "Psyche" may be as much psychotic as it is psychedelic. The opening track Ambulance Driver is akin to the Moves Fire Brigade. Were not entirely sure if its about emergency service personnel or drug dealers but it a psychedelic nugget nonetheless. On Coal Saco cleverly uses a spousal argument to address the age-old question: why are we still mining/burning coal? To get his point across, Saco is not scared to cross the line, exemplified by the highly controversial Drinkin, Drinkin, Drivin, where he takes us through the mindless destructive behavior of those that drive while intoxicated. The second verse goes: "Janie was my first girl, she wasn't any fun, then one day I met Suzanne and we drove and drank 'till dawn." Obviously, Janie had her head on straight but Saco leaves that for the listener to figure out. The album includes three covers, the first of

which is Howard Hauseys Whispering Pines. Saco gives the song a much more intense and strident treatment than the classic Johnny Horton version. As he says, theres no way anyone could sing it as pretty as Johnny so I took an entirely different approach. McShanes slide work, particularly on the second verse, with long clean lines followed by short edgy bursts, is reminiscent of Alan Blind Owl Wilsons best work. Steppin Under Ladders takes the listener back in time with Chet Atkins style guitar licks and Rod Argent/Zombies-era electric piano fills. Cunitz unleashes a sonic barrage on the garage masterpiece Hear Me Now with clavinet played through a distortion box and wah wah peddle. On the Beau Brummels Theyll Make You Cry Saco shows his humorous side as he opens the song with a brief Johnny Cash-like diatribe about his first job outta college. Sacos pre-falsetto sometimes sounds more like Neil Young than the man himself, and this is the case on the masterfully crafted Patriotic Christian Song. Again, showing absolutely no fear of crossing the line, he takes artistic liberties with one of President Bushs better known quotes to build the chorus Youre either with them or youre not In this case, them being the Administration, neo-con right and evangelicals. Following Patriotic theres an interesting juxtaposition with a cover of Donovans Jersey Thursday, which Saco and McShane give a renaissance-like treatment. McShanes vocal harmonies shine big time on the next two tracks Mickeys Blue Room and I Dont Like You, which draw heavily on Sacos honky-tonk influences and sense of humor. Based on a true story, Mickeys Blue Room has one of the CDs finest hooks with the chorus if you ever played poker in Mickeys Blue Room, everybody there packin boom boom boom With its Beatlesque back beat and Tex-Mex pump organ, I Dont Like You reminds one of Doug Sahms early work with the Sir Douglas Quintet. Finally, another of the CDs highlights has to be the breathtaking rave-up on Farewell with McShanes pulsating bass and Cunitz orchestral arrangement laying the foundation for Sacos soaring vocals. Farewell should strike a chord (no pun intended) with every frustrated songwriter: when I should have hit the text books I was searching for a word, when I should have written papers, I was searching for a chord One can only hope this isn't his swan song. This CD is an absolute monsterone of 2007s finest independent releases.

--Guitar Empire

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