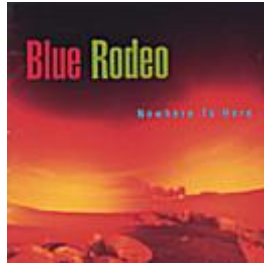


## Mp3 Blue Rodeo - Nowhere To Here



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Canada's most popular roots rock band, Blue Rodeo became a veritable institution in their home country, although they never quite moved beyond cult status in the U.S. Their sound is a basic blend of country, folk, and rock, but with a definite pop appeal. 12 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Rock, ROCK: Americana Details: A band that sustains a career spanning five albums learns about the nature of relationships, and the weight and stress those connections can bear. They understand that even more than friends and lovers, the band becomes your family. After countless nights spent both in front of cheering fans and down long sleepless highways, camaraderie becomes a bulwark against the world, a place of musical respite where the psyche can be free to roam and create. On Nowhere to Here, Blue Rodeo explores emotional landscapes in all their joy, wonder and disillusionment. Best known for their unique synthesis of country, rock and folk, the band actually transcends such easy categorizations. Their new batch of songs ranges from ethereal moodiness ("Save Myself") to R&B tinged country ("Better Off As We Are"), from Abbey Road styles epics ("Brown Eyed Dog") to sparse hymnal sketches ("Flaming Bed"). Though their sunny songs still captivate, it's the darker songs, with their longing and space, that make a lasting impression. "There are emotional seasons," says Greg Keelor, one half of the band's songwriting team. "The last album (Five Days in July) was very bright. Then we spent two years on the road, and our relationships and our lives were changing. Music is always a catharsis for me and I've found that it takes a certain amount of strength to go into the valley of the shadow. The song becomes a ladder that allows you a descent in and a way out as well. Sometimes you've got to dig a tunnel." The dark beauty that infuses Nowhere to Here is part of what ties Blue Rodeo together as players and people. "It's a place that we always exist in as writers and musicians," says co-songwriter Jim Cuddy. "You get in touch with that well of pain. In everybody's psyche there's a certain reservoir of sad memories. The aural

traditions of poetry have always created a landscape where there's a lot of isolation and anxiety, all contrasted against something that helps you survive." Like all the great ensembles, from The Band to The Meters to the Stones, Blue Rodeo possesses that increasingly rare talent for making music that breathes with the passion of living. With Keelor and Cuddy handling the vocals and guitars, drummer Glenn Milchem, keyboardist James Gray, steel guitarist Kim Deschamps, and bassist Bazil Donovan make their music flow like surges in a river. The band handles powerful, majestic passages with skill and tosses off driving grooves with ease. "In the past three years we've actually learned how to communicate," says Keelor. "When writing for this record, I realized how good the band is. We have a certain weight and gravity. We trust each other as players and that allows us to have space in the music. And it was good to write some songs that were more spacious and sculpted, rather than jingle, jangle, jingle." The previous *Five Days in July* was an all-acoustic bit of country-folk revelry, a time for the band to blow off steam after a long tour. *Nowhere To Here* is an admittedly different animal. "We're conscious that our last record was the end of one conversation and this is the beginning of another," says Cuddy. "We're aware of that bridge. But we've always been into hard contrasts. We've borrowed arrangements and ideas from rock. It's pretty hard to get new ideas from country. It's a good way to express pain and sadness. Somehow the sounds of the music are soothing enough that it makes it okay to be screwed up." Blue Rodeo began out of Keelor and Cuddy's high school friendship. After a brief New York stint in the mid-80's, the pair returned to Canada and eventually recorded their Blue Rodeo debut, *Outskirts*. *Diamond Mine*, *Casino*, and *Lost Together* followed to much acclaim, both at home and abroad. From *Rolling Stone* to *Musician* to *Kentucky's Courier Journal*, the reviews have been universally outstanding. Although the U.S. market has been slow to catch their fire, Blue Rodeo continues to make splendid music. And somehow that's all that matters. "There's a certain point in a band's evolution where you realize your instincts are in sync," says Cuddy. "That's the lifeblood of this band. Our evolution is something that captivates us. It's interesting to contemplate how far a band can go. Playing together feels really good to us." - Ken Micallef

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