

## Mp3 Deer Whistle - Stranded Somewhere Else



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Rocking, good-time alt. country with thoughtful lyrics and plenty of energy to burn. 6 MP3 Songs ROCK: Roots Rock, ROCK: 90's Rock Details: Deer Whistle Stranded Somewhere Else by William Michael Smith Hellbent on makin' my mark On a world that don't care Chasin' hopes and dreams That may or may not be there --Gerald Collier, "I Don't Know" Just guessing, but I'd bet Gerald Collier has turned his cynical, jaundiced eye on his own career and, with his tongue firmly in cheek and in full recognition of the futility of the fame chase in an industry that lately seems to be imploding like a black hole, has titled his latest EP with his new band Stranded Somewhere Else to make a point. Or a joke. Or both. To hammer the point home, the minimalist cover art shows seagulls and a trout amidst a desert populated with cacti. It's irony, don't you know, Collier's signal that he's changed his musical format and ensemble again, altered his frame of reference and taken another creative shot, but that his expectations aren't too high and that most likely he's just trading one dead-end career location for another. Stranded somewhere between Wilco and the Lollapalooza Nation. Well, actually, according to Collier, this time musically he's stranded in the rock guitar zone somewhere between the Meat Puppets and ZZ Top. The tune cut through the radio Like a knife through butter The second that I heard "La Grange" I was changed forever --"I Was Flyin' G. Collier Seattle's Collier has always been a little different. Even though the first album was on Sub Pop, the indie label that gave us Nirvana, Collier never fell into the city's No. 1 export after Starbucks, the grunge scene. Collier's band, Best Kissers in the World, which included Phoenix musical buddy Danny Bland, was a rocking, power pop influenced band. SPIN once described the Kissers as Paul-Westerberg-cum-Cheap Trick. However dumb that sounds, they had chops enough to tour with the likes of X and Social Distortion. But after four albums, the Kissers had run their course and Collier again swam against the Seattle current by heading in the direction of alternative honky tonk. (Supersuckers covered Collier's "Hungover

Together" on their recent *Must've Been Live* album.) On the strength of his dark, bitter acoustic solo, 1996's *I Had to Laugh Like Hell*, Warner Brothers signed Collier, but his 1998 Warner effort, *Gerald Collier*, didn't do much. He put out 1999's *Low Tar Taste* on Danny Bland's *Aces and Eights* label, the same Seattle label where *Supersuckers* found a home when their major label deal cratered on liftoff. Collier's record was well accepted critically, but didn't sell well. So, frustrated with the music business and the Seattle scene, the Phoenix, Arizona native packed away his guitars and took a job as a bartender. With time on his hands, his musical attention turned to his youthful influences, ZZ Top and Phoenix's *Meat Puppets*. Just as Collier was tiring of bartending, his old bass player from *Kissers* walked in the bar by accident and before long Collier and Dave Swafford (*Mother May I*) were jamming, looking for a drummer and a new place to be stranded. Swafford recruited a poker buddy, Tom Nurse. Whatever genre Collier has worked in throughout his career, he's stood out for writing songs that didn't fit the mold. Most of his songs were less mainstreet than backstreet, less suburban sidewalk than downtown gutter, less living room than opium den. He could be humorous, but he always had a skeptic's eye for realism (I hate the cliché "gritty," but it can apply to Collier's writing) and an ability to author quizzical lines like "Nothing like a loss to keep you thin" (from "Gone Away"). His title "She Won't Get Under Me 'til I Get Over You" speaks volumes about Collier's songwriting mentality. *Stranded Somewhere Else* again gives us the literate, streetwise, hip Collier. Urbane and occasionally brazen and smart-mouthed, like any plugged in novelist Collier touches on the emotional issues that confront us, but with an eye for the overlooked detail, the telling minutia that distinguishes gifted writers. On the punchy "Staring Into the Sun," Collier ponders the eccentricities and banalities of life and comes off with some great lines like "most of my best ideas just drop dead inside my mind" and "I've got my finger in the dike of something I don't understand." But things are looking up when Collier finds a convenient solution to frustration, indecision, and anomie as, wailing on his guitar, he concludes: I'm ready as I'm ever Gonna be I'm gonna turn this time on my hands Into a little luxury I'm gonna laze around all day Not talk to anyone Elbows on the windowsill And stare into the sun Musically, the EP features plenty of references to ZZ Top and *Meat Puppets*, even a nifty *Credence Clearwater* "Fortunate Son" signature playfully added to "I Was Flyin'," which features the deep groove rhythmic attack that made the Texas threesome so popular. Collier's leads are pure homage, rendered straight with no chaser and no irony. With the help of *Supersuckers*' sound whiz Dave Fisher, Collier has done some neat guitar overdubs to fill out the sound, particularly on "I Don't Know," a raucous, punky

hard charger. According to the self-effacing Collier, "I'm just been doing my impression of what I think Billy Gibbons would do if he were as retarded as me." Lyrically, "I Don't Know" is just a variation on the Stranded theme, the unpredictability of life (and just maybe the record industry?) For days and nights For what seems like weeks I've listened to the ripped up voices Of idiots and freaks "Slummin'" is another driving riff rock track that wedges its way between ZZ Top and the punkier sounds of Meat Puppets. With Swafford's thick bass pushing the track, Collier does some clean but deft sleight of hand with repetitive, seemingly simple lead licks while delivering the lyrics with a wink and a sneer. Slummin' through the afternoon like a great buffoon And all the great buffoons that came before me Let suns rise and fall, let friends disappear Into the ether of getting older Walls that stood and time stands still, I got sleepin' pills That make my day a whole lot slower The album contains an atomic cover of "Live With Me" from the Rolling Stones' classic album Gimme Shelter that highlights Collier's current fascination with guitar riff songs. A tad on the rough-n-ready, we're-just-doing-one-take side, Collier, Nurse, and Swafford grind on the track, just twisting the knobs up high and having fun with a great, fast rock groove. I probably haven't heard this song in twenty years yet, after a lulling two minutes of silence getting to the track, when the bass unexpectedly kicks in the realization is instant and highly pleasurable. This is how the Stones should be covered, in high-speed garage band style. Stranded Somewhere Else contains a sharp, hard, well-honed edge driven by Collier's urgent vocals and wailing guitar. While we may not be seeing Deer Whistle on MTV anytime soon, with their brand of rock they will undoubtedly develop a loyal club following. Niche-wise, Stranded Somewhere Else won't be "heavy" enough for the hip-hop thrashing Lollapaloozas and, on the other hand, will be too stout for sensitive roots neo-folkies. Whatever. We've had a decade to catch on to Gerald Collier. It's about time we rewarded his persistence and talent, before he chucks it all, hocks his guitars, and goes back to tending bar. Rock this straight and uncalculated shouldn't find itself stranded without an audience. There's one place for sure where the band will be welcome with their brand of basic rock. Look for Deer Whistle appearing at your favorite local biker bar soon. \*For more info and to order Stranded Somewhere Else go to [geraldcollier.com](http://geraldcollier.com) Contact William Michael Smith at: [wms@rockzilla.net](mailto:wms@rockzilla.net) NOTE: This review taken from [rockzilla.net](http://rockzilla.net)

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