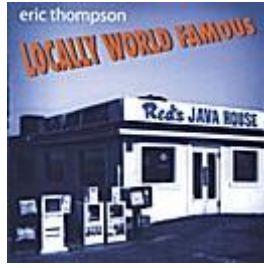


Mp3 Eric Thompson - Locally World Famous



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Cosmic Country + Roots Pop/Americana in the Gram Parsons tradition. 11 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Rock, COUNTRY: Modern Country Details: From Delusions of Adequacy, 3/29/04: Gram Parsons called it Cosmic American Music, a term that reflected the paisley aesthetic of the late 60s. But this curious little sub-genre has managed to morph itself into various incarnations since then, from the 70s peaceful, easy California Country, to too-slick 1980s country pop, to the alt-country boom of the 90s, which was a couple of hit records from-as a friend of mine recently put it in reference to Wilco's debut, A.M.-saving pop music. As for me, I know it strikes many as cliché, but I still get a familiar, welcome little thrill from hearing that tremulous, liquid stirring of pedal steel rise up through the mix. Eric Thompson is a California-bred roots artist who on Locally World Famous's best songs corrals the best of his home state's sound to evoke The Mavericks or Los Lobos, and who at times reaches back a little further to give an unironic nod to Elvis Presley. "Gone, Gone, Gone" could probably be the album's hit single. It's a buoyant song with a great rhythm, and its elliptical lyrics careen through images of loneliness, self-reflection, and even politics. The best of what Thompson does comes together in this song, with its country instrumentation, energetic pace, and blithe sensibility. Along with his more original sound, Thompson can also step out and incorporate different borrowed styles when he wants to. "Road Yer Travelin'" incorporates Cat Stevens's endearingly fractured delivery, an odd changeup from the richer, country-tenor tones of the rest of the album, which for the most part call to mind singers like Joe Ely and, in some places, even The Mavericks' Raul Malo. "The Beginning" is one minor misstep, an Allman Brothers-style jam that never really gets off the ground. In a genre that appreciates and accepts virtuosic acoustic instrumentation above all, it's curious and a little disappointing to hear synthesizers used not inventively, but in places where they don't really seem needed. The songwriting and overall performance

are so persuasive over most of the album, though, that the 80s synth thing, while distracting, never gets in the way too much. Ditto the backwards-looking use of a gaggle of female backup singers, a staple of overwrought 80s post-classic-rock and something that never fails to send up a little flare of warning when I hear it. Again, it's not too much of a detraction, but you get the feeling that those vocal tracks could have been unceremoniously dropped without losing anything. *Locally World Famous* is a solid, if occasionally uneven, entry into its thankfully long-lived genre, of which Eric Thompson is a skilled purveyor. **BIO** This former Dallas, Los Angeles, Fresno, Boston, and San Jose resident called 11 cities home in his first 11 school years. Having lived and traveled throughout the world and now living near San Francisco, this songwriter's innate transience is reflected in his wide range of musical styles and influences. His debut cd, *Manic + Organic*, enjoyed very warm critical acceptance. With his follow up cd, *Locally World Famous*, Thompson has created a similarly accessible collection of songs that hints broadly at a variety of influences but stays grounded in the country-esque roots-pop genre.

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