

New Artist Radio

Madmonk's CD Reviews December 11, 2005

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Since Jeff Laine resides in Studio City California, which is about 45 miles from where I live in Huntington Beach, I guess that sort of makes him my neighbor. Many months back, he submitted his latest record Long Way Home, which he released in back in 2003. He has put together an impressive press kit that includes past reviews and information about his well known producer Magic Kramer and notable session players including percussionist Deborah Dobkin who recently played on Richard Thompson's latest record.

Jeff's well produced effort is a hybrid of rock, blues and alternative country adeptly executed by the aggregate of seasoned musicians that participated in the recording. His writing style is reminiscent of bohemian poetic crooners like Tom Waits, Lou Reed and Rufus Wainwright and he sings with a distinctive clean, low timber vocal. Using a nice array of grooves and moods, the material is easy on the ears and is perfect for college and adult alternative radio stations.

For my money, Jeff is a competent melody writer but I was much more impressed by his lyrics, which are dark and often beautiful in their imagery. Song highlights include the title track, which offers this flowing passage:

"Waiting at the water / watching for a light / A Boatman at the border / crossing tonight / Shadows of the mountain / falling to the sea / Is that you my lover, smiling at me? I would not trade for crowns or kings / I would not trade for crosses or rings"

Other inspired tracks include a gritty, rewed up version of "Frankie and Johnny" that reminded me of material from Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited" album; and the very cool "59 Les Paul" sounding a lot like Lou Reed and gets my vote for coolest words on the record. However, "Son" gets my vote for the prettiest track dishing out wise fatherly advice about experiencing the joys and responsibilities of life. Very polished record and Madmonk gives this one A-
