

Tony Joe White - The Shine (2010)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Season Man*
02. *Ain't Doing Nobody No Good*
03. *Paintings on the Mountain*
04. *Tell Me Why*
05. *All*
06. *Long Way from the River*
07. *Strange Night* [play](#)
08. *Something to Soften the Blow*
09. *Roll Train Roll*
10. *A Place to Watch the Sun Go Down* [play](#)

Personnel:

Tony Joe White (vocals, guitar, harmonica)
John Catchings (cello)
Tyson Rogers (piano, organ, Wurlitzer organ)
Jack Bruno (drums, percussion)

The 21st century saw Tony Joe White resume his recording and performing career, and experience a resurgence of critical interest in his older music as well. Since 2002, "the Swamp Fox" has recorded sporadically for his own Swamp imprint, and also had his back catalog remastered and reissued. Earlier in 2010, Rhino Handmade made available *That On the Road Look*, a previously unreleased live date. *The Shine* is a (mostly) low-key, basic affair. White wrote or co-wrote everything here with his wife, Leann. The band is a quintet: White plays guitars and harmonica with drummer Jack Bruno, cellist John Catchings, bassist George Hawkins, and Tyson Rogers on piano, organ, and Wurlitzer. The sound is warm and raw; the album feels like it was cut mostly live from the floor (with guitar and vocal overdubs added) and it's full of natural atmospherics. White's acoustic nylon-string guitar is prevalent, sometimes more so than his quavering, downright spooky baritone. His electric six-string work paints the

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backdrop. The only real exceptions are the downright rocker "Strange Night," where White displays everything that Mark Knopfler copped from his style inside of five minutes. The levels feel off, overloaded; the vocals come from the backdrop as the guitars and drums smoulder, smoke, and bubble. A broken love song, everything in it bleeds into everything else: it expresses pain as an immediate, crushing experience; it evokes everything from anger to tenderness. "Something to Soften the Blow" is an electric country waltz, sad, beautiful, and lonely. The protagonist is desperate for comfort in seeking a one-night stand from what is perhaps a sympathetic other. White somehow manages to pull off his plea without coming off as pathetic; he wears his brokenness with dignity. "Season Man" is a classic White minor-key narrative about a drifter. "Ain't Doing Nobody No Good" is a droning swamp blues, full of dread and sinister purpose. "Long Way from the River" is a backbeat-driven deeply atmospheric folk song that contains a classic White line: "When you're running with the swamp, the rain is gonna fall." "Roll Train Toll" is pure Delta-style folk-blues, played solo on a steel-string acoustic guitar; it's loaded with a quiet yet ever-present menace ready to break the surface, though it never does, and is all the more effective as a result. Ultimately, The Shine is White's most consistent and gratifying offering since he began recording again.

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