

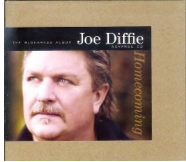
## Joe Diffie – Homecoming (The Bluegrass Album) (2010)

Written by bluelover

Tuesday, 18 December 2018 14:05 -

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1 *Somehow Tonight* 2:58 2 *Lonesome And Dry As A Bone* 3:52 3 *Tall Cornstalk* 2:47 4 *Fit For A King* 4:11 5 *Route 5 Box 109* 3:57 6 *Rainin' On Her Rubby Dolly* (Featuring – The Grascals) 2:54 7 *I Know How It Feels* 3:39 8 *Tennessee Tea* 2:50 9 *Free And Easy* 3:00 10 *Stormy Weather Once Again* 3:02 11 *'Til Death* 4:28 12 *Hard To Handle* 2:30  
Joe Diffie - Vocals, Primary Artist Mike Compton - Mandolin Charlie Cushman - Banjo Mark Fain - Bass Aubrey Haynie - Fiddle Rob Ickes - Dobro Bryan Sutton - Guitar (Acoustic)

During his career as a country singer, Joe Diffie always walked on the traditional side of the street, or maybe the long lonesome highway. He was known as a hit songwriter before he started his career as a country music singer, but before that he played in rock bands and gospel groups. He also spent six years touring and recording with a bluegrass band called Special Edition. When Rounder asked him if he'd like to make a bluegrass album he jumped at the chance. With Grammy-winning producer and engineer Luke Wooten at his side, Diffie assembled an impressive cast of super pickers like Rhonda Vincent, Alecia Nugent, Rob Ickes, and the Grascals, who add their chops to a new tune penned by Diffie and pal Shawn Camp, "It's Raining on Her Rubber Dolly Now." The song is a take on divorce with the kind of over the top emotion that often gives country a bad name, but Diffie's understated vocals and Jeremy Abshire's weeping fiddle strike the perfect balance between pathos and despair. He revives the shoulda-been hit "Tennessee Tea," a tune he wrote in his days with Special Edition, and takes it at a faster than light tempo. His phrasing on this ode to illegal drink suggests George Jones at his wooziest. Diffie settles down into a relaxed groove for a cover of Flatt & Scruggs' "Somehow Tonight" and pulls out all the emotional stops for Camp's "Lonesome and Dry as a Bone," the tale of a man mourning for his deceased lover without the aid of alcohol. There's not a weak track here, and Diffie's wailing lead vocals and name recognition will hopefully fan the fires of the current revival of interest in traditional bluegrass. ---j. poet, AllMusic Review

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He's had success in the country field – maybe not as many as some, or as much as a singer of his caliber probably deserves – but Joe Diffie has done all right for himself, both as an artist and as a songwriter. But his new project on Rounder, *Homecoming: The Bluegrass Album*, shows what can happen when a pure singer like Diffie takes on a project that's close to his heart.

Featuring a great mix of songs by some old friends, some classic artists, and the singer himself, Diffie is joined on *Homecoming* by a band of some of Nashville's finest bluegrass players, including mandolinist Mike Compton, guitarist Bryan Sutton, and dobro whiz Rob Ickes. And the background vocalists are no slouches either, with Rhonda Vincent, Alecia Nugent and Harley Allen among them. Diffie's delivery on every track is on the money, and his affinity for bluegrass comes through loud and clear.

The album opens with the Flatt & Scruggs classic "Somehow Tonight," with a vocal that shows that Diffie isn't just a country singer trying to do something new. He sings like a broken man on Shawn Camp's heart-rending "Lonesome and Dry As a Bone," and Camp also appears as a co-writer on the humorous and appropriate "Rainin' On Her Rubber Dolly Now," with music from the Grascals. And it's all produced by Luke Wooten, who understands what to do with this material and instrumentation as well as anybody on Music Row.

The Diffie original "Til Death," a pure bluegrass song with recitation about adultery and murder, may be the lyrical highlight of the album; when Diffie matter-of-factly sings "evil thoughts ran through my mind/I began to track her down/I would not be satisfied/'til she was in the ground," there's no way a listener can't be glued to the edge of his or her seat to see what happens next. The biggest surprise on the album, though, is Diffie's treatment of the old Otis-Redding/Black Crowes number "Hard to Handle." If Diffie and crew were able to play and sing this thing any faster it would sound like the Chipmunks.

Enough already. This is a wonderful record that pays tribute to the masters with the freshness of 2010. Here's hoping Joe does more work like this in the future. ---Rick Moore,  
americansongwriter.com

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