

Joe Purdy – Eagle Rock Fire (2014)

Written by bluelover

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01 – Eagle Rock Fire 02 – L.A. Livin 03 – That Diamond Ring 04 – Waiting for Loretta Too Long 05 – Good Gal Away 06 – Meet Me in N.Y. 07 – Ba Girl 08 – This American 09 – I’m Sorry You’re Blue 10 – Wildflowers Joe Purdy - voice, guitar, mandolin, harmonica, piano, banjo

I discovered Purdy in 2008. It was a serious “gotcha” moment between a friend and myself. I made a comment about a Kia commercial and how catchy the tune was. My friend Matt, said he had never seen it. So, I hummed the tune and he knew it. Of course, I was skeptical—prompting my friend to pull out his, at the time, new iPhone and play me the song. It was the same song, so I had to hear my friend out. He told me all about this singer-song writer from the Ozark’s. Being that it was 2008, my friend “burned” me a copy of “You Can Tell Georgia”. It’s still one of my favorite albums to listen to. So, to Matt, thank you. You’re a good friend.

Joe—I don’t know you. I’ve seen you twice in concert. You had a very nice, sharp performance at one show and seemed “road weary” at another, but delivered nonetheless. However, you let your music be heard to those who want to listen. That speaks well for the Ozarks as a whole. Kudos to you, my man. The new album, is the goods. “Eagle Rock Fire” is the same quality music from Purdy that many have come to expect, in the true “American Troubadour” fashion. That is to say, he tells one hell of a story and frames one hell of a narrative. How can I make such a declaration? Well, I too am from the Ozark’s. I was raised on Johnny Cash before hipsters made him “en vogue”. It wasn’t an option. Waylon and Willie, Merle Haggard, and Chris LeDoux—these were steady cassettes played at social gatherings in my youth on stereos I didn’t have control over. Basically, I know my “country” jams when I hear ‘em. Purdy proves his writing abilities deserves note among other great American singer-song writers, with chorus lines like, “I hope you and my old dog ain’t mad at me anymore”

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Also, I mildly bitched to him on Twitter about a less than stellar performance I attended and he doesn't care. That's instant "street cred". For Purdy...that's "troubadour 101". My friend who introduced me to Purdy was such a fan, he paid for both of us to go see Purdy at 'Off Broadway', in St. Louis. It was such a great show. So good in fact, that my wife decided to celebrate our anniversary the next time he came through town by going to his show again. The second show, he looked beat—"rode hard and put up wet"—is the way the old timers would put it. Needless to say, my wife wasn't impressed. She gets it though, he's in character. Purdy may not have been at his sharpest at the second show, but he was real—as advertised.

When I heard "Take advice from me my friend, Don't fall in love with a mannequin" from the track 'Ba Girl', I figured this guy probably has a good perspective on things. As one guy who survived the Ozark's, examining the art of an artist from the Ozark's, I can say with certainty, this is Down Home. The texture of the album is authentic. It comes through as organic and original. He's not faking the down home feel. To be honest, the whole song seems to be Purdy perhaps addressing an industry, "We'll keep on stealing cowboy songs and feeling free." I'd love to hear about the inspiration behind that line.

Eagle Rock Fire revived my appreciation for the steel guitar—the place it has in the American social fabric; the images, the sounds, the texture it refers our minds to. It's an authentic feel of an America we all know just isn't coming back. Purdy sticks to his basics, tells great stories, and even incorporates the Southwestern-style guitar "pickin". And yes—there is a harmonica, which I always thought he has used tastefully.

You should give this album a listen. When Purdy comes to a city near you, you should go see him. I know I intend to see him in concert again when he swings through the gateway city in June. Although, don't let me push you...as Joe Purdy puts it in track number nine, "Take me or leave me, I don't care which..." You gotta at least respect the honesty. ---
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