

CHRIS SMITHER ♣ STILL ON THE LEVEE

A 50 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

CHRIS SMITHER QUOTES

ASSOCIATED PRESS: Wise words pour forth from Chris Smither – observations and aphorisms, similes and internal rhymes, run-on sentences and concise quips, all in a conversational flow. The careful construction of Smither’s lyrics is a thing of beauty and the bedrock of his bluesy folk music. Smither is an excellent acoustic guitarist and first-rate foot-stomper.

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO: [Smither] taps his foot to keep the rhythm, much like the late blues legend John Lee Hooker. His finger-picked guitar lines are sleek, unhurried and insistent. And then there’s the voice –equal parts gravel and molasses, Smither’s singing sounds like a distillation of the folk and blues heroes he grew up listening to in New Orleans.

ROLLING STONE: Bathed in the flickering glow of passing headlights and neon bar signs, Smither’s roots are as blue as they come. There is plenty of misty Louisiana and Lightnin’ Hopkins in Smither’s weathered singing and unhurried picking. So fine.

MOJO (5 STARS): *Hundred Dollar Valentine* is a thing of profound beauty; deep, sad, wise songs, allied to perfectly crafted arrangements, from a a man who’s live long enough in darkness to address the big, heavy questions with a lightness of touch.

MAVERICK: Cast your mind back to the first time you heard Hank Williams, Big Bill Broonzy or JJ Cale and remember how good it felt. Think of the opening encounter with Leon Redbone or Leo Kottke. They say newcomers to Chris Smither’s brand of country blues-tinged southern folk experience those some emotions. It’s true.

NEW YORK TIMES: With a weary, well-traveled voice and a serenely intricate finger-picking style, Mr. Smither turns the blues into songs that accept hard-won lessons and try to make peace with fate.

THE AUSTRALIAN: Stoical and sometimes nihilistic reflections on the meaning of life flow fluently from a gruff, world-weary voice that falls somewhere between Bob Dylan and JJ Cale. Groove is of the essence for this acclaimed guitarist, whose propulsive Delta blues-influenced finger picking is augmented by trademark foot percussion.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD: His ability to take the emotion at the heart of a song, make it transparent and pass it on to the listener is unmatched. Smither’s rich, deep, emotion-charged voice and his exquisite guitar playing imbue these simple thoughts with a profundity forged out of genuine passion.

INDEPENDENT (UK): Chris Smither has been steadily releasing classy albums for decades, honing his craft as a songwriter of thoughtful ruminations on and acute observations about life’s bitter ironies.

MONTREAL GAZETTE: With his Southern-drawl, tapping foot in constant motion and fingers pulling fluid blues patterns from his acoustic guitar, Smither is an engaging, sometimes intense singer-songwriter who can convert almost any audience he sits down in front of.

WIRED: The masterful combination of pure folk songwriting and intricate guitar blues are tangible signs of the singer-songwriter’s vigorous genius. A megawatt solo performer.

WASHINGTON POST: His songbook is overflowing with rollicking, clever blues-based folk tunes, and he has been a consistently engaging live performer for more than four decades.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: Smither continues to give ample proof that he’s matured into one of roots music’s most passionate, soulful songsmiths and interpreters. He has the perfect husky, country-music voice, and he keeps the tunes clipping with crisp acoustic picking.

BOSTON GLOBE: (Smither) is among the finest acoustic guitarists anywhere in American music (Bonnie Raitt calls him my Eric Clapton), and his songs, while banked in the blues, are as modern as tomorrow’s newspaper.

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES: His hallmarks include the fingers of an effortless musician, a voice as craggy and deep as the earth, the soul of a philosopher and master poet, and the foot-tapping percussion of a restless wanderer.

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER: Nobody philosophizes to the blues quite like Chris Smither. the singer and guitarist continues to be a spellbinding blend of the elemental and the erudite, with a deft touch and often droll undertone that allows him to go deep without getting ponderous or pretentious.

OFFBEAT: Smither’s songwriting style has grown long, convoluted branches from the hard core of his blues, but his guitar technique is still nimble, with all the soulful nuance and intricate architectural sense that continues to set him apart. Townes and Lightnin’ and John are gone now but Smither is still with us—and a return to New Orleans, where he spent his formative years, is always a special occasion.

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