

MARK SELBY

BLUE HIGHWAY

Mark Selby's new album, *Blue Highway*, takes us on a winding and wide-ranging musical journey, so it's only appropriate that the project began with an unforgettable snapshot from a cross-country road trip.

"My wife, Tia, and I were on a long drive from Nashville down to Dallas and on up to our Colorado cabin. Somewhere north of the Texas line we got chased around by a tornado, which put us off course and headed us straight for Gage, Oklahoma, the little prairie town where I grew up." On the very same two-lane blacktop where Selby learned to drive, Tia snapped a haunting through-the-windshield shot of a lonesome storm-threatened road. The framed photo sat on Selby's studio desk for the next year. "I'd look at it every day and think 'that's my next record right there -- I don't know where it's leading me but it's all right there.'"

What that evocative photograph led to was the vagabond path that is *Blue Highway*, with Selby in the driver's seat steering us down roads both real and metaphorical, roving through the varied landscape of American music and the twisting journeys of life and love. "I wanted this album to really take us on a ride -- musically, lyrically and in its overall scope. I want the person who listens to an entire record to really be rewarded for coming along on this adventure with us."

And what an adventure it is. This record rocks, it grooves, it snarls and soothes and makes you wanna move, and feel . . . and think. From the opening salvo declaration, "I Will Not Go Quietly," to the Bourbon Street sway of "Gotta Be Enough," the down-in-the-delta "Black Diamond" to the big-riff swagger of "This Is Why We Rock & Roll," the funky/jazzy "Trouble Wants" to the low-down shuffle "Mile Zero," and all points in between, there's never a dull moment on this highway. And there's rich imagery to observe along the way: the flood's-a-comin' power of "Forty Days, Forty Nights," the bittersweet first-love tale of "A Little While," and the pure sexy grooviness of Selby's take on the Rolling Stones' "Let's Spend The Night Together." And has anyone ever written a song quite like "Another Man," where a full-grown man faces off with his younger self and lets us witness the battle?

Mark Selby has a few not-so-secret weapons on his side every time he makes a record: his Grammy-winning favorite co-writer, the aforementioned Tia Sillers, legendary record producer Brent Maher and ace recording engineer Charles Yingling; and his eternally-grooving long-time rhythm section pals Daryl Burgess and “Chopper” Anderson on drums and bass.

Selby had a few additional aces up his sleeve for **Blue Highway**. "My last studio project, **Nine Pound Hammer**, and our **Live At Rockpalast** CD/DVD really explored the power trio of Daryl, Chopper and I. It was time to expand the palette again for this record."

Selby brought in some stellar musical friends for the new project: the basic band was expanded with keyboard session ace Tim Lauer (Sheryl Crow, Robert Plant, Selby's **Dirt** CD) and vocalist extraordinaire Crystal Taliefero (Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, Selby's **More Storms Comin'** CD), with Tia Sillers adding distinctive vocals on many tracks as well. Southern rock/soul powerhouse Jimmy Hall (Wet Willie, Jeff Beck) stopped in to blow world-class harmonica on “Change A Comin’” which he co-wrote with Selby, and acclaimed jazz trumpeter Rod McGaha steps up on “Trouble Wants.” “Gotta Be Enough” and “Forty Days” called for a full horn section: Selby called on his friends Oscar Utterstrom, J.P. Frappier and Chris West (collectively they've worked with everyone from Aretha Franklin to My Morning Jacket, and with Selby on a recent arena tour with Canadian superstar Johnny Reid). Rising talent Rick Brantley, co-writer of “Forty Days...” also appears as a guest vocalist.

"This album may have been conceived at a pretty relaxed pace, but it was written and recorded quickly", says Selby. "It wasn't over-thought or over-wrought, and I think it's the better for it. In fact, top to bottom I kinda think it's the best record I've done." We think you'll agree. So slip on your favorite shades and slide on into the passenger seat -- you could do a lot worse than to ride shotgun on Mark Selby's **Blue Highway**.

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