

# Joe Griffin

## Rough Cut Love

Everyone in the songs on Joe Griffin's "Rough Cut Love" is at the end of a rope. Everyone, that is, except Griffin, who has hit his stride with this CD and combines a rich mix of musical mastery, a keen feel for life in the 21st, and a quirky sense of the bizarre to produce 40 minutes of melodic and lyrical surprises that paradoxically feel comfortably familiar.

This is clearly a lyricist who's read a book or two. The songs are evocative and mood-driven rather than literal and plot-bound, closer to Finnegans Wake than Charles Dickens.

It's as if the best of the last 40 years of rock and roll seeped into Griffin's brain, got all marbled with post-post modern angst, took a few turns through "don't go there" land, and came out fresh, taut and dead on target.



Griffin's eclectic nature shines through each tune as the CD packs in nods to Aeschylus, Beckett, Shelley, Eliot, Melville, Shakespeare, Vonnegut, Badfinger and Bugs Bunny.

John Lennon's stream of consciousness wordplay is a clear lyrical inspiration while the strong musical influences include late-60s/early-70s rock such as David Bowie in his Ziggy Stardust era and White Album Beatles. You also hear elements of Radiohead's "OK Computer" and Wilco's "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot."

Griffin doesn't shrink from these connections, he embraces them: in "Cold Hands Warm Heart" he tells us that every artist, in one way or another, draws from a big pile of past masters: "I borrowed this; we all steal from someone."



"Rough Cut Love" was produced by Joe Griffin and co-produced by drummer/guitarist/brother Pete Griffin, and bassist John Toljanic. Matt Kern, Brian Posdal and Ron Barnes, drummers from former bands, appear on select tracks. Brother Tim contributes harmonica. Ralph Covert of Chicago's Bad Examples co-produced the song "You Again."

Griffin released a full-length CD, 'tree fort' with the garage-experimental band Donny Who Loved Bowling in 2003 and released two full-length albums with The Others during the 1990s. He has appeared on CDs by Chicago artists Braintree, The Radio Hour, Tamara Pierce and Question of Honour.

"Like many songs," Griffin said, "some of these started with things I was going through, but then they quickly spun away to being about characters that were ultimately more interesting."

*"Joe Griffin's 'Rough Cut Love' is loaded with infectious pop hooks, impeccable classic rock sensibilities, and seasoned with a dash of alt-rock spiciness. A departure from his previous work with the experimental garage-band Donny Who Loved Bowling, the songwriting here is more mature, the musicianship experienced, and the lyrical craftsmanship poetic. "Rough Cut Love" marks the impressive emergence of Joe Griffin as a creative force to be reckoned with, and one that should easily win the hearts and ears of all who take the time to listen."*

*- Vince Font, "Schizopolis" Internet Radio Show*