



"Bordertown" **The Piedmont Brother Band – 2008**

Music plays an important part in everyone lives. It can touch every one of our senses and emotions. Brings us joy. Brings back memories. Makes us want to dance. Make us smile. Makes us think. What would life be without music?? Once in awhile a CD can come along and there will be moments on that shiny disk that will make you want to dig it out and hear it again. I received a CD recently and I have had troubles getting it out of my player. Was it stuck? No! But let me tell you the music will stick in your brain. The melodies will stay with you. This is not rare, there are many classic CD's albums out there but it is rare for me in 2008 -2009. The music is a potpourri of styles. Folk, blues, rock, country and bluegrass. Is it just faithful covers? Yes there are some, but it is the original songs and the production of this CD that brings all these styles of music into the new millennium. Ladies and gentlemen "Bordertown" - The Piedmont Brothers Band.

The album opens with a Byrdesque sounding intro. The jingle jangle rhythm takes you back to the mid 60's. The sound is clear and sharp. Is this a 12 string electric or a programmed keyboard designed to replicate this sound?? I have played this over and over and still undecided but heck this is a beautifully crafted intro. "I was born in a small town, and I live in a small town" wrote John Mellancamp on his track from 1985. Writing about a place you belong, or a place that means something to you is always a way to grab a listeners ear. **BORDERTOWN** sets the tone and is a great way to start this collection. Beautifully crafted the melody and lyrics will stay with you for a long time. Ron Martin shows his writing skills on this self-penned track. Great production, the harmonies and discreetly placed percussion effects really add character to this tune. **ANOTHER LOVE** starts off sounding like a Hank Williams 78 that you may have heard while visiting your grandparents many moons ago. Then once the banjo kicks in you know you are listening to another PBB track that showcases all the influences musically of the band members but with a modern sound. Another Ron Martin penned tune. When I first played this song the vocal struck me. The woman's voice sounded familiar. Rosella Cellamaro is a name that deserves a mention. She owns this song with her powerful vocal rendition and I was so taken with her voice I knew I had heard it before. Sounds like Rosy & The Snow to me! A great tune, and one that will get your feet a tapping. **EVERYDAY I CALL YOUR NAME** sounds like an outtake from a Desert Rose Band album. Classic country rock 1980's style with great lyrics and vocals. This deserves some radio airplay. Track 4 opens with the sound of Buddy. Buddy happily barking as his beloved owner plays some classic licks on his banjo. **BUDDY'S STOMP** could easily have been written by the Dillard's but it is a self penned Marco Zanzi instrumental. Great exhibition of Marco's love of the instrument and displays his fluid virtuosity. **MY EVERYTHING IS YOU** is a real surprise. When I first played this disk I enjoyed the first 4 tracks thoroughly but this one made an impression. Why? What was it? How? Well my wife loves her music but is not fanatic about it. This one made her want to hear it again. The words are from the heart and for anyone who has ever been in love will relate to this. For a writer to write a personal song and for others around the world to be able to relate to it is a true gift. Marco's voice is dream like and the music has a touch of 1960's Beatles/ Byrds rhythm structure. A real gem.

ANNABELLE LEE opens with a sound of a mandolin which sounds like a heart fluttering. You have to have no heart not to enjoy this beautiful Ron Martin song. A tale of lost love, stolen love and heartache that will suck you in with its passion in this duet. Beautifully crafted and majestically played this is another stand out track and another of my favourites on this CD. Probably Ron's best vocals and reminds me of a stage musical taking place in your mind. Touching emotional lyrics delivered perfectly. **MASON WINE** is the seventh track on this collection from the PBB. The sound of this tune takes me back to mid 70's British rock with the later half of the song reminding you this is PBB as the instruments kick in and take this song to another level. What a classic song. To me it is the trio of tracks 5, 6 and 7 that really show the many faces of the PBB they are the centrepiece of this album. **4F RAG** is a companion piece for Buddy's Stomp and is another fine instrumental this one written by Francesco Comolli and it is pure joy and full of class and style. **B- STREET BLUES**, what can I say??? This kicks ass. The sound is a cross between Grace Potter and The Nocturnals and Govt Mule.(If you haven't heard of them check them out) Love the thick heavy guitar lines and the vocal from Barbara Galafassi is right on the money. A great blues song that does not feel out of place on Bordertown. Close your eyes and imagine riding along the lonesome prairie on your trusty steed. The wind and the rain don't bother me. The opening bars of **COWGIRL** will set the scene for this Ron Martin song. Beautifully sung by Rosie and it surely wouldn't sound out of place on an Emmy-Lou Harris record. "If I had a dollar" the eternal question. **RICH MAN** covers that question, beautifully played by the band and Ron's vocals are once again spot on. Musical talent flows in the genes of the Zanzi family as Cecilia steps and delivers a clean fresh interpretation of Nanci Griffiths **I WISH IT WOULD RAIN DOWN**. Track 13 on this CD is **WORKING ON A BATTEAU** a true touch of Americana, a ballad with emotion and a great backing track. This one is like listening to a movie unfolding in your mind. This is reminiscent of a lost Dylan / Band tune from long forgotten Basement Tape period. The Dylan influence shows in the intro of the next song **MR SPACEMAN / WAMPUS CAT SONG**. Ron can be over heard that he can't help sing this like Dylan. Banjo sets the tone for this cover of this Byrds classic. This song will make you feel like clapping, dancing or singing along. After a verse or two the instrumental break leads you into a good old hoedown stomp of the Wampus cat song. Excellent lead break leads back into Mr Spaceman. What a joy. The third instrumental on Bordertown is **ONE MORNING IN MONTE GOLICO (While Cutting The Grass)**. More virtuoso playing from the band as they glide through this delightful melody with ease. This fits perfectly and balances the album and leads us into the final three tracks on Bordertown. **GOIN' HOME** is a Marco Zanzi / Francesco Comolli original again Marco's vocals capture the emotion and feeling about returning home to your family after a journey abroad. Great from the heart lyrics and next time you are on plane flying to loved ones you will know how special this song is. A tune about making new friends in a new place but the feeling of returning to loved ones in your home country. Not much can be said about the next song **WHEELS** one of the best "country rock" songs ever written and a fine cover here and the production is crisp and brings the song into 2000's. Great song, great performance. **BORDERTOWN (Acoustic)** bookends this CD and this stripped down version may lack musically what the opening track has but the song stands up well to the wooden treatment. I would highly recommend this CD and it is full of different styles and influences, but stands up on its own as a marvellous collection. There is something inside for any fan of music and if you are not a music lover than do yourself a favour and get a copy of **BODERTOWN** and you soon will be.