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# JJ CALE

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## 2008 GRAMMY Award Winner

The Road To Escondido With Eric Clapton

## 2008 RIAA Certified Gold Award

The Road To Escondido With Eric Clapton

*"It is my humble opinion, he is one of the most important artists in the history of rock, quietly representing the greatest asset his country has ever had."*

**Eric Clapton**, *Clapton: The Autobiography*

*"The songs are top-shelf...his bubbling guitar – as much a jam band archetype as Jerry Garcia's – glints across the shadows. Supremely chill, utterly ageless..."*

**Rolling Stone** review of *Roll On*, 2009

*"The effortlessness, that restraint and underplaying, under-singing – it was just very powerful. The power of doing less and holding back in a song, I've taken a lot of influence from that."*

**Beck**

*"His way with words shines...Whether he's double-tracking his vocal over the banjo and guitar of "Strange Days" or conjuring a live ambience for the R&B boogie "Oh Mary", it's all done with exquisite taste, care and attention...Genius so self-effacing you can barely hear it."*

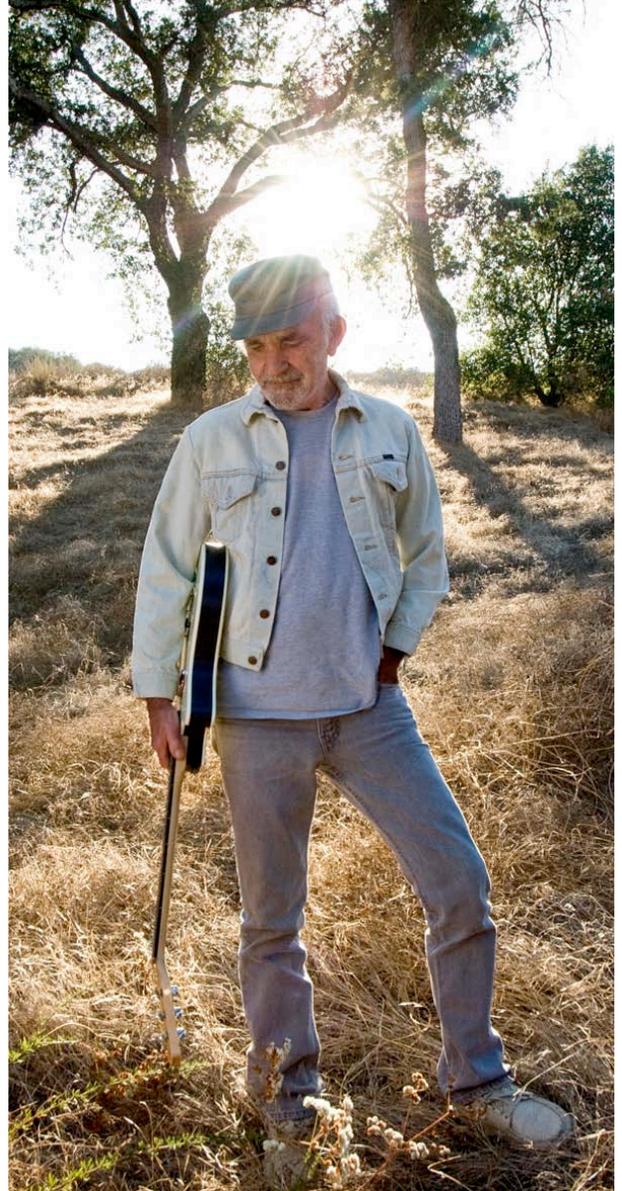
**The Independent UK**, March 2009

*"Even after the Grammy-winning Clapton collaboration elevated his profile, Cale remains one of rock's most doggedly enigmatic figures."*

**Los Angeles Times**, February 2009

*"Cale is a tasteful, restrained guitarist and still tends to half bury his voice in the mix. His modest but unmistakable vocal style blends the conversational manner of Guy Clark and the mumble of Mark Knopfler, who has acknowledged Cale's influence, perhaps equally as a guitarist and singer."*

**BBC**, March 2009

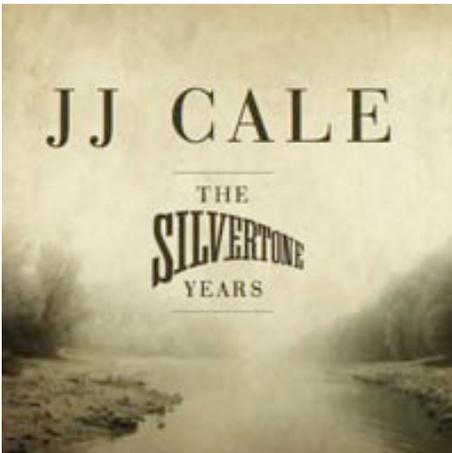


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## JJ Cale Collection - The Silvertone Years

A collection chronicling JJ Cale's music released by Silvertone Records between 1989-1992, entitled The Silvertone Years, was released internationally on February 7th, 2011 from Sony Music. The physical CD, while not initially set for release in North America, is available as a European import from outlets such as Amazon. The disc features songs from JJ's Silvertone albums, Travel-Log and Number 10. Whether the music is bluesy, jazzy, country, rock (or country rock), folk, or tinged with Spanish or even Flamenco guitar flavors, once you hear that guitar or the voice, you immediately know it's JJ Cale - an incredibly humble man whose very nature has inspired a deep emotional connection with die-hard fans worldwide. Enjoy the collection.



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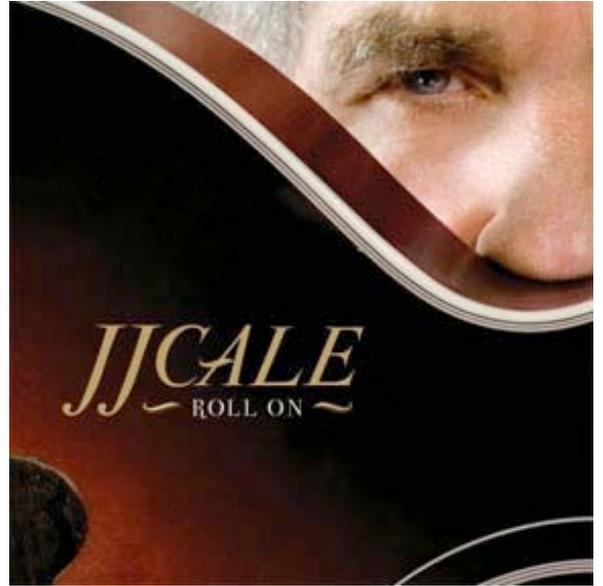
# ROLL ON

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Rock & roll is an unforgiving profession. We eat our young, disregard the old and always want more of everything. Aging gracefully while remaining relevant in the rock game is the hardest trick of all, and JJ Cale might be doing it better than anyone.

"I remember when I made my first album [1972's *Naturally*], I was 32 or 33-years-old and I thought I was way too old then," laughs Cale. "When I see myself doing this at 70, I go, 'What am I doing, I should be layin' down in a hammock.'"

For some, music is a hobby, or if they're lucky a job or a passion; for JJ Cale it's not even a choice: music is all he's ever known. He's a lifer. Born John Weldon Cale in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the guitarist, singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, producer and engineer has been doing this for over fifty years and on February 24, 2009, Rounder Records released *Roll On*, Cale's sixteenth album. Comprised of 12 new songs, including the previously unreleased title track recorded with Eric Clapton, *Roll On* is Cale's first batch of new solo material since 2004's *To Tulsa and Back* and comes on the heels of his gold selling (platinum overseas) 2006 collaboration with Eric Clapton, *The Road to Escondido*, which also earned Cale his first Grammy®.



In addition to the always appealing notion of another Cale record, what makes *Roll On* special is that it actually breaks new ground. Parts of this album sound like classic Cale and could have come out 30 years ago while other songs find him traveling in completely new directions. The banjo picking and earthy feel of "Strange Days," along with the pedal steel of "Leaving In The Morning," sound like they could have come off the *Naturally* sessions, while the crunching guitar on "Where The Sun Don't Shine" is in the vein of "Cocaine," and the gypsy funk of "Fonda-Lina" could be the sophisticated cousin of "Travelin' Light" from 1976's *Troubadour*.

You want proof that Cale still has a few tricks up his sleeve? Just press play on the new record and all of a sudden there's JJ Cale jazz-scatting for the first time ever on disc opener "Who Knew," and later he's loping along behind a restrained jazz piano on "Former Me." So, where did this new inspiration come from? "When I'm singing in the bathtub I usually do that [scat]," says Cale. "When I got through with ['Who Knew'] it made me laugh, so I went, 'Well that's good.' Me doing the scatting is kinda funny."

The recording process for *Roll On* followed the same general path Cale has used throughout his career. He starts by reviving old songs from previous sessions, writes some new ones and lays down way more material than he can put out. Then he whittles it all down to the strongest set of songs. The albums are generally cut spontaneously with little attention to concept, mood or story. Three of the album's tracks were done at his old friend David Teegarden's Natural Digital Recording Studios in Tulsa, and the rest (except "Roll On") in his home studio, where he eventually takes all the material and truly works his magic, carefully crafting that "Classic JJ Cale Sound."

But what's truly remarkable and often overlooked about Cale is that he does the majority of this on his own. A few of the songs, specifically the ones cut in Tulsa, feature Cale's old cronies backing him, but the majority of the album is just Cale "screwing with electronics." The new CD finds Cale playing guitars, pedal steel, bass, drums, synthesizers, singing lead, backup, harmonizing with himself and then producing and engineering the whole thing. After all these years Cale is still in love with making music, passionately creating future-classics that he'll one day tuck into his very own chapter of the Great American Songbook.

Cale was "do it yourself" before DIY was even a term and he was using drum machines long before it was made fashionable by hip-hop producers. Posted next to his long list of song credits and album accolades ought to be a section on Cale's pioneering work in music technology, which has had a major impact on his sound. In classic Cale fashion, it's his role as engineer and co-producer of *The Road to Escondido* that he takes the greatest pride in regarding the Grammy® win, perhaps even more than his work as the artist.

"I think it goes back to me being a recording mixer and engineer. Because of all the technology now you can make music yourself and a lot of people are doing that now," reflects Cale. "I started out doing that a long time ago and I found when I did that I came up with a unique sound."

That sound came to life when Cale created *Naturally*. "[In addition to vocals and guitar] I'm playing piano and bass; and I'm playing bass on 'Cocaine.' On 'Crazy Mama' and 'Call Me The Breeze,' those were electric drum machines and that was the first album I made back in 1971. I first started out doing that because of the economics; I didn't have enough money to hire a band. Now that I have enough money to hire a band I still like that; it's kind of an art form in itself."

All of this - the drum machines, the synthesizers, the homemade records, the one-man band - all of it plays into Cale's vintage front-porch style. Often called the "Tulsa Sound," there's an enchanting aspect to Cale's music; the boogie-rhythm guitar barreling over the hushed, hypnotic vocals with subtle

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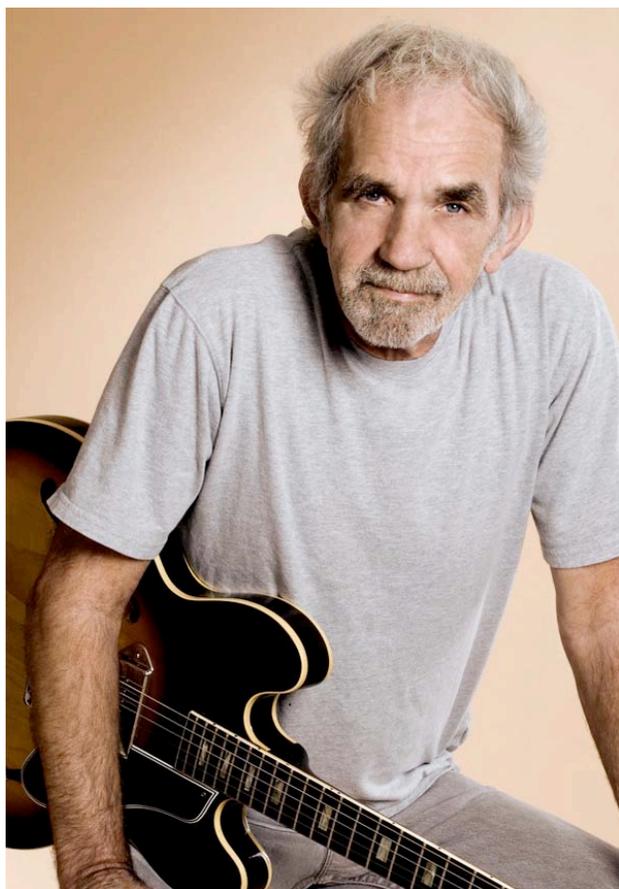
influences leaking in from the blues, country, rockabilly and jazz. For all the talk of Cale's music being "laid-back," it's remarkable how much work goes into making it sound so loose and relaxed. There's a real duality to Cale. He says he's just a guitar player or an engineer, yet he's penned some of the most indelible songs of the past 40 years. His tracks are simple, well constructed and homegrown, but to achieve that natural esthetic he takes the material into his studio and messes with it obsessively, using all types of technology to mold it into his trademark sound. He's like that when he speaks, too. He's polite and kind, generous even. But, there's also some deeper mystery that seems to glow underneath his unassuming nature. He refuses to attribute too much of his success to any one thing (other than luck) and he rarely reveals himself through song. That is if you can even hear the vocals buried in the mix, which is exactly where Cale likes them.

"I consciously do that. I actually have the vocals up more in my later years. They used to be really low," says Cale. "I never considered myself a singer. I always considered myself a songwriter, so my singing got on my nerves so I'd always pull my vocals back. I guess in the last ten or fifteen years I've pushed the vocals up a bit, but not to where it was uncomfortable for me."

Considering the vast influence Cale has had in developing an original style of music, it's ironic that he refuses to take credit as the architect of an entire sub-genre. "Basically, I'm just a guitar player that figured out I wasn't ever gonna be able to buy dinner with my guitar playing so I got into songwriting, which is a little more profitable business," says the always self-effacing Cale.

Guitar player, songwriter, singer, engineer, technician, legend, icon, call him what you will, but Eric Clapton calls him a "master" and it was Clapton who jump started Cale's career and may have saved him from obscurity. When Clapton cut Cale's "After Midnight" in 1970, a song Cale put down in the mid-60s, everything changed. "I had already given up on the business part of the record business and had moved back to Tulsa and had gotten me a job playing with some friends of mine," remembers Cale. "When Eric cut that song it opened up a bunch of doors and I drove over to Nashville and that's when Naturally was done."

Since then it's been a slow, steady climb to the top. In addition to "After Midnight," Clapton went on to record Cale's "Cocaine," "Travelin' Light" and "I'll Make Love To You Anytime." Lynyrd Skynyrd made "Call Me The Breeze" famous, and diverse artist such as Santana, The Allman Brothers, Johnny Cash, The Band, Chet Atkins, Freddie King, Maria Muldaur and Captain Beefheart have all covered his songs. Cale even found inroads to a younger generation of rock fans with jam band heroes Widespread Panic and moe. performing extended versions of lesser known gems like "Ride Me High," "Cajun Moon" and the aforementioned "Travelin' Light." In addition to those who play Cale's songs, landmark artists such as Neil Young, Mark Knopfler and Bryan Ferry cite Cale as a major influence. And the great state of Oklahoma has even nominated "After Midnight" to potentially be the Official State Rock Song.



People like Cale, Young, Clapton and Cash have known something the rest of us don't. They're tapped into the cosmos and have found that universal switch inside our beings, turning us on, creating the soundtrack to our lives. So does it bother Cale that contemporaries and critics list him amongst legends, and fans might love his songs yet not even know his name?

"No, it doesn't bother me," he laughs. "What's really nice is when you get a check in the mail."

Cale's longevity and keen sense of quality control is no doubt tied to his modesty. By staying outside the reach of the music business' sticky web, Cale's career has been steady, strong and rewarding to both fans and artist. He never sought the limelight, and stayed grounded, allowing him to focus on what really matters: the music.

"[Fame] elevates your ego to the point where you start believing your own bullshit," he says. "So I told Audie [Ashworth - Cale's late longtime producer and friend], 'I'd like to have the fortune, but I don't care too much about the fame.'" So, what we did was we didn't put any pictures on any of my albums. It wasn't a planned thing, I'm not really a recluse, but it drifted in that way and it became a good press item, something to make me look like somebody: He's a recluse. But that's really not true."

While hinting that this could be his last CD, Cale is just as quick to mention the growing desire to get back on the road and play live for his hard core fans, and should the inspiration strike, make another record. There are no rules, Cale just rolls with it, and at 70 he's still doing it, and doing it well. He's writing songs, playing guitar, producing, engineering, messing with gear, ripping apart instruments and releasing albums. There ain't no changing JJ Cale - he's a true American original. And like the album says, he's just gonna continue to Roll On.

- Aaron Kayce

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