

RECORD REVIEW

GNR is the loser, but give roses to Izzy, Ju Ju Hounds for album's rockin' sound

By MARC D. ALLAN
STAR STAFF WRITER

Lafayette native Izzy Stradlin took an enormous risk last November when he quit Guns N' Roses for a solo career. GNR may have been a nightly headache and a daily freak show, but it paid the mortgage on any number of estates in any number of countries.

Yet, with *Izzy Stradlin and the*

Izzy Stradlin and the Ju Ju Hounds

★★★★★ Album title: *Izzy Stradlin and the Ju Ju Hounds*.

Record company: Geffen.

Star ratings: 4 excellent, 3 good, 2 fair, 1 poor.

Ju Ju Hounds, which will be released Tuesday, the guitarist demonstrates that Guns N' Roses was the loser in this transaction.

A huge loser.

Forget that Guns N' Roses lost a rhythm guitarist; Gilby Clarke is a quality replacement. They also will have to do without the pen behind songs such as *Patience*, *Mr. Brownstone* and *Double Talkin' Jive* and a player who understands — as evidenced by this album — how important feel is to music.

Mick would like this

This record is pure rock 'n' roll, the album the Rolling Stones would make if only they could concentrate. Stradlin (who grew up as Jeff Isbell) and his guitar-bass-drums band claw through 10 songs that, although heavily Stones-influenced, have extraordinary freshness and vitality.

Part of the infectious spirit must come from being out of Guns N' Roses.

The rumors were that Stradlin was road-weary and uninterested in GNR's circus atmosphere. Sounds here like Stradlin just wanted to get away from having to start performing at midnight — that maybe he became disgusted wondering what jail his lead singer was going to be in from night to night or when the next riot would erupt while the band was onstage.

In the accompanying biography, Stradlin is quoted as saying, "I've known Axl (Rose, Guns N' Roses' lead singer) a long time and I still have a lot of feelings for those guys. But I had to leave to get sane and somewhat normal."

Songs stand alone

Lyrical, he makes no mention

of his six years in Guns N' Roses, letting the songs stand on their own merit.

They do. *Somebody Knockin'* bubbles and blisters with Stones-like guitar. *Pressure Drop*, his cover of the Toots and the Maytals' reggae classic, is a raveup worthy of The Ramones, as is *Bucket O' Trouble*. *Time Gone By* starts out like Little Feat's *Fat Man in the Bathtub*, then veers into a modified Bo Diddley beat.

With its "hoo-hoo-hoo" choruses, *Shuffle It All* shares some similarities with several Stones songs, from *Sympathy for the Devil* to *Emotional Rescue*. Meanwhile, the music's restrained, resigned tone gives an accurate feeling of the fatigue he describes in the lyrics.

Back home again

Stradlin even takes the listener to Indiana for two songs. *Train Tracks*, which opens with the sound of a train roaring by and a smoker taking a hit from a water pipe, shows us his favorite hang-out and activity in Lafayette.

Come On Inside Now is about bracing for a cold Hoosier winter. With its piano base, little gospel-style choir and mandolin riff, the song shows the record's diversity.

Stradlin says he had trouble communicating with the members of Guns N' Roses. He has no such trouble with his Ju Ju Hounds, a no-nonsense band that knows how to kick it. Bassist Jimmy Ashhurst, former Georgia Satel-



GEFFEN

Heading in the right direction are Izzy Stradlin and the Ju Ju Hounds (from left): Rick Richards, Izzy Stradlin, Jimmy Ashhurst and Charlie Quintana.

lites' guitarist Rick Richards and drummer Charlie "Chalo" Quintana form the nucleus.

for Keith Richards fronting the Stones.

Stradlin closes the record with *Morning Tea*, an uncredited song of drums and percussion that reflects his interest in music beyond rock 'n' roll. The song has nothing to do with the rest of the record, but it shows that he can, if he wants, move in other directions.

No hurry, though. The direction he's headed is just fine.

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SHARON ISBIN

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