

Teddy Thompson – *My Love Of Country* Biography

“Country music has been inescapable for me, a recurring theme,” says Teddy Thompson. “At the age of 10 or 11, that's the first thing I heard where my ears pricked up and I'm like, 'Oh, this is music? I like this.’”

The simplicity and emotional intensity of classic country – à la Hank Williams, Patsy Cline and George Jones - has been a big part of Thompson's own sound as an artist, which the *New York Times* called “beautifully finessed” and *NPR* hailed as “the musical equivalent of an arrow to the heart.”

Back in 2007, he explored his roots with *Up Front and Down Low*, an album of Nashville golden era favorites. And now he's picked up the thread again. Thompson says, “The pandemic hit and all bets were off, and the question came up, 'What can we do musically just for fun? I said, 'Let's do some country songs.’” Where the earlier record was made with what he calls “an off-the-cuff approach,” his latest release, *My Love Of Country* goes much deeper.

“The goal was to do it in the way that country records I love – mostly from the '60s – were made,” says Thompson. “Everything was mapped out, with charts and string parts in place. The musicians came in, and we cut the songs the way they did back then. We just blazed through them.”

The results are riveting. Thompson's rich, honeyed voice responds beautifully to “A Picture Of Me (Without You),” “Cryin' Time,” “I Fall To Pieces” and other songs of poetic despondence, throwing off both sparks and tears without ever seeming showy. You can hear how he's listened deeply to the genre's masters, absorbing the finer stylistic points of their influence. But rather than imitate, he does something more nuanced and profound. He makes the material his own, and makes the familiar sound new. “Many of these songs I thought were a bit beyond me when I was younger, too big to tackle,” Teddy says. “‘A Picture Of Me,’ ‘You Don't Know Me,’ big ballads like that, which I think maybe take a little bit of maturity to do justice to. I was excited to sing those songs now, after knowing them for decades. I think at least I've earned the chance to try.”

Helping Thompson realize his vision for *My Love Of Country* was multi-instrumentalist producer David Mansfield, whose resume includes touring with Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue, scoring Oscar-nominated films like *The Apostle* and years of high-profile session work with the likes of Johnny Cash, Lucinda Williams and Dwight Yoakam. Recorded at Mansfield's studio Hobo Sound in Hoboken, NJ, the album balances elegant, wrap-around arrangements with one-take energy (“I've learned that I do my best in the first couple of takes,” Thompson says). A star-studded group of harmony vocalists, including Vince Gill, Rodney Crowell and Aoife O'Donovan, added final touches.

The latest stop – and eighth album - in a career that has carried on the legacy of his parents, British folk-rock legends Richard and Linda Thompson, and found him collaborating with such artists as Rufus Wainwright, Rosanne Cash and Emmylou Harris, *My Love Of Country* follows 2020's *Heartbreaker Please*, listed in the Top 10 Records of the Year by Britain's *Daily Mail* and called “buoyant, brilliant and soulful” by *Billboard*.

While Thompson looks forward to writing his next album of originals, he notes the undeniable connection to his latest covers project. “In my favorite eras of music, it was all about the song,” he says. “Most of the country songs that I know and love were recorded by dozens and dozens of people. And it was all in the service of the song. I grew up with that being the most important thing. For this record, that was a huge part of it. I just want people to hear these songs.”

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