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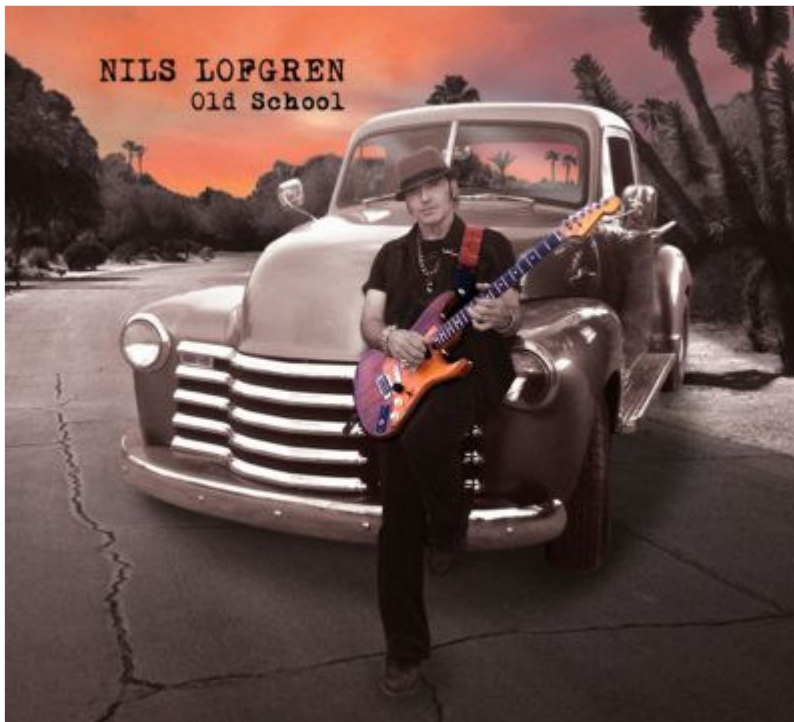
LEISURE

While we're waiting for the wrecking ball, Nils has something to say

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NewsBlog he E Street Band in 1984, Nils Lofgren has never been one to wait around
Press Bruce to call and announce the next tour. He always seems to be working
 on an album of his own or touring the States or Europe either by himself or with a band.
Articles Although his loyalty to Bruce is never in doubt, you sometimes wonder if that call from his
 boss is a little inconvenient.

Take his new album, *Old School*. He must have just finished this, his first album of new songs since 2008, when the call came from Bruce to put his solo tour plans aside and reserve 2012 for an E Street Band tour. And if it weren't so wonderful that the E Street Band is back in business, that would be a big shame. *Old School* is as solid an album as Nils has created in years and contains songs that deserve to be staples in his live repertoire for years to come.



From the bouncy opening blast of the title track to the classic Nils sound of the closing "Why Me", it's an album of several highlights and very few misses. Like most good music, it requires a few listenings before it opens up, and Lofgren's unique voice will always be an acquired taste. But if you're new to his solo work, *Old School* is as good a

place to start as any. A handful of the songs are downright catchy, and while not as featured as on some of his other solo albums, the guitar work is unmistakably Nils and offers many treats.

Thematically all you have to do is look at the song titles to see where Nils is today mentally. “Old School”, the title track, “60 Is the New 18”, the wonderful Sam Moore duet “Ain’t Too Many of Us Left” and “Miss You Ray” all tell the story of an aging musician looking back on the heydays, but at the same time insisting... no, demanding... to still play a role and have something to offer. And he does, of course. While his songwriting skills will never be in the same league as Bruce’s, he can still put a song together and shape it in the studio without cheating and without cheap computer tricks. The production is unpolished and downright “real” for lack of a better word. Real instruments, real voices with real flaws, real warm, physical presence, all of which is unlike so much new music.

Highlights include the title track, the aforementioned “Ain’t Too Many of Us Left” (a song that wouldn’t have sounded out of place on Southside Johnny’s best albums), “Irish Angel” (one of Nils’ best love ballads since “Valentine”) the tribute to his departed dog Harley, “When You Were Mine”, and last but not least the closing countryish “Why Me” with that wonderful guitar sound that is so Nils.

So while we all soon - and rightly so - will be cheering Nils for his climactic guitar solos and tasty fills that add so much to some of Bruce’s songs, we should take just a little time to pay attention to Nils’ own very worthy new album before it gets knocked out of sight by a *Wrecking Ball*. It’s true what he says: there ain’t too many of his kind left, so let’s support them while they are still here to appreciate it.

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