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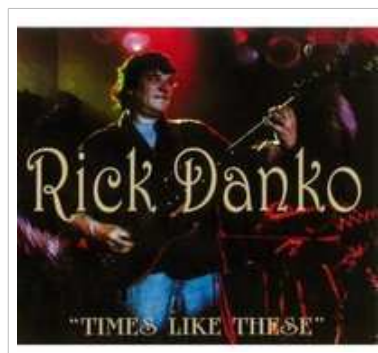
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TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008

Rick Danko - Times Like These album review



Without question, bassist/vocalist Rick Danko had one of the most expressive voices in rock music. It could be joyful or mournful, sometimes sounding as if it would shatter like glass, as on the heartachingly beautiful "It Makes No Difference," from The Band's 1975 release *Northern Lights-Southern Cross*. His singing on The Band's landmark debut, *Music From Big Pink*, in many ways defined the sound of the group - not easy in a band that also featured the formidable singing talents of Richard Manuel and Levon Helm.

Although Danko's name will be forever associated with The Band, he went on to a fruitful solo career. *Times Like These* was Danko's last solo record, released posthumously in 1999 and recently reissued by Woodstock Records. It includes songs from an earlier, unfinished solo project up to his final live performance shortly before his death.

The 10 songs are an even mix of Danko originals and covers. The album has an old-timey feel to it, like a group of friends playing together in an old barn without a care in the world. Of course, when your friends include fellow Band-ers Helm and Garth Hudson along with Joe Walsh and Tom Pacheco, among others, you're gonna get something worth recording.

There's also a feeling of optimism running throughout the recording, with tunes such as the title track, "You Can Go Home" and "People Of Conscience" providing a lens into Danko's personal feelings about people helping others and making the world a better place.

Gentle covers of the Grateful Dead's "Ripple" and Sam Cooke's "Chain Gang" are balanced by a joyous take on the Fats Domino/Dave Bartholomew number "Let The Four Winds Blow" and a foot-stomping "All Our Past Times," which Danko wrote with Eric Clapton in the '70s.

One of Danko's most famous songs is "This Wheel's On Fire," a tune he co-wrote with Bob Dylan for *Big Pink*. Here it's treated

About Me

TDub

Superior, WI, United States

Sound Affairs is devoted to discussion and discovery of the greatest rock, pop, folk, reggae, blues, jazz and other music that's out there. My tastes run largely toward the classic era of rock (late '60s-'70s), although I'll also explore music of more recent vintage as well. Watch for artist interviews, music news, reviews of new releases and reissues, my vinyl finds, and more! Rock on! Thunderwing67

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