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Blast From the Past Blast From the Past: Charlie Pickett -- "If This Is Love..."

By Abel Folgar, Monday, Jun. 14 2010 @ 3:00PM
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Charlie Pickett

"If This Is Love, Can I Get My Money Back?/Slow Death" (Open Records)

One of the beautiful things that we can wholeheartedly enjoy here while County Grinding is the fact that we don't necessarily have to come up with explanations from the get-go. I've been enjoying a good run with *Miami New Time's* Crossfade blog, where I get to look back on South Florida releases from yesteryear, and now that the sheriffs deemed it so to split and have separate entities, I can enjoy a couple more buckaroos to aid in my liver's demise.



Passé terminology like "cult hero," "midnight movie" et al. bare no justice on the far-reaching tentacles that one South Florida man has made dentritic over the past three decades. That man is **Charlie Pickett**. A man respected by mainstream luminaries R.E.M. and responsible for whatever little dollars Soul Asylum managed to receive during its tenureship, which I'll deem its "Twin/Tone heresy" that'll be the subject of a story later down the line (remember, we pick and choose here, baby).

This big-hole 45 rpm seven-incher is cowpunk country-blues filtered by heroin abuse and the unforgiving South Florida sun. The A-side, "If This Is Love, Can I Get My Money Back?" is a typical country song skewed by the reality of our surroundings. Written by Pickett relative Mark Markham, it is biting social satire that passes off for danceable rock 'n' roll. It is full of signature Pickett guitar work and his drawl sprechgesang. A really good, albeit punkier cover was done by the **Crumbs** on their *Out of Range* album.

The B-side is a scathing report on the transition of the '70s and '80s, "Slow Death." True in the sense that it harkens to what we all know is our inevitable demise; it does manage to make it fun with some solid guitar riffs.

The personnel here is Pickett on vocals and guitar, Barry Elliot on guitar and vocals, Leigh Stoner on drums, and David Shibley on bass. Debbie DeNeese and Brenda Bartholomay contributed backup vocals on the tracks, and while you might not wanna shell out three weeks' pay for the wax slab, these tracks are available on Pickett's discography disc, *Bar Band Americanus*, and I strongly suggest you pick that up, though it is not a complete catalog of Pickett's work.

On a personal note, this little record took many stabs and close to three years of eBay hassles to acquire. A full Pickett explanation will work itself out over the course of these Blasts From the Past pages.

Tags: **Charlie Pickett, cowpunk, punk rock, The Crumbs**

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Abel F. says:

I was just informed by my friend Margaret Griffis, that Dave Shibley, the bassman on this recording, passed away last month. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Posted On: Tuesday, Jun. 15 2010 @ 11:55AM

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