

COUNTRY

MUSIC PEOPLE

CD REVIEWS

R.W. Hampton

Austin To Boston

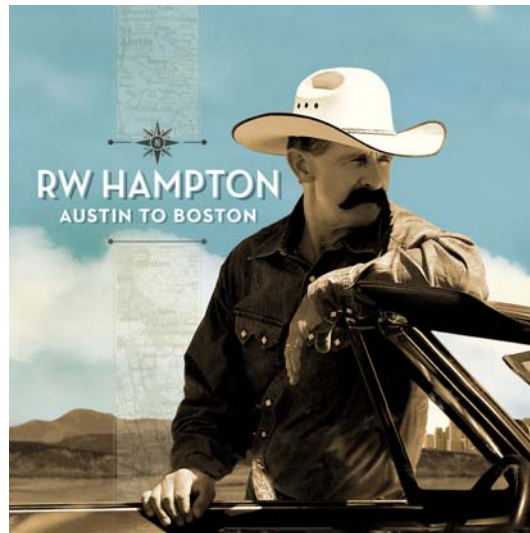


Back Home / Crazy Little Thing Called Love / Cowboy's Prayer / Dream On Little Dreamer / Danny Boy / Driftin' Again / Lady / Wherever You Are / Rodeo Man / You Don't Know Me / Job For A Cowboy / Kansas / Home / Shortgrass

Producers: Joe DiBlasi / Gary Bright

Cimarron Sounds

52:15



Real life cowboy R.W. Hampton obviously likes his life on his ranch in New Mexico because if there is a theme to this album it is one of missing home. Half the tracks deal with homesickness in one way or another, and for the singer with the truly outstanding facial hair, and an equally commanding timbre to his voice, it presents quite a variety of material, some of which is far from being "Western."

Cowboy's Prayer has been picking up plenty of airplay on country radio across Europe thanks to its inclusion on the DJ promo Hotdisc, and so it should. Equally, if there was any justice in the world it would be all over US country radio but will sadly be limited to Americana and selected stations around Texas and the south. It is, however, a perfect example of everything a modern cowboy song can be. Another which falls into that category, and is even better, is the $\frac{3}{4}$ time *Rodeo Man*, the lyrics of which gives the album its title. Utterly gorgeous, it is the standout track, and is sadly one of only a few that R.W. has written for the album. On the strength of this he should have included more. The other Hampton compositions are *Lady*, where he pleads for his lady to be "a woman," and the album's closing *Shortgrass*, another about longing for home, and catchy too.

Also rather good are: *Wherever You Are*, *Back Home*, the Western Swingin' *Driftin' Again*, and Cindy Walker's timeless *You Don't Know Me*, which R.W. pulls off as well as Leon Rausch. *Job For A Cowboy* is very contemporary, a touch too line-dancey sounding for my liking, and I wasn't expecting a cover of Michael Buble's *Home*, but it works, and *Kansas* is a wonderful song with which I was previously unfamiliar.

I know anyone with a half-decent voice likes to sing *Danny Boy*, but though I like the song, enough is enough. I officially don't want to hear any more versions. Hampton has bagpipes on the intro, a lush arrangement and handles it well, maybe putting it at the end of the CD, rather than the middle might have been a better move. Then there is *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*. I never really liked Queen. Dwight improved on it, but I do have a bit of trouble with the song, it is not suited at all to R-dub's style, and seems a strange choice.

I love this guy's voice, and this is very nearly a brilliant album. Maybe as a 12-tracker, without *Danny Boy* and *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* it would have flowed a little better for my ears, but I can understand the problems commercially with being a straight "cowboy" singer.

Duncan Warwick

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