

CD Release Date: April 21, 2009

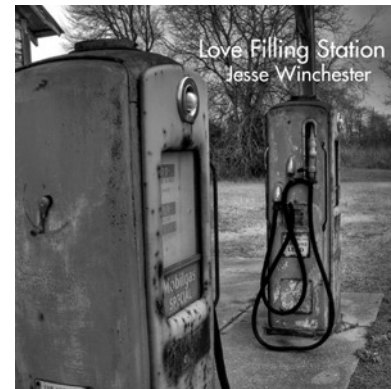
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JESSE WINCHESTER

Love Filling Station

Appleseed Recordings · APR CD 1116

*The first studio CD in ten years
from the singer-songwriter Bob Dylan has named
as among the best of his generation!*



You could stock a crowd-pleasing jukebox with the songs **Jesse Winchester** has written and recorded in the last four decades – and with the better-known versions of his songs that have become hits and album staples for artists ranging from Joan Baez to Elvis Costello to Jimmy Buffett. Winchester’s skill in capturing vivid small town vignettes, heartfelt love and love-lost situations, and goodtime celebrations has yielded a litany of I-know-that-songs: “Yankee Lady,” “Biloxi,” “Brand New Tennessee Waltz,” “Talk Memphis,” “Rhumba Girl,” “Payday,” “I’m Gonna Miss You, Girl,” “Let’s Make a Baby King” and many more. His **2007 Lifetime Achievement Award** from the **American Society of Composers, Artists and Publishers (ASCAP)** is one gauge of the music world’s esteem.

Love Filling Station, Winchester’s Appleseed debut and his first studio CD since 1999’s *Gentleman of Leisure*, offers nine characteristically top-flight originals among its dozen songs. It also highlights Jesse as a graceful, soulful vocalist, as memorable a singer as a songwriter. His light southern tenor drawl, warmly wrapped in country/bluegrass/folk arrangements, can gently ascend to the heavens a la Roy Orbison, as in the lovestruck wonderment of “**O What a Thrill**” (already covered by **The Mavericks**), dish some sly, wry dirt (“**It’s a Shame About Him**”) and even capture the sublime hush of Ben E. King’s classic “**Stand By Me**,” one of the CD’s three covers. The lightly rocking “**Wear Me Out**,” another original, mixes a mock-plaintive vocal of sexual exhaustion with a funky, gospel-tinged call-and-response as the great bluegrass solo artist and sideman **Jerry Douglas** threads carnal lap steel guitar licks throughout the song.

Aside from Douglas’s guest shot, some of the core musicians on *Love Filling Station* are the equally estimable **Russ Barenberg** (guitar, mandolin); Mark Fain (bass) and Andy Leftwich (fiddle) from Ricky Scaggs’ band; Jesse himself (guitar, keyboards, lead and backing vocals); and solo artist **Claire Lynch**, who summons her inner Dolly Parton on one of the album’s other cover songs, “Loose Talk,” an uptempo country lament about wagging tongues and provincial minds.

The strength, sincerity and humor of Winchester’s songs combine the laidback gentility of his Memphis upbringing with the perspective and longing of his longtime Canadian exile, self-imposed in 1967 upon receipt of his draft notice. The ten years that followed, before then-President Carter declared amnesty in 1977, may have limited his recognition and eliminated touring in the US, but the next 25 years based in Montreal were voluntary and productive, in a leisurely way. Repatriated in Virginia with an American-born wife since 2002, Winchester sounds happy to be home on *Love Filling Station*, and we’re glad to have him back.



About JESSE WINCHESTER

If you listen to many of the songs Jesse Winchester has written in his professional career, now nearing four decades, you'll hear most of the elements of what's become known as "Americana" – detailed, empathetic stories of everyday people set to music incorporating folk, country, bluegrass, blues and gospel instrumentation.

How ironic, then, that a musician with such a strong sense of personal and musical roots should make the life changing decision to leave his Memphis home in 1967 and resettle in Canada in defiance of his draft notice, a.k.a. an invitation to fight in Vietnam.

Born on the air force base – another irony – in Bossier City, La., where his father was stationed, Jesse was mostly raised in Memphis, where the Winchester name was well-established in local politics and society. There were ten years of piano lessons ahead, playing guitar in high school bands, and attendance at Williams College in Massachusetts, where Jesse made the first dramatic change in his life. During a year of studies overseas, he joined a rock band in Munich, Germany, and toured there before and after his 1966 graduation.

But in the mid-Sixties, graduating from college almost inevitably led to military service, and Jesse soon received his draft notice back in Memphis. Aware of the consequences, he bought a one-way ticket to Montreal and fly north with his guitar and a few hundred dollars.

After a few years of playing piano in Canadian bars and teaching himself to write songs, Jesse met **Robbie Robertson**, lead guitarist and main writer for **The Band**, the legendary quintet of former Dylan backing musicians, "through a friend of a friend." Robertson produced Jesse's self-titled debut album, enlisting fellow Band-mate **Levon Helm** on drums and mandolin and whiz-kid musician **Todd Rundgren** as engineer. That first album was released with the most low-key packaging possible – no lyrics and a gatefold cover with the same photo of Jesse on all four panels, resembling a 19th Century "Wanted Dead or Alive" poster.

Fortunately, Jesse's songs spoke for themselves. That first album included reputation-building original compositions like the homesick "**Yankee Lady**" (covered by Tim Hardin, Brewer & Shipley, and Matthews' Southern Comfort), "**Biloxi**" (Jimmy Buffett, Tom Rush, Ted Hawkins), "**Brand New Tennessee Waltz**" (The Everly Brothers, Patti Page, Ronnie Hawkins) and the rollicking "**Payday**" (Elvis Costello, Alex Taylor).

Although his inability to tour the US hampered his career until President Carter declared amnesty for draft defiers in 1977, Winchester remained based in Canada, writing and recording great songs that solidified his critical acclaim and popularity among other artists. Jesse's "Rhumba Girl" was a pop hit for **Nicolette Larson**, "Well-a-Wiggy" reached the R&B charts in a version by the **Weather Girls**, and **Michael Martin Murphey** had a Top 10 country single with "I'm Gonna Miss You, Girl," which Jesse finally recorded for his new *Love Filling Station* CD. **Reba McEntyre** and **Wynonna Judd** have been among the most regular outlets for his songs. Jesse even had his own Top 40 hit with "Say What" in 1981.

After releasing seven albums between 1970 and 1981, Jesse took some time off to recharge, living on the royalties from his songs. He broke cover again with 1988's *Humour Me*, which was followed by another long wait for 1999's *Gentleman of Leisure*. In 2002, Jesse and his new wife finally relocated back to the States, in Virginia. While Winchester has maintained an active touring schedule during much of his career, his return to the recording studio to cut *Love Filling Station* after a nine-year absence was inspired by that most romantic of reasons: "My wife kept bugging me."