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## Jeffery Halford & the Healers - Rainmaker (Album Review)

Posted by [Terry Roland](#) on June 26, 2014 at 7:00pm



Jeffery Halford and the Healers have been around a while. With a string of fine blues-rock albums the San Francisco-based band reflects the kind of musical fortitude and collaboration that brings to mind the likes of Michael Bloomfield, Al Kooper and Barry Goldberg. Their latest album, [Rainmaker](#), is a blues drenched effort with music inspired enough to leave us wanting more as the album comes to an end. They represent a river of blues that has run through American music since the 60's, but we don't hear often enough among the trends of music in Americana today. With a stripped down sound that leans on the interchange between slide and lead guitar bolstered by some fine keyboard R&B support, they have created a landscape of sound that conjures past blues spirits and brings them solidly into the present in a way that is both urgent and real. The album brings eleven well written songs to a full realization through skilled, dynamic production, arrangement and musicianship. Driving all of the proceedings is the artistic vision of Jeffrey Halford.

A Texas native and California transplant, Halford's musical vocabulary is rooted in the country-blues of his homeland discovered in the foundational blues-rock of the late 60's. If you care to reminisce you may hear strains of Joe Ely, Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore comfortably merged with California's Phil and Dave Alvin and Peter Case. He's learned his lessons well bringing fine lyrics together with often haunting, penetrating and engaged lyrics. He draws from classic American literary influences like Raymond Carver, along with the best and most upbeat soul of the singer-songwriters of the 60's and 70's.

The album opens with the title track, an earthy boogie shuffle about the California drought and the need for healing as the imagery conjures up the 'oceans in the sky.' It's a trance like blues shout He sings to the lost place in all of us reaching for home on "Lost Highway," perhaps one of the most successful songs on the album. "Mexico" takes us further down the road south to a coastal Mexico of the soul with Cormac McCarthy like imagery and a haunting reverb guitar part. The slow country-slide blues guitar of "Second Chance," like the under-side of Roger Miller's "King of the Road," a early Halford influence.

At times, as on songs like "Harry We Need You," and "Cry of Hope," the writer reaches too far outside of his blues inspired poetic vision for comments on politically driven current times. Not that these issues are off limits for singer-songwriters, but Halford's strong suit is in the songs of Mexico and Thunderbird Motels.

Rainmaker is as well-produced and realized American roots album as you're likely to hear this year. It's an album that should give Nashville and Austin reason to take notice with its originality and inspired consistency. *Rainmaker* finds its place comfortably and ably alongside the finest Americana of 2014.

To see Jeffery Halford's tour schedule go to his [website](#).