

CRAZY HORSE "TOAST"

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In 2000, Crazy Horse was in San Francisco, south of Market street, at an old studio called "Toast." Coltrane had recorded there, among many other jazz greats, known and unknown. The Dot Com boom was happening and buildings were being bought and turned into lofts or torn down completely and rebuilt. New money was everywhere. Toast was a target. The place was a little run down and sort of on its last legs.

To a man, if you asked Crazy Horse about these sessions, you would learn that it was a depressing atmosphere and things were not going well. The band recorded there for months and came up with very little. Nothing, other than one song, "Goin' Home" was ever finished. But a lot was started. Several of the songs written at Toast showed up on the "Are You Passionate" album with Booker T. and the MGs. But that album met with mixed reaction.

Now, years later, John Hanlon, the original co-producer with Neil, is at work mixing all of the Toast material. Many songs share a bluesy, jazz-tinged vibe as a common thread. Three solid rockers are interspersed in the mix. Other songs are long with extensive explorations between verses, a Crazy Horse trademark, kind of like a down-played Tonight's the Night, except these songs deal directly with love and loss, not drugs. The ambient atmosphere, foggy, blue and desolate, pervades many of the tracks, if not all, with Tommy Brea's muted trumpet and dusky male and female counter-part BGs occasionally surfacing from Poncho and Ralph on one side, Nancy Hall and Pegi Young on the other. A cool and sleepy lounge piano rises in the fog occasionally.

The result of this is perhaps one of the most under-estimated and deceptive Crazy Horse records of all time, with many songs originally discarded, and then re-recorded with Booker T. and the MGs. The original performances now surface again through a foggy past. Like an abstract painting, lyrical images of a love lost and maybe even destroyed forever just refuse to die, creating a landscape littered with half-broken dreams and promises.

"Toast" is coming, a dark Crazy Horse classic for the ages. This first NYA "Special Edition" is the beginning of a new series of unreleased albums.