

Rosie Flores: Music's Rockabilly Filly

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
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In the past four decades, Rosie Flores has learned a thing or two about the hardscrabble life of a working musician.

She's released 11 records and tours constantly. Last year, she laid down "Baby Took a Limo to Memphis," one of the most memorable tracks on "This One's For Him," the 2-record set honoring Guy Clark. She performed the song at the Long Center, bringing the house down.

"I was the only one on an electric guitar," Flores remembered during a recent telephone conversation from her home near Austin. "It brought something else to the show."

In October, she shared the stage with Chuck Berry during a performance at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

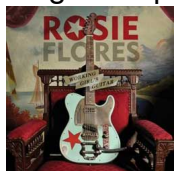
"I got to pay tribute to one of my heroes," she noted. "I'm getting to do some pretty cool stuff."

While she's worked hard to earn her nickname, "Rockabilly Filly," she realizes Rosie Flores is not a household name, even in some parts of her adopted home state.

"I can't draw flies in Dallas," she laments. "I just haven't found the right venue."

Flores was raised in Southern California and was exposed to the Bakersfield sound early on. Some critics have even dubbed her "the female Dwight Yoakum," but she started a long time before Yoakum picked up a guitar.

"I've been on the road so long," she said. "I started when I was 16. I saw The Eagles and [decided to] put my first girl band together. It's been a lifetime of recording, playing live, writing songs and producing."



On her latest record, "Working Girl's Guitar," Flores decided to play all the guitar parts herself.

"People kept coming up to me after shows and saying, 'I didn't know you played guitar,'" she said with a laugh. "I've been playing lead guitar since day one in 1987. A lot of people must not read the credits."

The record has a real 1960s feel, including "If" a gospel-influenced blues ballad, a Buddy Holly bopper "Drug Store Rock and Roll," and a couple of Beach Boy-inspired numbers, including "Surf Demon #5," complete with a great Hammond B3 organ.

"I was excited to write a surf song," Flores explained. "It's a secret guilty pleasure [of mine]. It really gets the crowd going during live shows."

"Little But Loud" is also a crowd favorite.

"It gets a great crowd response," she said. "It's like the crowd realizes, 'Hey, she really can play and sing.'"

"Love Must Have Passed Me By" brings back the feeling of being at an 8th grade dance,

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listening to a cover band try to sound like the Ventures. Great guitar vibe on this one.

If you can listen to "Too Much" without a serious urge to do the Stroll across the living room floor, then you were born too late.

Maybe the most pleasant surprise on this record is Flores' acoustic cover of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." It's a fresh, upbeat arrangement and proves the lady's versatility.

Flores is understandably proud of this record.

"It was the first time I said, 'To heck with it, I'm going to play all the guitar parts because I can."

Although she's been out there a long time, Flores has never been on the charts.

"I'm not Prince," she said. "I'm not Clapton. I'm not George Harrison, but I'm going to keep trying."

Maybe the world will come calling once they get a taste of "Working Girl's Guitar." But, if they don't, that's alright with her, too.

"I'm hoping this record might point them toward me," she said at interview's end. "I love this record. Is that self-indulgent? [Laughs] In my own mind, I've received a lifetime achievement award. If no one else knows it, that's okay."

To learn more about Rosie Flores, visit www.rosieflores.com. No tour dates are currently posted.

To watch clips of Flores doing "Little But Loud," click [here](#) .

"This One's For Him" has been nominated for a Grammy in the Best Folk Album category. Maybe the listening public will give Rosie's performance of "Baby Took a Limo to Memphis" a listen and realize just how special she is.