



MONTE MONTGOMERY

You can call it prescient or predetermined, but when Terry Lickona, undisputed tastemaker and producer of **Austin City Limits**, plucked a then relatively unknown guitar talent to tape a segment of the legendary show, one had the sense that this was just the beginning.

Since that jaw dropping performance, **Monte Montgomery** has embarked on an almost fantasy like rock and roll roller coaster ride filled with dizzying accomplishments and mind blowing accolades. Named one of the "**Top 50 All-Time Greatest Guitar Players**" by Guitar Player Magazine, he's been called everything from "guitar-god" to the "answer to the Fermi Paradox".

Still, despite the six-string notoriety, Monte is not content to rest on his musical laurels. "I've resisted temptation to be just that guitar gunslinger from Austin, Texas," says Monte. "I strive to have more depth, to be more layered as an artist, songwriter and singer."

With the release of his latest CD "**Monte Montgomery**", he is cementing his place as not just some blazingly electrified acoustic guitar playing freak of nature, but also a rare and true triple threat; songwriter, singer and master musician.

"I want my music to be accessible to everyone," says Monte. Accessible it is, but he's still managed to make a record that is uncompromising. The virtuoso-like trademark guitar licks and arrangements you'd expect from Monte are there, forming the rich and colorful aural backdrop for his insightful songwriting and amazing voice.

The end result, in a day of homogenized, digitalized, and processed music, is that this new project stands out as a throw back to the great pop rock records of the past. Recorded live at the legendary Masterlink Studio, the textured, deep, rich, nuanced and just plain rocking 12 tracks run the gamut, showcasing Monte's stylistic diversity beginning with the opening album track "River", an almost primal seven minute dark bluesy roots rocker, and ending with "Midlife Matinee" a wistful ballad that soulfully explores the turning points and crossroads of life, love and loss.

In between, it's a mix of dark, edgy rock to light, breezy pop-like melodies. There's the pure rocker "Can't Fool Everyone" and the jazzy, vibey "Could've Loved You Forever". And just when you think you've got him pegged, Monte changes it up to leave you breathless with the sensual, lyrical, Latin-tinged "Moonlight Tango."

"All of these songs are road tested," laughs Monte when you ask him to explain how he chose what to record for this record. "I don't write with a project in mind. I write to play live, for my fans. My audience is great, they tell me what to record. It's like having a built-in focus group."



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Long a big draw on the live music scene, Monte's non-stop touring schedule this year has included ParkPop (one of the largest music festivals in Europe). A Monte Montgomery show is likened to a musical religious experience. "I wanted to capture what I do live on this record. I want people to close their eyes and envision themselves at one of my concerts."

To do that Monte enlisted the help of the hip, rock producer John Billings and Rob Clark, Grammy nominated Neil Young and CSN&Y recording engineer. "In the past my records were made in my hometown of Austin", says Monte. "We went to a larger [studio] room in Nashville for this one which, with some very clever microphone placement techniques from Rob and John, enabled us all to set up in the same room and just play each song straight through. These are live takes, band tracks and no overdubs, with the only exception being some different instrument parts (string section and B3) added later to some tracks."

All the songs were written by Monte, with the exception of "Little Wing". Monte's blistering interpretation of the Jimi Hendrix classic is a fan favorite but has never been recorded in a studio environment. "I never play it the same way twice," says Monte. "So when making this record we planned for "Little Wing" to be the last thing we attempted to track every night in the studio and if we get it, we get it. If not, we would just leave it to the live performances. On the second night, after a long day in the studio, the track we got was like, wow. We knew it was magic."

Ironically, it's the cover of another rock pop classic that is bringing Monte a high profile fan and opening up new doors. After seeing Monte's version of Sara Smile on YouTube, **Daryl Hall** (Hall & Oates) was so blown away he invited Monte to be the featured artist on Live From Daryl's House, the popular web-based music show.

These accomplishments are quite a distance from Birmingham, Alabama where Monte learned to play piano and trumpet. At the age of 12 Monte moved to Texas to live with his mom, a singer/songwriter who instilled in him a passion for music and a taste of the life he was destined to lead as he sang and performed with her in Hill Country picking parlors.

It was the eventual move to Austin where you could say he earned his musical baccalaureate from that city's highly competitive music scene (earning him seven consecutive Austin Music Awards). That led to the current fulfillment of his musical destiny; a dedicated fan base, critical acclaim and an ever growing touring circuit in the U.S. and Europe. It's no wonder that when Terry Lickona introduced him on that Austin City Limits' stage some years ago he uttered these words: "**Monte Montgomery blows people away. There is no other way to describe it.**"