

## Mp3 L.I. Cooper - Old Hardin Store Road

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Folksy accents brush up against Americana vibes, crisscrossing with country grooves and slight hints of rockabilly and Cajun rhythms. But instead of sounding scattered, the group's debut disc is a solid sampler of its strengths. 14 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Alt-Country, ROCK: Americana Details: LL Cooper offers a solid, sparkling disc By JOEY GUERRA Copyright 2007 Houston Chronicle L.L. Cooper's Old Hardin Store Road plays like a sparkling amalgamation of world-weary, road-tested musical genres. Folksy accents brush up against Americana vibes, crisscrossing with country grooves and slight hints of rockabilly and Cajun rhythms. But instead of sounding scattered, the group's debut disc is a solid sampler of its strengths. It's the perfect album for an afternoon road trip or a lazy afternoon patio party. Just add barbecue and beer. L.L. Cooper is led by namesake Larry Cooper vocals, guitars and "stupid ideas," according to the liner notes. He has a sturdy, steely voice that's also adept at sweet expressions of emotion. The sugar quotient, however, is thankfully kept low. Opening tune Harvey Keitel sets a wry, amusing tone. It draws inspiration from the veteran actor's minor roles as a "cleaner" in films Point of No Return and Pulp Fiction. But instead of messy murders, Cooper sings of tidying up personal relationships. Elsewhere, the mood shifts from silly to serious. "I'll always be bitter/I'll never see the good," Cooper confesses amid the husky heartbreak of Bitter. It's an accurate encapsulation of lost love. It Didn't Happen is another mournful moment and an album highlight. An extended instrumental introduction sets the mood, and the tune is buoyed by Rick Thompson's rolling piano licks and Susan Jackson's shimmering fiddle work. In the hands of one of today's country heartthrobs, it and similarly solid tune Gathered Around could be huge radio hits. (Dierks Bentley, are you listening?) Spirits rise during Used Car Salesman, a comic respite that cleverly blames the titular character for stealing a wandering lover. The song really kicks in halfway through, and its Cajun-conjunto rhythm is an invitation for two-stepping in a live setting. The diverse song styles are understandable, given the backgrounds of the tunes' players. Cooper and bassist Jeff Enlow most recently played with local favorite Lisa Novak's band; drummer Brian Hays still rocks alongside Austin outfit Podunk; and Thompson spent a decade as part of Moses Guest. Novak chips in backing vocals throughout the disc, most notably on the raucous barroom romp Propane

Line. Her delivery is appropriately in sync with Cooper's lead. Also making vocal cameos are acclaimed local singer-songwriters Lee Alexander and Lise Liddell, and Nashville, Tenn.-based artist Dan Colehour. Old Hardin Store Road isn't a complicated record, but the unfussy Americana approach works well. Cooper's balance of humor and heartache make it an engaging expression of lyrical emotion.

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