
Howlin Rain



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CONTACT

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INFO

LINE UP

Ethan Miller (Vocals, Guitar)
Jeff McElroy (Bass)
Dan Cervantes (Guitar)
Justin Smith (Drums)

PREVIOUS RELEASES

The Alligator Bride (2018)
Mansion Songs (2015)
Live Rain (2014)
The Russian Wilds (2012)
Magnificent Fiend (2008)
Howlin Rain (2006)

LABEL

Silver Current

LINKS



[Website](#)



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VIDEOS & TRACKS



Howling Rain - Missouri

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press photo 1



press photo 2



album artwork

FULL INFO

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With their new LP *The Alligator Bride*, Miller's merry band of pranksters deliver their fifth full-length set of swampy, ragged, and unapologetic rock 'n roll. "The guiding principle for *The Alligator Bride* was to create 'Neal Cassady Rock,'" says Miller. "Which is to say, high energy, good-times adventure music, driving the hippie bus, shirtless and stoned, up for four days straight, and extremely fuzzy around the edges." It's their first release on Silver Current Records, the artist-run label owned by Miller, who carefully oversees all curation, recording, graphic design, and distribution.

The Alligator Bride is gleefully indebted to classic rock formations such as the Grateful Dead's *Europe '72*, Mountain's *Bus* 1974 burner *Sundance*, and Free's masterpiece of atmospheric, minimalist blues, 1969's *Fire and Water*. But there's a wider context to the Rain. At any given moment, Miller pivots between several projects, each a different facet of his sun-scorched California vision. From the pastoral psych jams of his celebrated Sub Pop band Heron Oblivion, to the scuzz punk freakouts of Feral Ohms, to the sprawling, analog ambience of *The Odyssey Cult*, to his various books of poetry, Miller cuts a renaissance figure in madman's garb, howling at the moon and cranking out handmade masterpieces.

Which brings us back to Howlin Rain's latest. Tracked over three days by Eric "King Riff" Bauer at the Mansion in San Francisco, *The Alligator Bride* is the sound of a full band playing live to tape, cutting the material in first and second takes. (It also marks the second installment in the band's Mansion trilogy. First was 2016's *Mansion Songs*, a less raucous affair, with the gentle touch of Espers/Heron Oblivion's Meg Baird on vocals, among other contributors.) Miller attributes the magic to the vibe of the Mansion studio, the same space that gave birth to modern garage-psych classics by Ty Segall, Thee Oh Sees, and Mikal Cronin. "Because it has the word 'mansion' in it, people are like, 'Oh, I didn't realize it wasn't an actual mansion,'" says Miller. "It's a basement in Chinatown. It's a mansion of the mind. It's a creative castle. It's not a literal, San Francisco mansion."

From the first notes of opening track "Rainbow Trout," Miller's guitar choogles out an inescapable riff, a sly reference to the sky spirits of Norman Greenbaum and ZZ Top. The riff - that riff! - unabashedly grounds *The Alligator Bride* in the classics, but reaches for the stars. Daniel Cervantes' bottleneck slide guitar eases into place along with Miller's tuneful-yet-ravaged lead vocals, followed by Jeff McElroy's bass and Justin Smith's charging drums. Title track "Alligator Bride" soon crashes the gates like Crazy Horse in all their ragged glory, telling a carnivalesque tale of American splendor, a parade of creatures across time and space. And final track "Coming Down" slow-burns its way through eight minutes of indestructible twin guitars, blazing to a heroic, acid-damaged finish.

"We're in a vortex of futuristic events," ruminates Miller. "At this present moment, we can still remember the way the train whistle sounded in the middle of the night, rolling through the dark on the outskirts of town. An old America before we walked on the moon, before TV, cell phones, and the internet. The song (and perhaps the entire album) 'Alligator Bride' is about standing in the eye of that tornado of time - between the past and the present - in America." It's a fitting vision for the band: torn between eras, an epic perspective on what's come before and what lies ahead, woven into a cosmic tapestry of riffs, rhymes, and resonant frequencies.