



"To sing a song, I need to visualize the story within the lyrics, to truly feel them. If I can't feel them, I can't sing them"

- **Carmen Gomes**

Carmen Gomes - vocal

Folker Tettero - guitar

Peter Bjørnild - double-bass

Bert Kamsteeg - drums

01 Passway Opening Credits (2:12)

02 Little Queen Of Spades (6:41)

03 Road Dark as Night (0:51)

04 Stones In My Passway (5:33)

05 Up and Go (0:35)

06 Dust My Broom (6:03)

07 Road Junction (0:51)

08 Sweet Home Chigago (5:31)

09 Juke Joint Dream (0:42)

10 Malted Milk (4:23)

11 Haints (0:46)

12 Rambling (5:16)

13 Virgie & Claud (0:32)

14 Sun Flower River (4:25)

15 Passway Closing Credits (1:56)

Total time: **46:17**

Original recording format **DXD 352kHz**.

Sound Liaison provide the one to one copy of the original master.

This is a One Mic + recording.

"A song is like a dream, and you try to make it come true. They're like strange countries you have to enter".

- Bob Dylan

Discovering the Music of Blues Legend Robert Johnson

With 'Stones in My Passway' Carmen Gomes Inc. embarks on a remarkable journey through the corridors of time. Paying homage to the legendary blues musician, composer, and founding father of the fatal 27 Club, Robert Johnson, their album transcends the boundaries of traditional recordings, offering a mesmerizing sonic road movie experience.

'Stones in My Passway' effortlessly transports you, each track being a gateway, to a world where time and space intertwine with the rich tapestry of Johnson's life.

Imagine Robert Johnson walking alone late at night in the 1930s United States of America, en route to his sad demise in Greenwood, Mississippi. As he walks, he reflects upon his life, accompanied by the sounds of the night and the echoes of his memories.

The small innovative soundscape vignettes, encompassing each song, weave a cinematic narrative to the unique road movie concept, further enhancing the emotional connection and depth of the musical experience. It's an immersive and evocative concept album showcasing the power of artistic vision and technical innovation, and a deep reverence for the timeless beauty of Robert Johnson's music.

The heart of this album is Carmen Gomes Inc.'s inspired interpretations of Johnson's immortal songs. The synergy among the band members, with Carmen's sultry voice in constant dialogue with guitarist Folker Tettero, bassist Peter Bjørnild, and drummer Bert Kamsteeg, goes beyond their instruments' traditional roles. They elevate the emotions, provide solace, and weave a mesmerizing sonic narrative that further enriches the musical experience.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Carmen Gomes Inc. is their aptitude for cutting to the core and realizing the essence of each song. This skill, combined with Carmen's ability to deeply connect with the mood of the lyrics, has reached new heights, as exemplified in their rendition of 'Little Queen of Spades'. The remarkable collaboration between Carmen Gomes Inc. and award-winning sound engineer Frans de Rond captures this sonic journey.

Renowned for his expertise and innovative approach, Frans brings a cinematic dimension to the recordings, solidifying his status as an industry trailblazer. His groundbreaking "one mic+" technique, utilizing the central Josephson C700S microphone alongside additional Josephson C700A, C617 and C715 microphones, creates a balanced and immersive soundstage.



This innovative setup allows Carmen's voice and the double bass to retain their complete sonic palette, even when the band raises the intensity, enabling drummer Bert Kamsteeg and guitarist Folker Tettero to explore the full dynamic spectrum of their instruments.

The result is a faithful reproduction of the band's sound, preserving the integrity of the music and allowing listeners to connect with the artist on a deeper level, experiencing the music in its purest form.

Each miniature complementary soundscape vignette was created on the spot immediately after the completion of each song.

During post-production, additional cinematic sounds were seamlessly integrated, emphasizing the atmosphere and enhancing the immersive experience.

Here Frans de Rond's remarkable talent in radio play engineering came into play.

His ability to create an almost visual sound field has made him one of the most popular engineers for radio plays in the Benelux. His craftsmanship was recently acknowledged with the prestigious PRIX EUROPA award for best radio play.



'Stones in My Passway' is more than a homage to Robert Johnson; it reimagines his music in a way that feels both familiar and exhilaratingly new.

The meticulously engineered soundscape vignettes enhance the immersive experience, enveloping the listener in a world where the music comes alive.

Carmen Gomes Inc.'s recording of Robert Johnson's songs stands as a testament to their artistic vision and commitment to capturing the essence of the blues. Through their road movie-inspired soundscape approach and Frans de Rond's engineering prowess, they transport Johnson's music to the 21st century, validating its enduring beauty and ensuring its continued resonance with audiophiles and music enthusiasts alike.

Peter Bjørnild:

The ghost in the machine.



Initially, I wasn't sure about writing this. Most of what happened could probably be explained logically if one looked into it. Plus, I figured no one would believe it anyway. After all the subject is none other than Robert Johnson – the mythical figure who reputedly traded his soul for musical prowess, practiced his guitar late at night at graveyards, his songs flirting with the mystical, the first member of the 27 club.

So, I decided to infuse the album's creation narrative with these unusual events, as the reality is, that the events did happen and were truly uncanny.

For this album I wanted Frans de Rond to magnify the essence of the small cinematic vignettes leading into each song, making full use of his remarkable radio play engineering skills. So on a rain-soaked Sunday afternoon, in an otherwise empty MCO building, we began working.

First up was the track 'Passway'. We added the sound of the train and the sound of the wind. And suddenly we faintly heard footsteps. I got up and checked the hallway, empty, the sound of footsteps was coming from the speakers. We tried isolating the train, wind, and music tracks one by one, but the footsteps were only audible when the tracks were played in unison, prompting Frans to humorously attribute it to "Robert walking." Whereupon he ventured into his sound library, digging up an audio sample called "Man walking on a gravel road" intending to add it to the soundscape, but as we started importing the file the computer crashed.

We took a coffee break, fingers crossed for the program's auto backup function, joking about Robert Johnson's spirit messing with us when the lights in the hallway suddenly went out. We returned to the studio, where the lights were unaffected, yet the hallway remained shrouded in darkness. Thankfully, the computer had been restored, enabling us to resume, and to our amazement, the sound file had been seamlessly integrated into the track, with startling precision making our usual alignment processes unnecessary.



We replayed the track. It was perfect, the footsteps gave it an extra dimension, I gave Frans a high five when suddenly the hands on the studio wall clock began spinning out of control. After a brief moment, they returned to normal. Undeterred, we continued working into the night without any further incidents.

The following Sunday back in the studio to finish the remaining vignettes, to our astonishment, it all played out again – The illusion of footsteps, the momentarily blue screen, the flickering hallway lights, the clock's spinning hands – editing flowing with unusual ease, although the imported files did require normal adjustments.

Carving out Robert's sonic journey, we found ourselves threading the needle between what is, what could be, and the tantalizing veil that separates the two.

Frans de Rond:

"There are several reasons I call this a 'One Mic+' recording.

In this recording, the role of drummer Bert Kampsteeg is very important. We wanted him to be able to play as freely and dynamically as possible. I realized that if we had Carmen up close to the one mic she was creating an acoustic baffle that covered up certain frequencies. The same was true for Peter Bjørnild's double bass.

By moving Carmen and bassist Peter Bjørnild further away and supporting them with two Josephson C700A microphones, the drum sound got much more present. We wanted the small 'soundscape' vignettes to have a very dark atmosphere (Peter said he wanted them to sound as dark as the Mississippi night), so I decided to add a spaced pair of Josephson C617 microphones up very high in the studio and let them be our main source of ambiance. That worked very well. And also the deep drop-tuned low notes from the double bass that Peter employed on some of the soundscapes got picked up very well by that pair. Such low notes are almost impossible to hear close up, somehow you only hear the upper harmonics generated, so that was an extra benefit of the ambient pair. And it made me fall even more in love with the sound of Studio 2.

You could argue that this is a return to old-fashioned multi-mic recording but I don't think that is true, The drums, guitar, and the main part of the double bass sound are still coming from the Josephson C700S. The microphone is key to the sound stage we have created.

The two C700A support microphones are identical to the C700S except that each has only one figure of 8 capsules. The special quality of the C700A is that spill coloration is much less of a problem. So it is a perfect spot microphone.

Another funny thing.....I keep learning things about the C700S. I have to keep forcing myself to keep experimenting with distance, closer or further away from the mic, it is crucial to get the best possible sound. I don't think I have ever captured Folker Tettero's guitar better than on this album and it was a question of moving the right leg of the table with the amp on, 2 cm. (0,787 inches) backward and there the sound was! Unbelievable."

Frans de Rond has been Carmen Gomes Inc' engineer of choice for 27 years.



Recording, mixing and mastering by Frans de Rond.

Produced by Peter Bjørnild.

Music arranged by Peter Bjørnild with lots of help from Carmen, Folker and Bert.

Recorded at MCO, Studio 2, Hilversum, The Netherlands, on the 16th and the 17th of July 2020.

Used equipment:

Main central microphone: Josephson C700S

Support microphone Carmen: Josephson C700A

Support microphone Peter's bass: Josephson C700A

Support microphone Folker's guitar: Josephson C715

Ambience microphones spaced pair of 2 Josephson C617

Micpre's: Merging Horus

Microphone cables by AudioQuest

Speakers: TAD Compact Evolution

Poweramp: Moon 760A

Mixing headphones: Sennheiser HD800S / AKG 702

All power cables and power conditioners by AudioQuest.

Mastered analogue signal chain to 768kHz.

Cover photo by Milan Bjørnild

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