**BLACK STONE CHERRY**

Chris Robertson- Lead Vocals, Lead Rhythm & Slide Guitars

Ben Wells- Rhythm, Lead Guitar & Backing Vocals

Jon Lawhon- Lead, Rhythm Bass & Backing Vocals

John Fred Young- Drums, Percussion & Backing Vocals

           The Kentucky-bred hard rockers in Black Stone Cherry have had their music blared from speakers large and small, toured relentlessly with the likes of Nickelback and Motörhead, and debuted at #1 on the UK rock chart with their sophomore release, 2008’s Folklore and Superstition. In the face of these successes, the band members decided to put themselves to the ultimate test for the creation of their third full-length, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: they took a year off from touring and focused all their energy on songwriting.

            Holed up in their rehearsal space, dubbed The Practice House, which in actuality is a rundown farmhouse, the quartet—vocalist Chris Robertson, guitarist Ben Wells, bassist Jon Lawhon and drummer John Fred Young—crafted almost 50 songs of soaring, Southern-fried hard rock about everything from being proud of where you come from and true to who you are, on lead single “White Trash Millionaire,” to songs like the rip roaring “Blame It On The Boom Boom,” that will make you want to jump up and shake what your mama gave ya. The album that Black Stone Cherry emerged with is a blistering set of intoxicating anthems, much like a modern version of their heroes in Lynyrd Skynyrd or the Marshall Tucker Band, whose 1975 country-rock classic “Can’t You See” has been revamped by the band for this go ’round. They poured everything they could into building the strongest hooks and the most passionate lyrics, both of which come through stunningly in songs like “Won’t Let Go” and “Like I Roll.” And they found inspiration in the pictures of Lynyrd Skynyrd, Cream, Howlin’ Wolf, and Muddy Waters that Young’s dad, Richard Young, and uncle, Fred Young—founding members of classic country rockers the Kentucky Headhunters—pinned to the walls of The Practice House when they formed the band as teenagers over a decade ago.

            For as hard as Black Stone Cherry worked, the most difficult part was taking off a year from touring. “This past year was the longest break from touring that we’ve ever taken, since forming the band,” Wells says. “Being in one place for so long was something we had to readjust to, but looking back, it gave us a chance to reflect, re-bond as brothers and craft the best songs we absolutely could.”  Young adds, “It took being home with all these great people we love to create kick ass rock n roll like we do!”

            Armed with an impressive arsenal of tracks, Black Stone Cherry pulled off another first-time personal feat: they recorded Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea(an Old English euphemism for choosing between two undesirable situations) thousands of miles from home, in Los Angeles. Under the friendly watch of producer extraordinaire Howard Benson (Theory of a Deadman, Daughtry, Three Days Grace), the bandmates tightened up their oeuvre in the studio. In fact, being on the opposite coast with Benson was how “In My Blood” came about.  The song is a heartfelt auto-biographical tale about being drawn to living life on the road, despite missing family and friends. “Howard said he was missing one more song from us, one that came from our hearts,” Wells says. “We sat at his house and he just pulled it out of us.  We wrote it in 20 minutes.” During the recording of the album, Benson guided them to play nontraditional instruments like mandolins, banjos and drums bought from an old high school marching band.

            Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea is chocked full of well-crafted tales that give listeners a glimpse into life as Black Stone Cherry know it and live it.  “I owned a 1981 Smokey and the BanditTrans-Am that I drove around in primer paint when we wrote ‘White Trash Millionaire’,” Robertson says. “I spent countless hours working on it at the garage.  We don’t need mansions or expensive sports cars to be content in life.” Moreover, Lawhon adds that they wrote the line about “the couch on the front porch,” because the house where they rehearse literally has a sofa on the front porch. “Of course the cushions don’t match,” he adds.

            Another song that shows off the group’s affinity for celebrating the simple things in life is “Like I Roll.” A song that could mean as much to a trucker driving an 18-wheeler in a convoy as it could to a rock band on a world tour as it recalls the free spirited life of living on the road. “The song is a reminder that no matter what you have to do, do it your way,” Robertson says. “And if no one supports you, at least you took that opportunity.” Wells says, “It’s about people who travel from city to city and love every single minute of it. It’s the life we live when we’re on the road.”

            Other standouts on the album include the emotional “Won’t Let Go” that really shows the strength in Robertson’s vocals.  “The lyrics were pouring out of us because we could all relate to them,” Robertson says. “No matter where we go, we’re not going to let go of who we are and where we come from.” Showing their powerful vision, the band’s cover of “Can’t You See” sounds as if it were actually written by Black Stone Cherry, thanks to some thick guitars and more forceful melodies.  “Blame It on the Boom Boom,” which has a fist-pumping chorus, is a party rocker par excellence, custom-built for sporting events and jukeboxes alike. Young expounds: “Blame it on the Boom Boom" is about anything you want! Whatever gets you in trouble is the Boom Boom!” If anything, the album presents an even keel between Black Stone Cherry’s most memorable bangers and their most introspective songs.

            What’s clear, when the band looks back on the hard work they put into making the record, is that the time off was worth taking. It was a long process, but Black Stone Cherry’s Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea is one of the most well-rounded hard rock releases to come out of the last ten years.