

**Artist : JEB LOY NICHOLS**  
**Album : DAYS ARE MIGHTY**

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[www.jebloynichols.com](http://www.jebloynichols.com)    [www.myspace.com/jebloynichols](http://www.myspace.com/jebloynichols)

**Management : Rhys Mwyn 01286 685 215 / 0778 669 2112**

[www.rhysmwyn.com](http://www.rhysmwyn.com)    [rhys@rhysmwyn.com](mailto:rhys@rhysmwyn.com)

## **“What’s a country-soul singer from Missouri doing on legendary Welsh Language post-punk Label Recordiau Anhrefn” ?**

Anhrefn Records the Label that first brought bands such as Datblygu, Y Cyrff, Fflaps, Llwybr Llaethog and Tynal Tywyll to wider attention has been re-activated by Rhys Mwyn and the first release in 18 years is this gloriously soulful release by Jeb Loy Nichols.

### **Rhys Mwyn quote :**

“Anhrefn Records was always about pioneers and mavericks, those artists at the cutting edge who do not have the word ‘compromise’ in their vocabulary. Jeb continues that tradition. We love his music. He lives in Mid-Wales. And he got us back to running a label!”

'I wanted to keep this one personal', says Jeb Loy Nichols. 'Personal and small. It seems like that's the only way to keep outside all the nonsense that passes for the music business these days.'

For Jeb Loy, the personal has always been political. A small act of sacrifice, of defiance, of awkwardness, is often the starting point of these new songs.

'I think about it more and more' he says. 'What I do everyday, in every small part of my life, is part of something bigger.'

Six years ago he moved to a remote farm in Wales to try and have as little to do as possible with the excesses of urban life. These days he grows much of his own food, generates his own power, recycles almost everything he uses, and heats his house with his own wood.

His new record, Days Are Mighty, is an intimate portrayal of a simple life lived on the margins.

'My last record', he says, 'was all about being away from home. I went to Nashville and wrote a record about my relationship with America. This record is about my relationship with home.'

Days Are Mighty, like most home life, is deceptive. On first listen it feels warm, comfortable, and safe. But like most home life, scratch the surface and you find a whole world of contradictions. Songs of loss, of separateness, of fear.

'Sure', says Jeb Loy, 'it's all there. But it's beautiful too. It's simple. Direct. It's like the bluegrass records I grew up with. All those beautiful harmonies singing songs about death. I wanted to make a beautiful record. A warm record. But I wanted it to be about the stuff I deal with everyday. Ideal with regret, with age, with disappointment, with the failure of society to be decent.'

The record steers away tricky production and fancy arrangements. It's a record that sounds like what it is: songs about life outside fashion. 'I could have made a bigger record', Jeb Loy says. 'Brought in horns and strings and everything, but I wanted it to fit in my kitchen. I wanted to feel like we were sitting at my kitchen table talking. Just you and me. I wanted to talk about the see everyday. Old barns falling down, the winter months, old girlfriends, the lack of political resistance. I wanted to say: the only true revolution is to fall in love. That's permanent revolution. That's real upheaval.'

To keep the record simple, Jeb Loy chose to work with old friends. Jennifer Carr, a long time collaborator, is on keyboards. Andy Hamill, one of Jeb's closest friends, is on bass. Jonathan Lee is on drums. 'Mates, Jeb Loy says, 'one and all. A good time. Just us, talking. Just family.'

## **SONG BY SONG**

### **1. MY KIND**

I wrote this a couple years ago. I'd been to London and I wrote this on the train coming home. I'd felt like an outsider there, like I didn't fit. Like I was an endangered animal. And I wanted to be different, I didn't want to fit in. I didn't want to buy all that crap, wear those clothes, watch those films. I wanted something else.

### **2. DAYS ARE MIGHTY**

I heard someone say once that life is short but days are long. Days, and time, are mightier than we are. Time is the healer, the witch doctor, the master.

Time carries on in spite of what we do.

### **3. LAY DOWN AND CRY**

I wrote this with my frequent collaborator Joe Brack. He brought the first verse and wrote the chorus and it was done. It's my favourite track on the CD.

### **4. 25 YEARS TOO LATE**

One about regret. I wrote this for everyone I should have apologised to.

Sometimes it takes a while to know how awful you've been.

5. POOR LITTLE BARN

A song about a particular barn I pass on my way into town and the fact that I'm not as young as I once was. How things fall apart and are discarded and how sometimes that's not such a bad thing. Again, all about time.

6. CAN'T FIND THE WORDS

A song for an author friend of mine who occasionally suffers from writers block. And about how she has to get past it.

7. THATS NOT WHAT SHE SAID TO ME

A fiction. The first line came and the whole thing was written in the time it took to write it down.

8. AFTER NOVEMBER

Winter passes slowly in the country. It's bleak and it's cruel and every year it's the same. Hard and yet, somehow, lovely.

9. LETS NOT FALL

I wrote this wishing Dusty Springfield was still alive to sing it. I wanted to say: be careful. Love, romantic love, is a shark pool. A debilitating disease, a nightmare. It's a hard business.

10. ALMOST

This is an old soul song first recorded Betty Lavette and the Karen Label. It was given to me by a good friend. It's pure, grim poetry.

11. I NEED YOU SO

This is a song I wrote when I was in Fellow Travellers. We tried to record it then but it didn't work out. I've tried it on each new record I've made and this is the first time I've gotten it right.