

The Honky Tonk From Hell

Words & Music: Pat Drummond

Dateline: Avoca Beach. 1996

A song originally written for Bill, Di, Nash and Kasey Chambers when my son, Peter, was playing Drums for them in one of their first incarnations called The Dead Ringer Band. It featured on their 'Homefires CD, now a bit of a collectors item for Kasey Chambers fans. I first met The Chambers Family at Barmah in SA in 1993 at the Riverlands Festival and, when they moved to the Central Coast in NSW to develop their careers, we became firm friends. I completed a number of recording projects with a budding Nash Chambers as he began to build his reputation as one of Australia's finest country music engineers and producers. ("Wheels and Wires" and Canowindra Means Home") Kasey, as most would be aware, grew into Australia's country superstar and Pete became one of our finest drummers leaving The Dead Ringers to join The Bushwackers and to eventually fill the drummers seat in Todd Hunter's newly reconstructed Dragon.

It was fascinating and inspirational, watching this bunch of highly talented teenagers feeding off each other, working on their skills and believing that anything was possible if they worked hard enough. The song, itself, was intended to be every bloke's best excuse as to why he was home late after a night out with his mates:)

A dead flat tyre in the middle of the night
out on the prairie in the pale moonlight
No spare; stuck there; sittin by the side of the road
Hopin for a ride; nobody came by
when all of a sudden to my surprise
A light winked on 'bout a half a mile up the road
And then I heard the sound of country music
rolling on the wind
A bar in the middle of nowhere
with a sign saying "Come on In!"

Chorus: Never seen such pickin' and a grinnin'

Never had me a time so swell
as the night that I spent drinking
in the Honky Tonk From Hell

Never seen such jumpin and a pumpin'
Never had me a time so swell
as the night with the whole joint jumpin'
in the Honky Tonk From Hell

**There was Old Nick pickin' on a Six String Gibson
Drinking Redeye and licking his lips 'n
holding them bets in big ol' Stetson
playing that five card stud
Waylon and a Willie dancing on the tele
Fellas making Whoopee with the pretty little Fillies
Alabama Slammers 'n' Old Re-runs of "Hud"
Well the Bourkenback Boys were kicking up a noise
And Lord it was hell of a din
And when Gary hit the tickle in the section in the middle
Well the whole damn bar joined in...**

Instrumental

**Never seen such pickin' and a grinnin'
Never had me a time so swell
as the night that I spent drinking
in the Honky Tonk From Hell
Then voice said "Son you better come along
You don't belong down here!"
And when I looked around to find the sound
An angel of the Lord appeared
Well he was sipping Cutty Sark; listening to Bach
floatin' in the stratosphere
I said why would I want to go to heaven now
When all of my friends are here?**

**Then the music died; I was back outside
The noon sun blazing in the back of my eyes
I saw that truck comin over the rise
and I quickly flagged it down
I turned my back on the old ghost shack
with windows blacked with the burlap sacks
Climbed in the cab and skedaddled on back to town
Now I left my wife devoted my life
To beer and booze and sin
When folks asked why
I tell them I'm makin' sure that I get back in!**

Chorus: Never seen such pickin' and a grinnin'

**Never had me a time so swell
as the night that I spent drinking
in the Honky Tonk From Hell
Never seen such jumpin and a pumpin'
Never had me a time so swell
as the night with the whole joint jumpin'
in the Honky Tonk From Hell
Never seen such hoppin' and a poppin'
Never had me a time so swell
as the night that I spent boppin'
in the Honky Tonk From Hell**