**The Rock Doctor, John Kereiff**

***ONE OF THESE DAYS* Louisiana’s Leroux (Gulf Coast Records) \*\*\*\*\*+**

***Good Lord. In the business of writing record reviews, every once in a while you get blown out of the water- it makes all the lonely hours holed up in the music room worthwhile.***  Such is the case with *One Of These Days,* LL’s 7th album since they began in 1978. Soulful and brimming with life this is one of the best records you’ll ever hear.

That Leroux could come back so strong after a ten year hiatus is, in and of itself, quite an accomplishment. Produced by Jeff Glixman (Kansas, Gary Moore, Georgia Satellites, Yngwie Malmsteen, Tony Iommi), *One Of These Days* packs quite a bit of oomph and yet all the instruments have plenty of room. Lots of people in this group; 8 principal players and a handful of special guests too. The album has a real southern feel/ Louisiana vibe and feels related to The Allman Brothers Band too, though I think I’m picking up some of that from the percussion.

I suppose Nelson Blanchard’s Hammond B-3 gives these songs some church and Jeff McCarty’s vocals really put some soul into them too… I haven’t heard a singer quite like him since Ronnie Hammond in the early days of Atlanta Rhythm Section. While all of the musical elements blend beautifully together, I have to say the icing on the cake is Jim Odom’s guitar leads; emotional and dramatic without being ‘showboat-y’. These guys have toured with The Doobie Brothers, The Allman Brothers, Journey, Kansas,, Heart and Marshall Tucker and have no doubt inspired them all.

*One Of These Days* is one of those records that gives off a tangible vibe and spirit, an undercurrent of voodoo that Robbie Robertson of The Band can likely relate to. As you listen- and I’ve done that repeatedly today- it just kind of carries you away to a swampy bayou, a trip I will gladly take over and over. And you’ll notice that, though tempted, not once in the 3 previous paragraphs did I use the word ‘gumbo’. Street date July 24th.

[www.lerouxband.band](http://www.lerouxband.band/)

KEY CUTS: *Lifeline (Redux), One Of Those Days, Nothing Left to Lose, Sauce Piquante*

**Rock and Blues Muse**

By Chris Wheatley

After a ten-year hiatus, they’re back! Fans of southern rock, who aren’t familiar with Louisiana’s LeRoux, should check out their eponymous 1978 album, a potent mix of southern blues, funk and country. Those who are familiar with that record, or with any of the band’s five subsequent releases, will be excited at the prospect of ten original cuts on new album One of Those Days, officially released on June 24 on Gulf Coast Records, produced by the legendary Jeff Glixman.

Opener and title-track, “One of Those Days” is representative of the record as a whole. Smooth, classy blues-rock, spiced with Caribbean-style percussion, sweeping harmonies and memorable hooks. “Throw a back-pack on the back seat,” sings Jeff McCarty, “and I’m about to be long gone.” McCarty has a great voice, effortlessly soulful and filled with conviction. The middle section of this cut is a treat, as the band stretch out on an extended instrumental passage which showcases some fine playing. Reminiscent of Californian legends Los Lobos, LeRoux are capable of laying down the sort of imaginative, well-crafted lines which bypass the brain and go straight to the heart and the feet. Keyboards cut in and out, percussion ramps up and then rolls back. Guitars lick and burn. There’s room for a bit of everything here. It’s a joyous jam played by musicians who clearly know their stuff, and are selfless enough to forgo grandstanding in the name of unity.

***“Don’t Rescue Me” is a stone-cold blues-funk hit, powerful and grooving. It cruises rather than strides, with the top down on a vicious highway, heading for the hot city night.*** “Nothing Left to Lose,” playful and shimmying, mixes swamp rock with dead-centre country. As throughout this set, the easy power of this band really catches the ear. The inclusion of a new recording of “New Orleans Ladies,” a hit from their first album, is a lovely touch. Here, talented guitarist [Tab Benoit](https://www.tabbenoit.com/) guests, putting down a beautiful, flowing solo.

The band’s line-up has changed significantly over the years. From the original, 1978 alumni, only Tony Haselden (guitar and vocals) and Rod Roddy (keys and vocals) are present. This is a heavyweight group, however, with a serious spirit. Their sound remains true to the “spicy southern rock” ethos, and newer members are first-rate musicians in their own right, seeped in southern blues and with decades of recording experience between them.

Drummer Randy Carpenter, a native of Baton Rouge and Grand Ole Opry performer, has previously worked with no less a personage than Waylon Jennings. Percussionist Mark Duthu’s relationship with the band stretches back to its earliest incarnation. As a team, they are formidable. Their playing is inventive and versatile, contributing a great deal to the tonal variety on the album. They know when to hit hard, when to drop back and at all times they swing.

Bassist Joey Decker (another Baton Rouge native) does a fine job of filling the great Leon Medica’s shoes. He plays right on the pulse, fulfilling the vital job of pinning sounds together. Jim Odom (guitar and vocals), a graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston, and keyboardist Nelson Blanchard (whose credits include working with Percy Sledge) combine seamlessly with Haselden and Roddy. LeRoux’s sound is solidly southern at its core, with the Cajun staple of focus on ensemble playing and interplay between the instruments.

A word must be said regarding the album’s producer Jeff Glixman. Musicians recognise and revere a good ‘helmsman’, yet, beyond the confines of the industry, very few receive acknowledgement. Glixman should surely one of them. His discography includes work with Kansas, [Gary Moore](https://www.rockandbluesmuse.com/2020/02/03/review-gary-moore-live-from-london/), Black Sabbath and ELO. He has done a typically wonderful job here. All the elements are perfectly balanced and organically combined. Sounds are allowed to bleed together, yet stay distinct.

The cover art says much about this album. A humble, retro-looking pick-up, cruising eagerly along a dirt track, by the banks of a bayou. Heading into the sun, with a stack of instrument cases piled high in back. Musicians hitting the road and doing what they love. Forty years on from the beginning of their journey, Louisiana’s LeRoux are still going strong with outstanding album One of Those Days.

[**www.the-rocker.co.uk/**](http://www.the-rocker.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR3LNzuklAx5NHHhMv2db8uNCqtY2ilJRg02OYyD0jmLGgLbcdNXMDPp6fM)

**LOUISIANA’S LEROUX**

**One Of Those Days**

***Gulf Coast Records***

Blimey! There’s a blast from the past. I remember about a thousand years ago picking up a copy of their ‘Last Safe Place’ in a bargain bin. Not that it deserved to be there but who, here in the UK, had ever heard of (Louisiana’s) LeRoux.

If anyone over here remembers them it’s probably for one of the later lineups featuring the late Fergie Frederiksen before he headed off to Toto and Survivor. Like a lot of bands of their vintage they split up in the mid eighties before various members put a new lineup together in the late nineties. They’ve been touring in their heartland ever since and put out a couple of records early on this century. But it’s a long time since they’ve been in a recording studio. Based on this, that’s a damn shame. Because it’s really good.

It harks back to their more southern / country roots / bayou than the eighties slicker sound and just oozes class. They’re down to two original members (which is one more than Deep Purple) in Tony Haselden and Rod Roddy although Jim Odom was around in the early eighties. Meanwhile, vocalist Jeff McCarty is probably still a new boy with only ten years under his belt.

***Musically, this record is magnificent.*** There’s not a duff tune nor a bum note. They know how to write a memorable chorus and you’re never more than a two step away from a good melody. The songs are nearly all new originals with a new version of eighties tune “LIfeline” alongside a few covers. Some of the harmony vocals are absolutely delicious but then when you can call up your old buddies Bobby Kimball and Bill Champlain to chip in, there was never going to be any doubt. “Don’t Rescue Me” is one of the main beneficiaries of some outstanding backing vocals soaring behind some gritty, hard guitar lines.

Of the covers, Dustin Ransom’s “No One’s Gonna Love Me (Like The Way You Do),” from his underappreciated ‘Thread On Fire’ EP is a real treat and let’s not forget the down and dirty vibe of “Sauce Piquante”. The record sounds amazing, courtesy of a production from Jeff Glixman whose name graces so many classic LPs (and whom I thought was long retired but who’d opened his own studio in Pennsylvania). A real treat.

[*https://www.leroux.band*](https://www.leroux.band/)

**The Rocking Magpie**

**LeRoux**

**ONE OF THOSE DAYS**

**Gulf Coast Records**

***Just add Gumbo, Sazerac, Shrimp and Lots of Beer and The Bayou.***

**At the start of ‘Lockdown’ I was transferred to a new depot an hour from home, which was a Godsend as it meant I could listen to whole albums travelling to work and back again.**

**Music can play tricks on the mind if you’re not careful, so as soon as I heard the opening salvo to the first track here; One Of Those Days my Hyundai i20 metamorphosed into a ’71 Ford Bronco and my bus driver uniform into a plaid shirt and well worn Wranglers; and I miraculously drove the back-roads from Tucson to Tucumcari and Tehachapi to Tonapah instead of plodding along the A19 in Wearyside!**

**What a song and what a band! Classic Southern Rock, with twin guitars fighting for your attention, a Hammond Rhodes that swirls like a swampy mist and a bass/drums combo that’s even tastier than a cocktail made with Jim Beam’s finest……. and that’s without Jeff McCarty’s smouldering vocals.**

**It’s obviously all too easy to get lost in the amazing melodies and solos across this album; and no one will blame you if you did; but there’s so much more here than LeRoux’s insanely catchy choruses; as if you listen properly, the songs and stories are exemplary from start to finish.**

**While I can list the musical ingredients in this heady musical cocktail; LeRoux assemble them in a way that they make their very own; and I defy anyone to test the DNA of Don’t Rescue Me, The Song Goes On or even No One’s Gonna Love Me and tell me definitively who the Father was ……. the lineage, yes……. but not the actual Daddy.**

**LeRoux want it known that they ain’t ‘Southern Rock’ …… they are the Sound of Louisiana; and when you hear the last three tracks, Lifeline (Redux), then the fiery instrumental Sauce Piquante and their ‘signature tune’ New Orleans Ladies, you know instantly that this music could come from anywhere else on planet earth.**

**I was tempted to go leftfield for my Favourite Song and choose the spiky Nothing Left to Lose as it is a real bonafide head down, gut punch Boogielicious Rocker that I’ve loved most of my adult life; but there’s another scorcher that has been something of an ‘earworm’.**

**Now; I’m not 100% sure if Lucy Anna is a love song to a young lady of the same name; or more likely a luuuurve song to and about the band’s home State of Louisiana or both ……. who knows and who the Hell cares? But; if it’s the latter it’s a wholesome sing-along, fist in the air Anthem that will close any or every concert the band ever plays; and if it comes on in a Roadhouse juke-box expect to clear the table to accommodate dancers of all ages and abilities. Then again, there just might be a little lady somewhere in the Bayou who has had a Classic Rock Love Song written about her …… lucky gal.**

**For what it’s worth, in 1975 I went along to Newcastle City Hall to see The Warner Brothers Music Show featuring Tower of Power, Montrose, Little Feat, Graham Central Station, the Doobie Brothers, and Bonaroo …… all for about £1.50 and it changed my life; and it’s fair to say LeRoux could easily have replaced any single act that night and fit in perfectly well.**