

.38 SPECIAL

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As thousands of fans across the United States can readily attest, the music of .38 Special smokes with a volatile energy which seems destined to carry the band's rock and roll doctrine to greater heights than ever before with the release of the band's latest album, *Wild Eyed Southern Boys*. From the hard-rocking mayhem of "First Time Around," to the sophisticated melodies of "Hold On Loosely," and "Fantasy Girl," .38 Special has created an album which represents the band's most ambitious effort to date.

Recorded at Studio One in Doraville, Georgia, over the late summer and fall of 1980, *Wild Eyed Southern Boys* "is the album we've always wanted to record," proclaims guitarist Jeff Carlisi. "We've been able to make better use of the recording studio this time without sacrificing the essence of .38 Special 'live.'" Working with producer Rodney Mills for the second time, the band spent more than three months honing and polishing nine new songs until they were totally satisfied. Mills' efforts were supported by the production assistance of Carlisi and guitarist/vocalist Don Barnes, who adds, "We felt comfortable making a more substantial contribution this time to the arrangements and ultimate presentation of the material."

Three of the new songs were penned in collaboration with songwriter Jim Peterik, whose composition "Rockin' Into The Night" gave .38 Special its first national hit in early 1980. "Rockin'" now stands proud as a signature tune which audiences continue to reach out for like the national anthem. The band's songwriting axis of Carlisi, Barnes and vocalist Donnie Van Zant demonstrate their continuing maturation as writers, exploring the wide ranges of their many influences, and even venturing into the jazz-like feel of "Honky Tonk Dancer." Van Zant recently contributed to the songwriting of two of the most popular cuts from younger brother Johnny's debut LP.

.38 Special began in their hometown of Jacksonville, Florida in 1974 when Carlisi, Barnes and Van Zant teamed up with fellow members of that city's rock and roll fraternity, bassist Larry Junstrom and drummers Jack Grondin and Steve Brookins. They began to carve a niche on the northern Florida rock and roll circuit and quickly established a dedicated following which rivaled that of area front-runners Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers.

Anxious to take their brand of no-holds barred rock and roll on the road, the band piled their equipment and themselves into a single station wagon and set out to ignite the rest of the country with the frenzied excitement of an evening with .38 Special. "The only way to really polish your songs and become known is to hit the road," Don Barnes states. "That's what we believed when we first started out, and that's what we still believe today. That's why we continue to spend over 200 days a year on the road. The day we get tired of touring is the day we get tired of rock and roll!"

In the midst of that initial tour, the band came to the attention of A&M Records and an association began which has now yielded four albums. The band's first two efforts, *.38 Special* and *Special Delivery* resulted in a group of songs like "Just Wanna Rock and Roll," "Gypsy Belle," and "I Been A Mover," which are staples in the band's live show to this day.

By avoiding the overworn "whiskey and women" cliches identified with rock and roll bands from the South, and incorporating the influences of British heavy-metal bands and hook-laden pop into their invigorating sound, .38 released its third album, *Rockin' Into the Night* in late 1979. *Rockin'* delivered on the promise of their earlier efforts and won immediate acceptance at radio. Touring with bands as diverse as the Outlaws and Rush, the band continued to expand and develop an audience which grew in leaps and bounds. .38 Special's long cross-country touring efforts of 1979-80 were highlighted by a fifteen-city live broadcast from Denver's Rainbow Theatre last March, carrying the excitement of that evening across the western United States. The evening was such a triumph that A&M Records quickly released a "radio only" record of the concert.

As summer approached the stage was set for *Wild Eyed Southern Boys*. Commenting on the new LP, Carlisi explains, "In the past we've always been lumped with the other bands from down South. With the new album I think we've proven that we don't have to take a back seat to anyone."

