

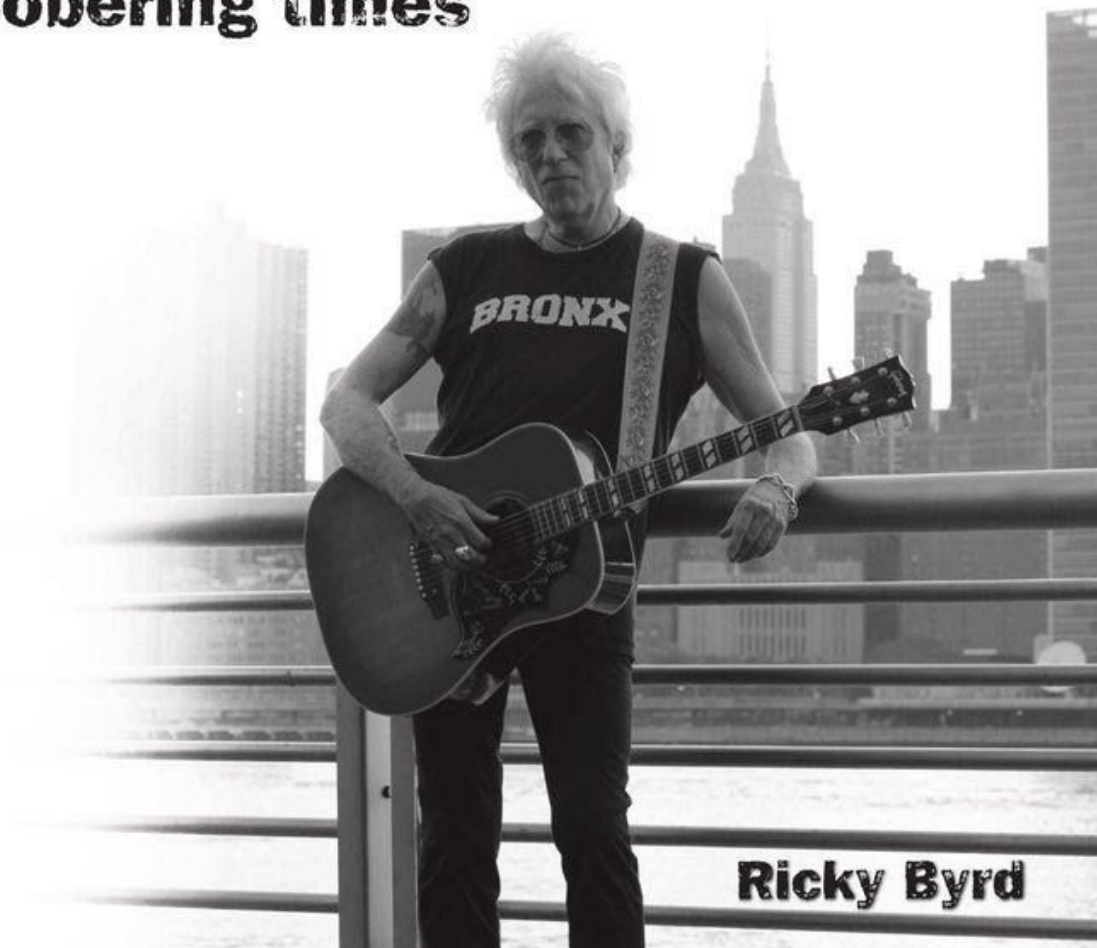
October 14, 2020

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/ridgewood/ricky-byrds-sobering-times-emotional-rock-roll-triumph>

Ricky Byrd's "Sobering Times" An Emotional Rock-and-Roll Triumph

Singer-guitarist's new album chronicling addiction and recovery brings joy and tears

sobering times



(Danny Garber)

Guitarist Ricky Byrd is best known as a member of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, a Rock & Roll Hall of Famer that performed on the all-time classic, "I Love Rock & Roll." Yet it's Byrd's solo work that is his most meaningful.

On his inspiring and invigorating new album, "Sobering Times," Byrd, clean and sober for 33 years, channels his personal experiences with addiction and recovery through a moving, emotional rock-and-roll journey. Byrd's unique insight into the harrowing struggles with and joyous victories over addiction and his knack for writing great rock songs make "Sobering Times" a compelling listen.

The disc, released in September, starts, fittingly, with "Quittin' Time (Again)." The New Yorker's jangly guitar and tasteful soloing lay bare the feelings of a hopeful, relapsed addict prepared to say goodbye to the party once again, and swearing this will be the last farewell. "Tired," with some fine slide guitar work, takes on the persistent temptation that leads to relapse.

On other tracks Byrd celebrates the gratitude and joy that comes with sobriety. "I Come Back Stronger" portrays confidence in fighting off demons while the beautiful "Starlit Night" and the expressive "Hear My Song" are all about being thankful and grateful.

Byrd's vocals adapt to his characters. He's a powerful singer who conveys heartache and exultation with honesty and fearlessness. And let's be clear: "Sobering Times," while at times delicate, also rocks hard.

Raucous tracks like "Recover Me" (a duet with fellow NYC rocker Willie Nile), the boogie-rock of country legend Merle Haggard's "The Bottle Let Me Down" and the blues infused "Ain't Gonna Live Like That" showcase Byrd's rootsy, down and dirty guitar playing. It's with good reason that his playing has been linked to the Rolling Stones.

"Sobering Times" is the follow-up to Byrd's 2017 effort, "Clean Getaway." The singer-songwriter is also dedicated to helping others in a very personal way. In addition to his albums, Byrd leads recovery music groups throughout the country, including right here in Northern New Jersey in Paterson. Byrd punctuates his messages during the group meetings with his songs. He will receive the Courage and Compassion award later this month from the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies.

One listen to "Sobering Times" and you'll be pulling for Byrd and his protagonists. It's a wonderful album by an extraordinary musician who has led an even more extraordinary life. We're grateful for Byrd's recovery, and that he's chosen music to convey his message.

"Sobering Times" is available through Byrd's website, www.rickybyrd.com and will be available across all platforms and in stores in the coming months.



(Frankie Byrd)



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