

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

Kris Kristofferson's Old Road' has a soft spot for old heroes

Friday, March 10, 2006

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Special to The Plain Dealer

Kris Kristofferson describes "This Old Road" (New West) -- his first set of all-new songs since 1995's "A Moment of Forever" -- as "just what I'm feeling today."

Some of it is about politics, as is Kristofferson's wont. But "This Old Road" also finds him waxing sentimental and nostalgic, singing in tracks such as "The Last Thing to Go" and "The Show Goes On" about kindred creative spirits including deceased Highwaymen bandmates Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings.

"You gotta realize these guys were my heroes before I even came to town," Kristofferson says, "so being with them was always a special kind of experience. I always felt like the kid that had been allowed to be in some place he might not really belong."

Kristofferson returned to Don Was, who produced the final Highwaymen album, 1995's "The Road Goes on Forever," to helm "This Old Road." He says the decision was crucial to making the new album work with a stripped-down band that included Was on bass and piano, Stephen Bruton on guitar and mandolin and Jim Keltner on drums.

"Don has a way of making everybody feel creative," Kristofferson says. "He gets good people together. The band was perfect, and he really brings it out of you."