

Mp3 Frank Hopkins - Make Love 'til Doomsday



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the growl of tom waits, the passion of fellow mainer ray lamontagne, and the biting socio-political commentary (and funkiness) of ani difranco 10 MP3 Songs FOLK: Political, ROCK: Folk Rock Details: myspace.com/frankhopkins sweetdreamrecording.com catandmouserecords The Portland Phoenix/Feb. 9, 2007 edition Doomsday Device: Frank Hopkins introduces us to our own mortalities by Sam Pfeifle Frank Hopkins is Portland's last angry man. Like the old Jewish doctor in that 1959 Oscar winner, played by Paul Muni, Hopkins is a throwback who spends most of his time upholding old-time values and helping others largely for the sake of its own reward. In Hopkins's case, those old-time values are the anti-establishment underpinnings of rock and roll, and the help he doles out is largely in the form of recording and production work with his Sweet Dream Recording studio for much of the Cat Mouse crowd and various other up-and-coming singer/songwriters. His playing credits would fill feet of Web space on allmusic if anybody ever took the time to catalog them. On Hopkins's sophomore record, Make Love Til Doomsday, his anger often manifests itself in a dark cynicism, though he describes it as a blueprint for enjoying human survival in the next century. It's enough to make you wonder what his definition of enjoying is. Right off the bat, in Einstein Song, Hopkins makes clear his belief that this world, it's a world full of lies in the context of a love song that also forces the conclusion that I believe in love, why's it never enough? A broken heart and a serious political disillusionment is a powerful combination. It's all very much worth a listen as long as you can get past Hopkins's uncanny aping of Tom Waits with his delivery. While Hopkins dresses his vocals in more digital effects than Waits would ever use, his husky growl is nonetheless a dead ringer for Waits on many occasions, and Wait's voice isn't exactly run of the mill. Logically, however, you've got to conclude that no one would ever decide to just sing exactly like Tom Waits, so you've got to further conclude that Hopkins is just singing from the heart, and Tom Waits is what

comes out. No one with his self-righteousness could live with himself otherwise. And theres nothing wrong with a little self-righteousness. Somebody in this town has to stir the pot a little. Largely, anyone with a political bent currently exists outside the mainstream club scene and is only heard from at the Common Ground fair. But Hopkins is out there playing in just about any joint with a stool in the corner, and busting out lines like, Were obscene and were bloated and we like it in here. Though in that Day Ignorance Won, he also points the finger back at himself: Id like to think my hands arent dirty/And Id like to think my hands they are clean/But I still pay my taxes, and I support your wars/And I still buy gasoline. Still, Ive got the same uneasy feeling about my thousands of tax dollars going to buy little itty bitty pieces of bombs while my car burns plenty of gas during my half-hour commute, but Im not quite to the point of: There are 14 traits of fascism and my America has touched on every one, from Ghost Story. Hopkins pulls no punches. Other than that Tom Waits thing, Hopkins doesnt miss many beats, either. Other than work from his Line of Force bandmates Chuck Gagne (drums, also of Dominic and the Lucid) and Matt Hansen (bass), Hopkins put this album together by his lonesome, contributing acoustic and electric guitars, piano, string arrangements via keyboard (Im assuming), organ, and trumpet (at least). While that might make the album seem manufactured at times, it also makes it intense and infused with Hopkins personality. This leads to an aesthetic unlike the precise and clean sound that many indie producers are putting out these days. Instead, Doomsday is a loose and raucous affair that stumbles and shuffles with a purpose. Its like all of the songs here were built for use as encores, with every crowd member drunkenly singing along, swaying under the rosy glow of lighters held aloft. Kurt Cobain on Polly? Thats not far off. Hopkins is indecorous and blunt, but its pretty clear hes got a good heart (like Hugh Laurie on House, maybe) on songs like the jazzy, Smooth Operator-esque I Was Alone and the playful title track. Doomsday, populated with just vocals, a stand-up bass, and an acoustic guitar, could have come off the new Norah Jones album, actually, except for those points when Hopkins is gargling his lines like Fat Albert. Theres a point on the new Shins album (my take: not as initially breathtaking as Chutes Too Narrow, and without the individual standout tracks of Oh, Inverted World, but the best album yet from first to last note) when James Mercer sings that he feels like a guy on the handlebars of a bike driven by a blind man. Yep, thats as good a take on living in America as you can get nowadays, and Im sure Hopkins agrees with the sentiment, but this album shows he isnt content to just be along for the ride. Make Love 'til Doomsday C2007 Frank Hopkins Cat And Mouse Records.

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