

Mp3 Jackhead - Slow Dance In The Kitchen



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Neo-Cosmic Americana Rock 12 MP3 Songs ROCK: Americana, COUNTRY: Traditional Country Details: Last fall, during their supporting gig for the BottleRockets at Blueberry Hill in St. Louis, Jackhead debuted a new song titled "Grey Hair." As the song unfolded to its conclusion, this four-minute, driving, almost radio-friendly song encapsulated the progress Jackhead has made in the last year and a half-- progress they have made as writers, musicians, and performers that has turned them from a loud and messy bar band into a loud and messy bar band at appropriate times, but intense and focused overall. After the show, I went up to Cecil Fuson, guitarist and lead vocalist, and spoke with him for awhile about their plans for their next album. It was clear, even then, that they were looking for something much different than their previous recording, Whiskey Melted Glass. Not to take anything away from that record-- it was a good representation of Jackhead at the time, loud and raw, a backdrop for one screaming solo after another. This time, however, they were looking for something more immediate and personal to fit the moody new material. Charlie Tabing, Jackhead's lead guitarist and vocalist, was sitting on the stage, still shaking a bit from another one of his classic onstage spastic machine-gun guitar performances. He confirmed what Fuson was saying: they wanted to do something completely different, based more around acoustic instruments, in the vein of Son Volt's Straightaways. Eventually, they settled on Misunderstudio as the venue for recording and Nathan Clark George as engineer. George, no stranger to acoustic music, gave the band another ear in terms of production, and pushed the recording quality to its limit. With Whiskey Melted Glass, they set out to record the band's live sound. This time they set out to make a record. Ten months since the Blueberry Hill gig, the album is complete, and it lives up to all expectations. Jackhead has not only delivered a CD of superior production quality, but a lyrically and emotionally cohesive disc. I first listened to the completed Slow Dance on a drive to St. Louis on a Saturday

afternoon. I took Highway 149 to Interstate 64 at Nashville. The drive through those small towns brought the context of the record into focus. The farm land outside of Murphysboro to the two stores and rusted cars of Vergennes to the once huge Consol mine to the renovation of the Opera House in Pinkneyville.... The album was born in these streets and the streets of Benton, Zeigler, and the trailer parks and PK's of Carbondale. *Slow Dance* paints a picture of Southern Illinois that isn't representative of the community as a whole, but one that is a reality for so many people. It paints a picture of the sparsely populated small towns, whose economy is still ravaged by the loss of the coal-mining industry, even as much as twenty years later, a picture that shows the lack of opportunity, lack of hope, and the overall stagnation of a people that for one reason or another are tied to the land and the area and can't get out, for whatever reason. It's a snapshot of those who frequent the bars and meth labs as a way to escape, and the abusive situations at home that arise as a result. *Slow Dance* is not a heavy-handed record by any means. Despite some of the subject matter, there's a lot of fun and energy in the songs. It's also not a protest record about economic conditions, it's just a reflection of this particular part of society, as the best art often is. In fact, this album most closely resembles Bruce Springsteen's *Darkness on the Edge of Town* in its depiction of blue-collar life. *Slow Dance in the Kitchen* opens with "Grey Hair," which starts off with acoustic guitar and vocals and unwinds into a melodic rocker where Tabing's lead trades off with the self-deprecating lines of the main protagonist of the song. "Someday I'll wonder where it all went wrong/I just say I'm sorry and stumble across my breath and write me another song," the main character proclaims. This illustrates another difference between the Jackhead of Whiskey Melted Glass with the Jackhead of today. Tabing's blazing solos are held in restraint to make room in which the stories of the songs may unfold. Most of the songs are based around acoustic guitar and vocal. Some are completely without electric guitar, like "Carry Me Home" and "Zeigler Coal Dust," two of the most touching songs on the record, which also feature Mark Stoffel of Shady Mix on fiddle and mandolin. Those songs, as well as many others, are propelled to greater life by newcomer Wally Davis's pedal steel. Though the focus is on acoustic ballads, that doesn't mean that there isn't any rockin' going on. The unsung heroes of the record are the rhythm section of drummer Nate Blache and bassist Jake Deleonardis, who hold everything together. They bring great sensitivity to the waltz swing of "Hide Behind Jesus," but still give energy to the more traditional Jackhead electric-guitar raveups of "Hell Hounds," "\$20 Haircut," and "Heavy Head." Fans who have seen Jackhead play around a few times will recognize the PK's anthem "Boozehound,"

which features members of the band Two Cow Garage singing along in drunken harmony, and even taking a verse of their own. Though Jackhead collectively takes credit for writing the record, two aren't actually theirs. The pedal-steel drenched "Goodbye Sunrise," the closing track, was written by a friend of the band, Justin Owens. "Sodomy and My Last Cigarette" (another live favorite with a great riff la Neil Young's "Powderfinger") was written by another friend, Steve Owens. A previous article of mine made reference to Carbondale as the cradle of civilization as far as alt.country is concerned. Jason Ringenberg began fusing punk and country in Carbondale bars, which he later perfected in Nashville. Jay Farrar and Jeff Tweedy started Uncle Tupelo in nearby Belleville, updating and further refining the genre created by Jason and the Scorchers before breaking apart into the highly influential Wilco and Son Volt. Jackhead is definitely continuing that tradition. In terms production, performance, and songwriting ability, I'd put Slow Dance in the Kitchen up against anything that's currently out on the alt.country market. Jackhead has created an album that will be instrumental in helping them reach the next phase of their career. In fact, Carbondale should no longer feel comfortable claiming them as a local band. If this disc can get into the right hands, and their performances in St. Louis can keep bringing them more attention and acclaim, we'll bid them a fond farewell very soon and begin linking their name with the label of "Carbondale alumnus."

Newspaper-"the Nightlife" Article by: Brent Stewart

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