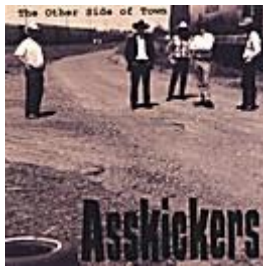


## Mp3 Asskickers - The Other Side Of Town



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Traditional country sounds with lyrics exploring more contemporary themes. 13 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Traditional Country, ROCK: Punk Details: Sure the Crazy Horse Saloon is where all the big names in country music play when they land in our sleepy little town. But Chico's best homegrown country band, the Asskickers don't call the Horse home, they play wherever they please, and this Wednesday, they're playing the grand stage at LaSalle's. The Asskickers' brand of country is something akin to the music of Johnny Cash or Merle Haggard, but with a bit more of a punk rock attitude. That's not to say you'll get deafened by grinding guitars and screaming freaks - the Asskickers are a nice mellow outfit who play pretty much straight ahead country music, they just do it in a really cool way. -The Synthesis Chico's favorite hipster country band, the Asskickers, have finally released their first full-length CD, a 13-track collection of sublimely simple, traditional country and country-fried-rock tunes with a distinctly cow-punk vibe. With this recording, the five-piece group - frontman Bob Howard (guitar), John LaPado (pedal steel), Steve Bragg (drums), Alan Wood (bass), and Scott Pressman (lead guitar) - capture on disc some of the great tunes they've perfected live: music that incorporates crying pedal steel guitar, traditional shuffle and bluesy, country rhythms and softer acoustic guitar accents, all wrapped up with biting and witty punk rock-esque lyrics that poke fun at modern pop culture, old-time country values, drug use and fleeting iconography. The album kicks off with "One Horse Town," a pretty straightforward, up-tempo country tune about the pitfalls of living in a small town ("All these trees keep closing in/I've got my booze my vicodin/but nothing seems to pacify my mind"), and leads straight into "Porno Queen," a lovely, weepy ballad, thick with pedal steel, about a love that could never be ("I guess in retrospect it seems/I was a bit naive/She made most of her money from her back and on her knees"). "Trees" is a song dedicated to Julia "Butterfly" Hill, "S&M Blues" is a scary little honky-tonk song about a bad night at the local bar and

time spent with someone named Mistress Sadie, and "Springer Show" runs afoul of so many different stereotypes of late night television "real life" drama, there isn't enough space to list all the barbs - sheer genius. -Max Sidman The Synthesis Expertly recorded, professionally played with a minimum of overdubs, and wryly yet compassionately sung, this is a fabulous debut from one of Chico's best bands. Lead Asskicker Bob Howard displays quite a talent for country-western trappings and a flair for a sort of poignant lyrical parody. "Trees" initially sounds like it makes fun of those who work in the lumber industry, but there's no joking in Howard's sympathetic voice when the song's character expresses his anger with those who seemingly take away his livelihood. In a way, Howard's lyrics depict a kind of 21st-century angst. "Porno Queen" is a heart-breaker about a guy whose girlfriend leaves him for the adult film industry. "Cooking Chicken" exhibits a lyric dealing with a teen-age transvestite supported by a percolating Waylon Jennings riff, and "Porn Head" is about as close to a successful country-punk hybrid as anyone has ever managed. So even if country isn't your usual cup of Texas tea, in this case the Asskickers' new CD might just well be what Doc Goodtime ordered. Rustle yourself up a copy. -John Young Chico News Review

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