

Mp3 The Brass Kings - Folk: Power-folk



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One of the most unconventional old-timey stringbands in town, their ferocious, world-influenced rhythms take that old-timey sound down some unusual roads. 13 MP3 Songs FOLK: Power-folk, ROCK: Americana Details: What the press are saying... "The back porch, stripped-down approach of the Brass Kings on their self-titled debut release is refreshing, comforting and a knee-slappin' good time." - RIFT MAGAZINE "One of the most unconventional old-timey stringbands in town, their ferocious, world-influenced rhythms take that old-timey sound down some unusual roads they're not to be missed." - PULSE MAGAZINE "the sound of a master fingerpicker on a resonator is still something special. Local guitarist Steve Kaul has a way with the instrument that should appeal to fans of Leo Kottke" - THE ONION "Their first recording displays a disarming wit and charm reminiscent of The Front Porch Swingin' Liquor Pigs." - CITY PAGES - 'A' LIST "The disc opens with a cover of "Muleskinner Blues," but the originals cut just as deep Kaul's got a terrific voice, too, that suggests Johnny Cash reborn as an '80s alt-rocker from Athens, Ga." - ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS "..an exceptional picker" - MPLS STAR TRIBUNE "Top-notch songwriting from metal-bodied resophonic guitar player Steve Kaul, and listenable, haunting songs with timeless lyrics make this an album you'll want to play again and again." - How Was The Show The full reviews... CITY PAGES MINNEAPOLIS - A LIST RECOMMENDED EVENT Brass Kings The Brass Kings consist of Steve Kaul (guitar and vocals), Mikkel Beckmen (washboard and other odd percussion instruments), and Brad Ptacek (washtub bass). Their songs, written by Kaul, range from the darkly comical ("Rural Methlab Blues") to the poignant ("When the Springtime Comes"), with Middle Eastern influences occassionally surfacing ("Lead Foot" and "Dynaflow"). Their first recording displays a disarming wit and charm reminiscent of the Front Porch Swingin' Liquor Pigs. -- Paul Demko Pulse Magazine Hot Ticket One of the most unconventional old-timey stringbands in town, their ferocious, world-influenced

rhythms take that old-timey sound down some unusual roads. Highly regarded Twin Cities guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Steve Kaul taps into old country blues, Latin rhythms, experimental music, Hawaiian slack-key, Middle Eastern and Far Eastern influences. Timely and provocative songs, such as Rural Methlab Blues and Heavy Hands (about the Iraq war), display Kaul's wry, insightful songwriting. Brad Ptacek, former punk bassist with Urban Guerillas, gave up his electric bass guitar when he fell for the washtub bass, after first plucking its weedwacker line for a jugband. Ptacek draws out all the notes on that line with a wild verve. Washboard, refrigerator parts player and foot stomper, Mikkel Beckmen (Charlie Parr, Crush Collision Trio) began his career on a pack of Grain Belt Premium bottles. His exquisite metal rhythms on the washboard add to the Brass Kings funky hillbilly rhythms, which drive dancers into a frenzy. Aptly self-described as something like Split Lip Rayfield jamming with Ravi Shankar, they're not to be missed. - Cyn Collins St Paul Pioneer Press - Led by guitarist/vocalist Steve Kaul, the trio employs all sorts of old-timey instruments (metal-bodied resophonic guitar, washtub bass, washboard and random refrigerator parts) to create an intimate, stripped-down sound. The disc opens with a cover of "Muleskinner Blues," but the originals cut just as deep, from "The Major's Gone" to "Rural Methlab Blues." Kaul's got a terrific voice, too, that suggests Johnny Cash reborn as an '80s alt-rocker from Athens, Ga. - Ross Raihala Star Tribune - CD Release - Debuts fit for Kings I'm still trying to figure out how a group fueled by resophonic guitar and washtub bass got the name the Brass Kings, but otherwise things are pretty clear-cut on the Kings' self-titled debut CD. The folk-blues trio is led by guitarist and vocalist Steve Kaul (an exceptional picker) and features bassist Brad Ptacek and washboard guy Mikkel Beckman, who often rubs alongside Charlie Parr. Their disc kicks off with "Muleskinner Blues" and includes 12 originals in the same traditional, twangy vein. - Chris Riemenschneider The Onion - There's no instrument as closely tied to 20s era country blues as the distinctively twangy National Steel Guitar, which not only was loud enough to be heard above the juke-joint crowds in the days before amplification, but could also stop a bullet in case the crowd turned ugly. The latter quality isn't such an issue anymore, but the sound of a master fingerpicker on a resonator is still something special. Local guitarist Steve Kaul has a way with the instrument that should appeal to fans of Leo Kottke, and his trio The Brass Kings plays the old-time angle pretty heavily with the addition of washtub bass and washboard. (No, they probably won't do your laundry after the show.) the trio's new self-titled disc kicks off with a splendid version of Jimmie Rodgers Muleskinner Blues, and keeps the pace going with a set of Kaul

penned originals inspired by the grittier side of street life along with a nod to oustate outlaws on Rural Methlab blues. - Chris Bahn Editor Live Performance Review: The Brass Kings CD Release Party By David de Young The Brass Kings - Photo by David de Young Sundays can be tough music nights in the Twin Cities, but the Turf Club was simmering sweetly with sound Sunday for the release of the much acclaimed self-titled debut CD from The Brass Kings. Arriving just after 10, I found The Brass Kings had just started. (Special guests Pert Near Sandstone were slated to play the final slot.) The Turf was set up old stage style for the event, with the big booth pulled down from in front of the soundboard and pushed up against the new stage on the floor. This wider than longer setup for the Turf is a good one on Sunday nights; it takes fewer people to fill the space, and an intimate relationship with the music is inevitable. The Brass Kings CD, released on Dream Horse Records, grabbed me the instant I stuck it in my CD player a few weeks ago. I liked it enough to pass it around to my staff, and the reaction was a definite, Wow, this is really good. Top-notch songwriting from metal-bodied resophonic guitar player Steve Kaul, and listenable, haunting songs with timeless lyrics make this an album you'll want to play again and again. Live, the music sounds even more unconventional, almost ambient at times, reminiscent of how the Doors might have sounded if they'd been formed in the ancient East and if Robby Krieger had played sitar, as Kauls guitar sometimes takes on that tonality in the mix. Take Rural Methlab Blues, for example, a kind of Bonnie and Clyde narrative of drug-making lovers in the country, or the bluesy and breezy When Springtime Comes, or Heavy Hands, which sounds as other-worldly as Nick Drake with a disco beat. Lest you start to get the wrong picture, keep in mind the percussive contributions here come entirely from a scrubboard (played by Mikell Beckman, who you may have seen playing with Charlie Parr) and washtub bass player Brad Ptacek (once bass player for the Urban Guerillas). Perhaps Kaul inadvertently described the musical landscape this band inhabits when he made the old joke from the stage, We play country music. Were just not sure which country. Theres a definite contemporary feel to the folk and blues The Brass Kings play, almost because of, as opposed to in spite of, the old-time instruments. And it was a joy to see it all go down with what can only be called virtuosity. -- David de Young is

david@howwastheshow.com RIFT MAGAZINE - The Brass Kings - Self Titled Release "The back porch, stripped-down approach of the Brass Kings on their self-titled debut release is refreshing, comforting and a knee-slappin' good time. Even though it's presented with very minimal instrumentation, it runs over you like a freight train. The speedy folk pickin' of chief Brass Kings songwriter Steve Kaul leads the assault as

washtub player Brad Ptacek and percussionist Mikkel Beckman keep the steady simple beats rolling. It's ballsy to release such a raw album when so many enter into the studio to make their grand opus, but the Brass Kings deliver with smart, sardonic songs that speak volumes of truth. The album's opener, "Muleskinner Blues," sets the foundation for what to expect with most of the album: Up tempo, minor key bluegrass-based songs. "Muleskinner Blues" is a great opening track, but what hooked me was the second tune, "Rural Methlab Rules." Maybe it's because I'm a drug and alcohol counselor, but I definitely appreciated the realistic picture the track painted of meth. I don't think since Springsteen's "Sinai and the Cowboys" have I heard such an effective song about the subject. There is no shortage of creativity on this album and this band. I really dug the Tom Waits-esque vibe of "Boxman Blues" ("It's good to have a window when you walk, so I cut one in the side of my cardboard box. Drew window curtains with a pen, but I'll think twice before I decorate again"). The Brass Kings definitely brought the goods on their debut release." - Nelson Heise

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