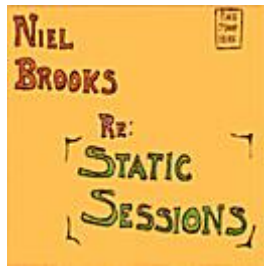


Mp3 Niel Brooks - Static Sessions



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Post-Gram Heartache music with as many roots in country as punk. 12 MP3 Songs ROCK: Americana, FOLK: Political Details: Static Sessions - Niel Brooks Review By: Ryan Orendorf Niel Brooks' Static Sessions feels like the musical equivalent of Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio. The album sketches stories of restlessness, love, religion and murder that intertwine to form the skeleton of an anonymous small Southern town. In a setting that seems all too appropriate, Static Sessions was recorded in a hundred year-old home in the upstate of South Carolina. Brooks, a former Clemson native, is an adept storyteller and musician. Static Sessions relies solely on his acoustic guitar and harmonica and has a surprising amount of rhythm and energy for a recording without drum tracks. The guitar work is excellent, which can be a rarity for singer/songwriters. It's rich, complex, and varied enough to sustain the songs without any other instrumentation. Static Sessions is reminiscent of early Ryan Adams' recordings and parts of Wilco's AM and Being There. It has a rootsy and underproduced quality about it that brings out the roughness and emotion in Brooks' vocals. The stories told are bittersweet and full of the contradictory influences that seem to shape small towns. "Satellite Road" is a soft lullaby about a double murder. "Jacob Halsey's 94th Dream" and "Railroad Blues" are upbeat, gritty songs of rebellion and escape. "Anabel," the album's most intimate track (you can actually hear the quiet draws of breath before Brooks begins each line), is an account of alienation from a love and the quiet resignation that follows. "Hang Your Head" is a haunting dirge for lives lost at the hands of racism. "Night" sums up the town's character with a tamed and disheartening feeling, one of reserved frustration. Brooks sings, "Dreams don't die in this town, they just don't get far." Piece by piece, Static Sessions becomes a fascinating portrait of a Southern town that is full of paradoxes -- a town of Bibles and guns, of beauty and self destruction.

***** Singer/songwriter Niel Brooks pens 12 songs covering religion, love, murders and social

issues in his debut solo release, "Static Sessions." (November, 2002) A native of upstate South Carolina, with a family tree of mill-workers, artists, engineers and farmers, Brooks writes a wise blend of folk, country and rock influenced music from gothic, southern experience. After several years of intensively studying jazz music, Brooks changed gears in the early 1990s with L.E.N.(Loud Electric Noise). L.E.N. emerged as punk rock with respect to early country writers. The jazz technicality, politics of punk and the emotional rawness of writers like Johnny Cash and Gram Parsons became the influences and foundation for Brooks' incredible songwriting. Brooks was a founding member of the band Grass Cactus, where he played acoustic guitar and mandolin. Grass Cactus went on to produce the album "Cactus Juice" and toured extensively until 1999. Besides being a staple of the jam-band scene, Grass Cactus was highly respected for their notorious jazz-oriented improvisation, as well as a reverence for bluegrass and country. Also a part-time addition to Greenville based alternative-country band Seconds Flat, Brooks has had years of valuable professional stage experience. Among other accolades, Seconds Flat released three full length albums. (The final album was recorded by Brian Ahern (Emmylou Harris) on Green Linnet records in 1999.) Wilco, Whiskeytown and Nnenna Freelon are just a few artists that have shared the stage with Brooks. His writing has characterized him as "an adept storyteller and musician." Brooks' talent and roots create songwriting with a haunting reality of southern, gothic culture.

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