

## Mp3 Blair Packham - Could've Been King



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Smart mix of roots rock, Americana and pop from "one of Canada's best unsung pop songwriters" (Ron Sexsmith) 11 MP3 Songs ROCK: Emo, ROCK: Americana Details: Blair Packham, acclaimed by critics and fellow artists (including Ron Sexsmith, Jane Siberry, Barenaked Ladies, and Craig Northey of Vancouver's late, lamented popsters Odds) as "one of Canada's best unsung pop songwriters", has just released his sophomore recording, "Could've Been King". (For those yawning "Canada?! So what?", remember, this is the country that brought you Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Robbie Robertson, Sarah Harmer, Leonard Cohen, Sarah McLachlan, Blue Rodeo, the Arcade Fire, Be Good Tanyas, Gordon Lightfoot, Sloan, Broken Social Scene, Alanis Morissette and many, many more. Not bad for a bunch of fur traders and some snowmobiles, eh?) At 44 years old, the time had come, in Blair Packham's case, to look back at a four-year period coping with that scourge of many a creative person: writer's block. "For a long time I made notes, jotted down ideas, but I was really blocked. I couldn't finish a song. It was torture," he says. "But when my dad died after a long illness, the songs seemed to pour out. This---my 'midlife-crisis collection'---was the result." The post-block songs are indeed lyric-driven, and the ups and downs of his recent life have given him much to write about. The Toronto Star said this: "No song provides more convincing evidence of Packham's mastery as a songwriter than the CD's centerpiece, the starkly acoustic "Little Fish," a deceptively pretty ballad, lullaby-like in form and delivery, yet imparting the realization of ultimate futility, an elegy worthy of Beckett or Eliot." The album is rich with imagery: Bobby "Boris" Pickett reprising his only hit (remember "Monster Mash"?) in a parking lot; a blonde starlet, breasts spilling out of her dress at a press conference. It's also got an unaccountably cheery song about impending insanity ("Coming Undone"), and a Dylanesque denunciation of our makety world and the people like you and me who inhabit it ("Hard Cold World"). And then there's the wry little salute to the

committed listener who stays to the end ("Last"). Larry LeBlanc, Billboard Magazine says "'One Hit Wonder' alone is worth the cost of the entire Blair Packham album or any number of albums." (Of course, Larry got his copy for free.) One way or another, Could've Been King is finding an audience. Like Blair Packham's other work, it's smart, bright, pure pop music for now-grownup people.

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