

## Mp3 The Mocking Birds - Still Here



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An "acoustalectric," experienced R&R band featuring passionate and witty songs; a wide variety of roots showing, but not too obviously. 9 MP3 Songs ROCK: Roots Rock, ROCK: Acoustic Details: The Mocking Birds are an "Alternaroots" tradition, ten years and counting, in and around their hometown of New Haven, CT.-- Two guitars, bass, drums and vocals; they invented it.-- James Velvet is the singer/songwriter in the band, Dick Neal is the one who has mastered anything with strings, Johnny Java is all things good in R&R bass, and Jon Peckman lives and breathes in his own beautiful time signature. The members of the group have extensive recording and gigging backgrounds in Bluegrass, Alt-Country, R&B, Blues, Pop, Funk, Indie Rock and even Jug Band music! Over the years they've melded all this into their own sound, described in The New Haven Register as, "A mix of tasty licks, lazy-bones riffs, and energetic rock'n'roll, with presence and personality honed by years of barroom gigs." Along the way they've played hundreds of stages, from gin-mills to festivals, as well as opening for the likes of The Band, Marshall Crenshaw, Dan Hicks, The Kinks, and Martin Sexton. They've recorded and self-released seven CDs, much-beloved by their fans. "Still Here" is their eighth release, on their own Mr. Lucky Records, and like the others it features the tunes of front man James Velvet. Velvet has a back catalog of some five dozen recorded songs, "some of them way too good for the industry, some of them lousy, and none of them published," says a bemused Velvet. John Swenson wrote the following for United Press International's "Life And Mind Desk" in November, 2002. "'Still Here' is a careful and nuanced look at one American's winter of '01-'02. Songs like "Gas Masks And Vaccines" and "Freedom Ring" address specific cultural and political trends while "I'm Still Here" and "Sail Away" examine images of home and loss, and the identities of place and possession. The tracks are stitched together in suite-like fashion with percussion loops by producer Vic Steffens of Horizon Studios." Connecticut concert promoter Rob

DeRosa describes the whole album, including the cover photography and design as "starkly beautiful." Longstanding New Haven arts writer Christopher Arnott was the first to review the album, and he closed his article with this paragraph: "Still Here" is topical, not nostalgic. It's hard-rocking (especially the steamrollong "Low Bar"), not wizened or trad. The writing is solid, not the rewrites of old R&B riffs most bar-stars get away with. Those are the main reasons to celebrate The Mocking Birds' first decade, and also the main reasons that the band has lasted this long. -- The New Haven Advocate 4/25/02

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