

Mp3 Bryan Masters - Thundar The Boy Giant



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Literate, lyrical Americana that croons country, blurts rockabilly and generally rocks the alt. 11 MP3 Songs ROCK: Folk Rock, COUNTRY: Country Rock Details: Bryan Masters' crooked heart was educated along the two-lane blacktops and dirt roads of Kansas, and his music speaks of small towns, dreams lost and found, and the torments of real love. Literate, lyrical, rockin' Americana for folks who think, hurt, laugh and live through busted hearts. Here's what others say: "It took years of playing around the Wichita music scene for Bryan Masters to finally release his solo debut in 2001 (the beautiful and aptly titled *So Low*), and only a year to follow it up. Upon listening to Masters' new CD, *Thundar the Boy Giant*, one must concur that it was a year well-spent. In contrast to the spare, simple *So Low*, which featured nothing more than acoustic guitar and solo vocal, *Thundar* is a fully-fleshed and nearly seamless slab of catchy, intelligent folk-rock. The eleven songs herein are performed by an ensemble of some of Wichita's most venerable and accomplished players. With this dream team of fellow travelers, Masters has trumped himself. *Thundar* is that rarest of birds, a sophomore effort that eclipses the debut. Though *So Low* was truly a lovely piece of work, its spartan instrumentation and mostly-melancholy tone weren't exactly uplifting (hey, neither was *Nebraska*). With the addition of a band, not to mention carefully-crafted arrangements, Masters' heartfelt songs take on new life here, soaring to new heights, resounding to new depths. Mark Scheltgen's return as producer has a hand in this, as well. *Thundar* benefits from a modern approach to recording, and Scheltgen seems to have innate knob-twiddling skills. On top of his production duties, he contributed numerous instrumental performances to the album, including (horrors!) drum samples. Of course, any monkey can cut a slick-sounding record- all that takes is time and money. Bryan Masters has the distinct advantage of being able to consistently write material that can stand on its own two legs, regardless of the amount of studio butter slathered on. *Thundar* is a compelling record from

beginning (it starts with what sounds like a very old, very scratchy gospel record) to end (the heartbreaking acoustic ultimatum "Last Song"), and it's because of the songs. The album opener "Grace" is a decade-old Masters chestnut, played around campfires and at songwriter circles a bajillion times. However, no previous rendition of this song approaches the joyful release of Thundar's upbeat take. Driven along on an undercurrent of mandolin (provided by notable local picker Dennis Hardin) and a transcendent eight-voice co-ed chorus, "Grace" is taken to its logical extreme, and the result is pop perfection. The schizophrenic and rollicking "You Again" keeps the tempo up, then gives way to a reinterpretation of So Low's "Miss You Sundays," a pining ode to a lost someone. "I can't get used to Sundays / and the sound of no one there," Masters sings over Mark Horton's pretty guitar figures, before retreating to his whiskey and his smoke. Rather than bringing the listener down any further, Masters kicks up the tempo with the unusually optimistic "Leap of Faith." This solid chunk of Midwestern roots-rock boasts more chiming clean guitars than the first five R.E.M. records combined. Lest you consider "Leap of Faith" evidence of Masters' city-slickerhood, he follows the song immediately with the straight country blues "Two Flattop Guitars," a jivey salute to casual pickin' featuring a slew of bluegrass and blues veterans (Hardin, Ken White, Richard Crowson, Kelly Slack and Mark Bennett). Through more upbeat jangle ("Thunderhead," "All Torn Down"), heart-on-his-sleeve confession ("New Blue Canoe," "Last Song") and third-person storytelling (the character-driven "My Turn"), Thundar the Boy Giant offers the listener an inviting opportunity to get to know Bryan Masters in perhaps the truest sense: through his music. Those who have been there all along, in the smoky, dank confines of Kirby's Beer Store or covered in mud in the Pecan Grove, have always known Masters as a gifted singer-songwriter. Thundar the Boy Giant may be his best chance yet to spread that knowledge to the masses." Michael Carmody, SEEN Magazine "...lyrically witty, energetic, and filled with the kinds of hooks you'd expect from a polished guitar pop band -- all while still maintaining an organic, acoustic, front porch appeal. ... Doesn't Bryan Masters know singer-songwriter songs are supposed to musically meander and be depressing?" Richard Horton, Optional Art Records "His songs, while highly personal, are accessible to anyone who has ever loved, lost, laughed or struggled to make sense of the world." Barney Byard, Orpheum Theatre

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