

Mp3 I See Hawks In L.a. - Grapevine



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"One of the most audacious sounds the Golden State has ever produced." -- Jonny Whiteside, L.A. Weekly Bluegrass collides with psychedelic country rock. 12 MP3 Songs COUNTRY: Country Rock, COUNTRY: Bluegrass Details: ALL PROCEEDS OF CD SALES GO TO RED CROSS TO HELP HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. iseehawks.com Best Country Artist, L.A. Weekly Awards, 2003 "With its new album 'Grapevine,' the evocatively named band I See Hawks In L.A. has secured its place at the head of the city's country-rock and psychedelic cowboy faction." --Richard Cromelin, Los Angeles Times "Celebrating the release of their extraordinary new Grapevine CD, I See Hawks in L.A. continue to explore artistic territory few others visit. The driving-force duo of singer Rob Waller and guitarist Paul Lacques have cooked up one of the most audacious sounds the Golden State has ever produced. Their songs have an air of both spontaneous immediacy and shrewdly applied musical craftsmanship so unconventional that frequently cited precursors the Flying Burrito Brothers pale to utter irrelevance beneath the band's high-altitude artistry. A wilder blue yonder." -- Jonny Whiteside, L.A. Weekly "Do two great groups constitute a, you know, scene? Along with Beachwood Sparks, the Hawks have updated Southern California country rock. Their music, driven by the fine steel guitarist Paul Lacques, is sinewy yet poetic--more nihilistic than decadent, with an urban-desert poetry all its own." -- Richard Gehr, Village Voice I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. feature the spiritous musings of vocalist Robert Rex Waller, Jr.; the classic fiddle and vocals of Brantley Kearns (Dwight Yoakum, Dave Alvin, Hazel Dickens); Paul Marshall (Strawberry Alarm Clock, Hank Thompson, Rose Maddox) bass and vocals; Paul Lacques (Double Naught Spy Car), guitar, steel, dobro and vocals; and Shawn Nourse (Dwight Yoakum, James Intveld), drums. The band formed on an altered consciousness trek to Cima Dome in East Mojave, when Rob, Paul, and brother Anthony noted how many hawks they'd seen circling over Los Angeles lately.

They decided to form a country band to sing about phenomena of nature and follies of humankind. The Hawks debut CD, "I SEE HAWKS IN L.A." got rave reviews (SEE BELOW) and made the F.A.R. Alternative Country Chart and The Music Never Stops' Top Ten CDs of 2001. Come see the Hawks on their HAWKS SUMMER MOUNTAIN TOUR House Concert benefit for KGLT Big Sky High Ranch, (north of Bozeman, Montana) bigskyhigh.com/ Thursday, July 14 Bandidos Bar Virginia City, Montana (south of Bozeman) Friday, July 15 Lander Bar Lander, Wyoming (at the entrance to the Wind River Range) Saturday, July 16

New CD "Grapevine" named to Best of 2004 lists: No Depression Top 100 CDs of 2004 (#87) Philip Van Vleck, Village Voice Freeform American Roots DJ Poll (#6) Bliss, Pasadena Weekly (#1) W.M. Smith, No Depression The Miller Tells Her Tale, SpydaRadio (UK) WNCW Listener's Poll KZSU (Stanford) Top 10 Insurgency Country (Germany) Lost Saloon, WRIR (Album Of The Year) Music Without Boundaries, KPRI Freight Train Boogie Listener's Poll Kay Clement, Don Grant, Freight Train Boogie Vielen Dank Top Ten, Netherlands The Music Never Stops, Barry Smolin, KPFK #1, FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS Chart, 2004 #2, XM' Radio's X COUNTRY Nominated Best Country Band two years in a row, L.A. Weekly's 2003 and 2002 Music Awards, winner in 2003. Their eponymous song was named crucial listening in an L.A. Times cover story on Echo Park. The Hawks also scored a "Modern Marvels" for the History Channel, a documentary on American cattle ranching from its roots in 19th century Texas to modern mega-factory-farms. The Hawks made soundscapes with old time fiddle, dobro, and jawharp, and brought the music to modern times with some Merle Haggard's Strangers-type country stomp and some space age (al la "Jetsons") guitar and human beat box. MORE REVIEWS OF "Grapevine": "For anyone who fancies fine country music, this album belongs on your must-buy list. This California band captures the expansive, vibrant heartbeat of West Coast country. Great musicianship in the service of excellent tunes. Top 10 CDs of 2004." -- Philip Van Vleck, Durham Herald-Sun "A fantastic fusion of twang and pop sense." -- Dave Menconi, News Observer (Raleigh/Chapel Hill) "Seemingly from out of nowhere, I See Hawks In L.A. have roared out of the scrubby Western terrain to claim a stake on the Americana scene. Poetic, introspective, and superbly talented, they're just what the nation needs." -- Andria Lisle, The Memphis Flyer "Occasionally a band manages to make sense of the moniker alt-country, and I See Hawks In L.A. fits the bill. Harking back to the early sound of the seminal country-rock thing, on Grapevine, I See Hawks captures the magic that flowed from the Byrds' Sweethearts Of The Rodeo and the two Gram Parsons solo albums. It's not 'pure' country, but rather a

unique yet identifiable style filtered through the casual easy living mentality of Southern California.

"Anchored by longtime veterans of the L.A. music community, the band features rich harmonies led by Robert Rex Waller Jr., whose voice bears an uncanny resemblance to the Monkees' Mike Nesmith, an often overlooked alt-country pioneer. With Paul Lacques' fine steel playing and Brantley Kearns' smooth fiddle, the band would be right at home on the Opry stage. But there's a sly undercurrent that indicates a different perspective. In the edgy 'Humboldt,' the band sings of a pot deal that takes a strange twist, and the sweet, loping 'Hitchhiker' recalls the '60s free spirits. An afternoon with Grapevine is like a pleasant road trip through the desert, with a flask of wine, a bag of gold and a pretty girl. Life was good then." -- James Kelly, Creative Loafing (Atlanta) "Members of a Los Angeles band called I See Hawks In L.A. apparently have true country-rock blood pulsing through their veins. Sometime of an all-star band in the Southern California country scene, the Hawks revolve around the songwriting of Robert Rex Waller Jr. and Paul Lacques. On their album Grapevine, they do harmonic meditations on the state of the city and the state of themselves, and come up with nothing but golden." -- Rob Kelley, The Oregonian "The mission of I See Hawks--chock-full of some of the most in-demand roots music session cats in L.A.--is to underline the 'Southern' in Southern California. Orange groves, check. Dusty highways, yep. Beating hot sun, uh-huh. Sounds like country music to me--and hold the 'alt,' thank you very much. Sure, flashes of modern life pop up in the lyrics, but the sound is pure classic twang, and all the sweeter for it." -- JR, Willamette Week "These cowboys make it clear that their focus is cosmic, but from a very L.A. viewpoint. From the languorous strains of 'The Beautiful Narcotic Place I Reside' to their debut album's eponymous title, 'I See Hawks In L.A.' (a call for California to fall back in the ocean and let the snakes take over), this Burrito Brothers update run by a group of self-proclaimed eco-radicals rattles the cage of country with psychedelic overtones and Byrds-like harmonies." -- Grant Britt, Independent Weekly (Raleigh, NC)

"Along with Beachwood Sparks, I See Hawks In L.A. are credited with reviving the Southern California cosmic cowboy sound. Their freewheeling, poetic style is in direct contrast to the one-dimensional Americana artists that currently can be found on every L.A. street corner." -- Nashville Scene "This LA band caught my ear straight out with their tight, eerie sound that plays into songs sounding straight ahead country, LA rockin' and bluegrass. This is west coast rock with a distinctive Southern California feel to it with space between the layers of sound that allow you to move along at your own pace. Fine guitar work with pedal steel, dobro, electric from Paul Lacques, strong satisfying vocals from Robert Rex Waller and

with the talented Brantley Kearns on fiddle and Paul Marshal on bass, this is a band of serious talent."

--Kay Clements, Freight Train Boogie "A country-rock band from southern Cali that play a Neil Youngish country-folk mixed with a Springsteen-leaning lyrical take. The key word is California here as the laid-back style overrides the ever-present Nashville infestation of country music. The new record Grapevine is filled with a moody vibe and bits of psychedelic flourishes, cryin' fiddles and acoustic and slide guitars. Hell, there's even some rip-roaring bluegrass, replete with soaring harmonies, thrown into the mix." -- Shukla, Creative Loafing (Charlotte, NC) "It's funny that the left coast figures the group I See Hawks In L.A. as part of the city's growing underground scene. Listen to them, especially their latest, Grapevine, and I swear I'd put the group from somewhere in the South. Sure it plays tricked-out traditional country that has that polished sheen that screams Nashville. But its combination of pedal steel, fiddle, soaring harmonies and rough-hewn Roger Miller baritone gives Grapevine enough cred to make any traditional country fan smile. But I See Hawks In L.A. comes at it from a different tack. Grapevine doles out tunes about lost love, muscle cars, the Book of Revelation, marijuana and idyllic Western scenes that read like poetry." -- Jeri Rowe, Go Triad (North Carolina) Wednesday nights Downtown have become one of the epicenters of the L.A. roots/Americana community, thanks to the bluegrass stylings of I See Hawks In L.A., probably the preeminent group currently on the scene. They took a little while off to tour the East Coast behind their wondrous new CD, Grapevine (which, like its title, owes equal amounts to Los Angeles and Bakersfield, combining a honky tonk heart with a mountain band soul), where they were met with rave reviews, but they are back home now, and have once again returned to their Wednesday night residency at Coles in Downtown L.A. They call it Truly Acoustic Wednesdays, and it is just that, everything unplugged and natural, but that doesn't mean that these weekly shows don't crackle with a natural electricity of their own. --Paul Andersen, Entertainment Today "Cosmic Americana as perhaps Gram Parsons envisioned it, from rippling waves of pedal steel and soaring multipart harmonies to beautifully evoked images of California landscapes and poetic lyrics celebrating the joys of alternate consciousness while damning the politics making it illegal (the rousing 'Humboldt' is a country-rock anthem waiting to be discovered). Richly melodic, thoughtful, sometimes psychedelic--perfect roadtripping music." -- Bliss, Fade In "There is a nagging doubt about Grapevine, the latest album from I See Hawks In LA. I'm not quite sure whether I'm being genuinely and right royally entertained by some wonderful country rock, or gently ribbed by some wonderfully ironic country rock. Whichever it is, listening

to it proved to be a hugely enjoyable experience and perhaps that's the whole point. There is one thing about them that I will accept without question or demur and that's the label psychedelic country. If the Beatles had gone west instead of east they might just have sounded like this. But the label not only fits perfectly the kind of bright sunny sound the band have produced, it also gives a reviewer from the cold north-east of England a warm and inviting image to hang on to. What is also beyond question is that I See Hawks In LA have managed to inject fresh life and energy into a genre that is now firmly in the mainstream and what's more they've done it without discarding one of its traditional strengths, melody. Libre Road for one is a celebration of the worth of country music. This is not a band who indulge in change for change's sake, Grapevine displays an instinctive understanding and appreciation of the roots of the music without being slave to them. The band will no doubt have been hit with a stream of comparisons from The Flying Burrito Brothers (they mentioned the Mojave Desert first) to The Eagles. All of them meant kindly I'm sure but none of them truly capturing the spirit of the band. They are also musicians who obviously derive great pleasure from what they do. They revel in the rocked up Texarkana but move easily and effortlessly into the undiluted bluegrass of The Salesman and onto the warm ballad melodies of Hitchhiker. To hear a band so at home, not only in three distinct styles but in three distinct generations is refreshing and reaffirming. And, for the sheer joy that it brings, Grapevine is an album that will never outstay its welcome." -- Michael Mee, Netrhythm (England) MORE REVIEWS and ARTICLES: I See Hawks In L.A. play the finest cosmic cowboy music since the Burrito Brothers--explicitly cannabinoided tunes encompassing expansive desert vistas and dysfunctional Hollywood losers. Dig their "Humboldt," the best marijuana anthem since "One Toke Over The Line." --Michael Simmons, L.A. Weekly NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 4, 2003 Earth and Sky by Jonny Whiteside Cosmic cowboy music lives. Cole's, an old saloon located on deepest Sixth Street, is an ideal setting for the musical dichotomy known as I See Hawks in L.A. With its shadowy barroom atmosphere, novelty signage (florid 1890s calligraphy proclaims "Ladies Please Make Your Solicitations Discreetly") and a crowd of downtown bohemian patrons sporting studied rumple-hep (one even turns up barefoot), the spot suits this band's unusual blend of country-rock methodology and beatnik-autonomy themes. Bassist-singer Paul Marshall, a veteran who has worked with everyone from the Strawberry Alarm Clock to hillbilly queen Rose Maddox, sits at the bar, answering a blunt "Just what is this band, anyway?" "It's country-based," he says, "but what drew me to them are the lyrics - they're very different. I guess the best

way to describe it is 'cosmic cowboy music.'" Formed three years ago by singer Robert Rex Waller and guitarist Paul Lacques, I See Hawks has an engaging reckless streak that's complemented by the first-rate musicianship of Lacques, Marshall, drummer Shawn Nourse, steel man John McDuffie and ubiquitous fiddler-mandolinist Brantley Kearns. While its first album, issued in 2001, was a somewhat haphazard affair, the band is currently sitting on a new 10-track demo that, though lacking a label, is loaded with the kind of idiosyncratic allure that Waller uses to great effect. He's a big boy with an affable demeanor; his strong, clean singing exhibits a profound relationship with the hard-country style. While this "Americana" thing has done got a bit out of hand, mostly providing context for a clutch of unpersuasive performers who favor droning, amelodic deconstruction of traditional form, I See Hawks manages to wrap up freeform poetics and Southern musical conventions into a convincing package. "Rob, my brother and I were out in the Mojave," Lacques says. "And we got high out on a distant peak, and it got tribal, this animalistic running-through-the-scrub ritual. Then we started talking about the hawks in L.A., and we're all kind of eco-radicals, so that subtext is in the music. We're all animals, but we've hit our limit and forgotten we're subject to all the laws of nature. The band is about trying to remain aware of nature while stuck in the city. So we said, 'Shoot, let's have a country band called I See Hawks.' We didn't play a gig for a long time, just wrote songs for about year." Waller amplifies: "We have three kinds of songs: songs about places, and animals - we have a donkey song, dogs, whales and, of course, hawks - and songs in defiance of death. What we're writing and playing is connected to the land. Whatever ground you're standing on influences the way you sound as a musician, and we've got the California country tradition that we love and want to be a part of. 'Defiance of death' is an important part, one that's deeply rooted in the country tradition. There's a sort of apocalyptic vision, and also the wish that all that would go away. "Everybody in the band plays a huge role, and our experiences are so different," he continues. "Paul Lacques has played in so many different bands, but he started out playing bluegrass and country when he was a kid. Brantley has all the old-time music in his head, and Paul Marshall has his country experience and the psychedelic world, which is also prominent in our music." This particular Cole's date - the band play here regularly - is the Hawks' stripped-down acoustic quartet; when in full electrified flight, they add mule-kick drums and Texas Playboys/ Allman Brothers twin-guitar takeoffs, but here, circled around a single microphone, Lacques' dobro cascades notes with an accuracy and affection worthy of Merle Haggard's Strangers, and as Kearns' impeccable fiddle breaks stir the audience to spontaneous

cries of glee, the Hawks' brand of peculiar cleaves to the familiar with striking ardor. The strange combination of Waller and Lacques' Mojave-fired animist concept and contributions from exceptional musicians seems to feed on itself. "I See Hawks' writing does have a of life of its own," Lacques says. "There's an unseen third person in the room when we're working on stuff - the songs come out very quickly. We feel fortunate about the people we've hooked up with, great pro players, and I always think, 'Oh, we've suckered another one in!'" I got a fantastic shock when I heard the California country music I See Hawks In L.A. have been crafting lately. They were already fresh and trippy enough to get an L.A. Weekly Music Award, but now that they've been together for two years they deliver killer after killer, with flavors of Gram Parsons, Pure Prairie Leage and even the Eagles floating on the Hawks' own creek of sheer ease. Rob Waller's casually robust voice presents their tales of lust and strange places on a plush platter, while Paul Lacques' clean-cut guitar carves up the spaces between, along with Brantley Kearns (fiddle), Paul Marshall (bass), and John McDuffy (pedal steel). --Greg Burk, L.A. Weekly

When you first listen to I See Hawks in L.A., you hear the staples of Southern California country rock -- sunny harmonies and a Flying Burritos Brothers vibe -- with a bit of bluegrass mixed in. But listen closely and you'll notice that they're often giving the genre a twist. How else can you describe a group whose lonesome ode "Duty To Our Pod" is a love song about whales? These cosmic cowboys often seek "the beautiful narcotic place" that they sing about. And, not surprising given the band's name, flying references abound here, from planes to birds to the man who is "100 feet up in a tree." Despite their somewhat skewed approach, their music is grounded by top-notch playing (particularly from fiddler Brantley Kearns and guitarist/lap steel player Paul Lacques) and strong vocals. Besides the group's fine harmonies, frontman Robert Rex Waller moves smoothly between a rough-hewn singing style and a sweeter, Parsons-like croon. Whether they're tweaking country rock, as in the humorous honky-tonker "Don't Bury Me," or simply creating the stirring dysfunctional family portrait "To the Snow," the L.A.-based band acquit themselves quite nicely on their debut. -- Michael Berick, Country Standard Time

The Neighborhood Sound (Echo Park): I See Hawks In L.A. In the title song he wrote, guitarist Paul Lacques turns one of the neighborhood's regular aerial features into a potent image of loneliness. --Richard Cromelin, Los Angeles Times

"One more day on the 605," laments Robert Rex Waller Jr. on the title track of I See Hawks in L.A., the debut album from the band of the same name. "What if this place got buried alive?" he continues. "The biggest quake the world's ever seen/Let the snakes take over again." Like the band's name itself, the song situates I See

Hawks' brand of country music squarely in Southern California, and it does so in front of a musical background lush with steel guitar and fiddle (courtesy of Paul Lacques and Brantley Kearns, respectively), and foregrounded by Waller's world-weary, expressive vocals. I See Hawks' landscape is an often forbidding one, bleak and lonely yet deeply human, with the shadow of death never far behind. The chorus of "The Mystery of Life" could be the band's credo: "In the end, it is each man's destiny to face the mystery of life alone." Yet the album closes with two tracks that depart from this somber vision: the up-tempo, humorously defiant "Don't Bury Me," which brags, "I'm gonna stay alive when I die," and the tentative love song "Baby," which ends the record on a guardedly hopeful note: "I think I'll hold you close when the cold wind comes." The members of I See Hawks have performed with the likes of Dwight Yoakam, Dave Alvin and Emmylou Harris, as well as with such outfits as the Magic of Television and Double Naught Spy Car. They've created a record that evokes sprawling desert spaces made hospitable by the presence of a few guys singing in gorgeous harmony. Dreamy and offbeat, the album stands up well against the best of country music while also achieving a surprising originality. --Gwynne Garfinkle, New Times (LA) Campus Circle

The L.A. Underground I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. Soar Atop Alt-Country World

Halfway through our afternoon interview, I See Hawks in L.A. guitar player and vocalist Paul Lacques points out of the window of the Silverlake diner where we are seated towards the resplendent soaring wingspan of a bird in flight, which passes by as if on cue. "There's a hawk right there," he says, forcing lead vocalist Robert Rex Waller, Jr. and myself to glance at what seems to be one on the wing, gliding directly above Sunset Boulevard. "We tend to see them as omens when we see them as a band." Sure enough, there are hawks in L.A. Not only in the sky, but in the world of alt-alt-country music. I See Hawks in L.A. formed a few years back and has been a mainstay on the re-emerging Los Angeles country scene ever since. Backed by the masterful fiddle playing of Brantley Kearns and the steel guitar of Paul Lacques, lead singer Robert Rex Waller, Jr. serves up a decadent helping of desert country rock that riffs on the pleasures of the soul. His somewhat vivacious range saunters from a Steve Earle-like plea for attention into Gram Parsons-like episodic peacefulness. Their self-titled debut record was hailed by critics and fans alike as a defining moment in the new country underground that began to take shape around the time that the Beachwood Sparks reminded L.A. why country-rock was once king. Songs like "Bury Me" and "I See Hawks in L.A." permeated a sad desert landscape that floated as high as the Hawks often claim to be. Now, as they prepare to release a follow-up album, the Hawks are ascending

closer to the sprawling open sky that punctuates their music with freedom. One of their new songs, the finely tuned marijuana love letter "Humboldt," shows that the Hawks are experimenting with a more rock-like sound, accentuated with the medicinal chanting that opens the song. "The new album just rocks more, it's a lot harder," Waller Jr. expresses. "The first record was very contemplative and a little quieter. The next one is more up and a little more experimental." With a new record due in early 2003, the Hawks continue to glide along the L.A. skyway. Hopefully, people will look up and recognize that there are not only hawks in L.A., but that they are poised for a musical takeover. -- Zach Selwyn, Campus Circle A local band called I See Hawks In L.A. creates music whose sound and feel is unmistakably Californian-like sunrise over desert saguaros, and, yes, great winged wonders circling the San Gabriels. There's an almost timeless quality about it. It's not quite garage rock, not quite country, folk, gospel or bluegrass, yet it possesses elements of each. Not unlike SoCal's landscape (and culture), it's a seemingly incougruous hybrid. But when the disparate parts of I See Hawks In L.A. come together in harmony, on waves of lap steel, the results are plain gorgeous. -- Bliss, Pasadena Weekly This album forces you to think uncomfortable thoughts. It reaches deep inside. (4 1/2 Stars) --Rhett Ashley, International Country Music Association News July 2002 I just completed my 4th listening to the disc, and I'm here to report that I love it! I knew the playing would be great, of course, but I'm quite smitten with the songwriting too. Great stuff! It has skill, authenticity, soul, irony, and an underlying sadness that I find incredibly compelling. Brilliant work. --Barry Smolin, host/producer, The Music Never Stops KPFK 90.7 FM, TOP TEN CDS OF 2001 LIST stuff as good as i see hawks in l.a. ain't easy for me to write about . . . you know, I never did get that rock critic job at the Deaf Gazette...but anyway....turn the cell phone off...keep your eyes on the road...visit this classic monument of sound and poetry...forget the camera for they have taken the clearest pictures...its american in the best sense of that word...its also my favorite record of the year, if not the last 5 or 10. -- Stew, from TNP I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. ***1/2 (out of 5) Band di Los Angeles all'esordio. Sonorit roots, belle voci, arrangiamenti intriganti ed una manciata di canzoni di indubbio valore. Una bella sorpresa, per continuare a scandagliare la scena roots alternativa. --Buscadero (Italy) MP3s, band schedule, photos at: iseehawks.com

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