

Mp3 The Low Anthem - What The Crow Brings



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New songs that come from old songs. Vibe. Providence, RI. Typewriters. Folk art. Corn-dogs. Gospel influence. Feng shui. Not entirely jaded yet: music that really is music, not an advertisement. Imagine that. Word of mouth. 11 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, ROCK: Americana Details: THIS IS THE FIRST RUN LIMITED EDITION. 500 HAND SILKSCREENED PACKAGES, MADE ON INSIDE OUT CEREAL BOXES. SERIAL NUMBERED. Motif Magazine - Sept. 23 - by Jim Vickers Low Anthem Makes Contribution to Americana Ben Miller and Jeff Prystowsky were once tabbed a "folk-rock" duo, but their music journey has them traveling further down Americana's back roads. What the Crow Brings, their 11-track minimalist masterpiece, resonates with profound beauty, depth and sadness. Low Anthem's stripped down sound and hoarse whispered vocals empower a rare set of poetry rife with pain, peace and longing, found only among the finest traditional folk bards. The self-produced disc opens with "The Ballad of the Broken Bones," a metaphor Low Anthem uses to create a reality of ideas from their experience. Jeff explains the metaphors point of reference: There's a bar in the east village, NYC called McSorley's. Behind the swagger of the young men who sit drinking with their red-haired dolls, there is a web of dust that begs discussion, but frequently goes unnoticed. Through that web, hanging on an old chandelier, one can see the unlikely shape of protruding bones. Aged bones the color of soured heavy cream. No one dares to touch these hanging artifacts of collective memory. Barely visible through the thick layer of dust that surrounds them, the conspicuous bones were placed there by newly drafted soldiers during the first World War. These men, upon safely arriving home, would take down their bone and break it with a long-awaited beer close at hand. The bones that still hang today, by contrast, are veritable tombstones, inundated with the repugnant fog of historical truth. The song sobs: So my friends if you're worried Don't worry about me The grasses are green here The winters are mild And the hunger is passing It's just a

sensation And over the world am I Up in the city it's panic and toil In every fiber and vein All dressed up like kings in their folds of desires The poets are going insane While such poetics can easily be labeled "pseudo-intellectual" or "pass," Low Anthem bring an authenticity folk aficionados find sacred. Without climbing on a soapbox, Low Anthem speak matter-of-fact through music, humbly acknowledging the limitations of their crafts and meager existence: "Now I will not play forever, so why would I play for keeps / Don't play for keeps, we are only for awhile." The eighth track - "Sawdust Saloon," picking up on the Broken Bones notion, may be the most surprising song, given America's seething anti-war fervor. The nostalgic and poignant piece of prose opens in 1971, with a young man and friends going off to Vietnam and tells of friends past: With Jimmy Tassone, I used to play ball Now he sits here beside me and talks like a man He looks like a man, says he shoots like a man But no medal of honor could make his Mom move back in So he said my drunk father, I'll be back for you soon But Jimmy still hangs in the sawdust saloon The song goes on to profess patriotism and throws a curve when giving reasons why the character "showed up on time to join his platoon." "Sawdust Saloon" laments unapologetically, increasing 10-fold its anti-war strength by telling a tearful tale and painting vivid images of loss. This one belongs on Neil Young's Living with War list (neilyoung.com/lwwtoday). Showing respect for their antecedents and traditions, Low Anthem pays homage to The Carter Family by covering the 1928 hit, "Keep on the Sunny Side," among their 10 originals. As genre-defying as many a youthful band fancies themselves, Low Anthem's Jeff Prystowsky talked about finding his music roots with a sense of reverence, playing old vinyl records such as Skip James Hard Time Killin' Floor, Tom Waits Swordfishtrombones, Woody Guthrie's Hard Travellin', Leonard Cohen's Songs of Love and Hate and Hank Williams Ramblin' Man. Jeff also spoke of Low Anthem's artistic commitment, sporadically working odd jobs to pay the rent, never straying from the project, What the Crow Brings. The band has even hand silkscreened the first 500 record packages to achieve exactly the look that they desire, which entails using cut up cereal cartons. The copy I have appears to be a Honey Nut Cherrios box. Maybe that's where things have a tint of the postmodern or avant garde, if you will. Jeff and Ben play more than 25 different instruments on the record - not prominently or showily - subtly, in order to serve each individual song. Unconventional instruments include pump-organ, tongue drum, tube harp, marimba, toy-piano and cell-phones. The album, however, stays grounded through the use of traditional folk instruments. Music comparisons will be drawn to Low Anthem's latest project, but if I had to make one, I would choose Ernest Hemingway. Low Anthem's What

the Crow Brings demonstrates a masterful control of language, an ability to tell precise stories and create concise imagery with simple common words. It's a brilliant piece of Americana.

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