

Mp3 The High Strange Drifters - Ancient Tones And Death Knells



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Collaboration between members of the Ass Ponys and bluegrass legend, Ed Cunningham. This album is a collection of traditional broadside ballads played with a reverence to the original style but reinterpreted through the eyes of great modern-day musicians 12 MP3 Songs FOLK: Traditional Folk, ROCK:

Americana Details: There have been enough revivals and tributes of hallowed bands and sounds and genres in the last several years for the sensible listener to be skeptical of them by now. These revivals and tributes - the ones we should be wary and tired of - fall into two camps: those who try, faithfully and desperately and grindingly and hopelessly, to recreate the sounds and music of their predecessors note for familiar note; and those who aspire only to the ironic cover version of songs that are far removed from their own sensibility, such as it is. Both camps miss the point: what is wanted in an examination and reinterpretation of old masters and their music is not slavish fidelity to that music, nor is it a fey and misguided expression of ironic, knowing contemporary superiority. What is wanted is a band that knows what's interesting in such projects, such music, is not the ability of a band to replicate the sounds of its predecessors, or to ignore them, but to play up and play with the distance between us and them, between the original and its interpreters. What is wanted is a band who knows itself and its influences. This is it, the High Strange Drifters, the band that is wanted. The songs herein, as Ed Cunningham has written in his liner notes, are Broadside Ballads. They find their origins in the British Isles in the 16th century, and while the High Strange Drifters' versions of these ballads certainly don't obscure or untenably mess with their given material (there are, for instance, no lyrical updates, no contemporary slang inserted here, no pop culture references inserted there), this album is notable and remarkable for its ability to show what should be obvious: these songs have clear connection to our own music - to bluegrass and country and

honky tonk and folk and rock - both in terms of instrumentation, and also in terms of its lyrical evocation of heartbreak and loss. There is virtuosity here, sure, but more importantly there is heat, and that is exactly what tends to be missing in these kinds of albums. One often senses that too many revivalists care too much about the originals, or not enough, but this album is so good because the band cares about the songs insofar as they mean something in the here and now - not because they remind us of an older time, but because they provide a connection between that time and this one, their songs and our own. --

Brock Clarke, Cincinnati, OH (from the liner notes)

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