



Wayne Scott “This Weary Way” Full Light Records

You’re entering the eighth decade that you’ve walked this planet, and while you’ve been writing songs for pretty much all that time less, say, just over a decade, and you even performed in roadhouses and bars for close on two decades with a country band that featured your sons, but in all that time onstage you never exposed one of those songs to public scrutiny – well, doesn’t it strike you as kinda odd! Maybe Wayne Scott thought his songs weren’t good enough, maybe it was just doggone shyness on his part – whatever, thanks to his Nashville based, hit song writing son, Darrell, “**This Weary Way**” is Wayne Scott’s debut song collection. Produced by Darrell Scott, and with his wife’s blessing half the tracks were cut in Darrell’s living room.

The precise nature of the loss that causes the pain – love, death, unemployment - isn’t defined in the melodically upbeat “It’s The Whiskey That Eases The Pain” and to be honest such clarification isn’t truly necessary, but one thing is certain about the album opener, a duet featuring Wayne and that almost 64 year old youngster Guy Clark, it sounds like a certified country standard, rockabilly style – except that this is the first occasion it’s been recorded. Midway through this cut there’s a neat accordion break from Dirk Powell. Without mentioning the fact, even casually in passing, it becomes apparent that the father and narrator of “Sunday With My Son” enjoys three hours of visitation rights with his son on the Sabbath. While this father might not have always been there for his child – in the second verse an absence for ten years of his child’s life is mentioned – the chorus says it all with “*When memory feeds upon the past of things that I have done, One thing that I remember most was a Sunday with my son.*” As for the melody – it’s a memorable one - Dirk and Darrell duel, respectively, on banjo and acoustic guitar.

“The Writer” is a spoken eulogy dedicated to the art of marrying melody to words, the trade that Wayne has been secretly plying for close on sixty years. Employing the Biblical introduction “*In the beginning the world was without song, People said give us harmony and lyrics to help us go on,*” Scott goes on to chart the evolution of man as an artist, respectively, via the dancer – “*to keep time with his feet,*” the musician – “*to keep the beat*” and the singer – “*there was no song*” and, finally, the [song] writer. Along the way the lyric alludes to some of the better-known contributions by Hank Williams, Johnny Cash and others to the classic canon of country music. The narrative closes with the astute “*Thanks to the writer there’s food for my soul.*” The gospel styled numbers in this collection include, the fiddle driven “Sinner” and the *call and response* uplifting profession of faith “Since Jesus Came Into My Heart.” The album title cut adopts the theme of offering a helping hand to the tired traveller, and at the outset the narrator bears witness with “*Once I was a slave for Satan, Many wrong things I have done*” and later urges the listener to “*Get down on your knees and pray*” then reflects “*I did not plan to go astray*” but concludes that due to past sins “*I’m on that hell bound Interstate.*”

Wayne was raised in Knox County, Kentucky, which is located to the west of Harlan County, and separated from it by Bell County. “I Wouldn’t Live In Harlan County” co-written by Wayne and Darrell, opens with the sound of Casey Driesen’s mournful fiddle, and finds the narrator recall, with tangible sadness, the passing of his father and how they “*laid him in six feet of coal*” next to his beloved wife. Haunted by the loss the narrator wanders aimlessly for fifteen years – “*I must stay on my weary way,*” but finally returns to the graveside to attest that “*You couldn’t give me Harlan County if those hills were made of gold.*” I guess simply due to it’s word structure “When It’s Raining After Midnight” was going to sound like “Walking After Midnight” and if there’s a low spot in this collection it’s this cut. That apart, the

track features some fine bluesy harp blown by Bill Schleicher. The public-spirited approach to life adopted by folks who live in small, remote mountain communities is the focus in "In The Mountains."

Having experienced crisis in "My Last Bottle Of Wine" – after draining the bottle - the narrator reflects, "*I feel the cold wind blowing, It's somewhere way down in my mind*" but made of steely stuff on a more positive note then adds "*There's nothing to do but keep trying.*" "Crash On The Highway" aka "Wreck On The Highway" was penned, circa 1937, by Dorsey M. Dixon – Wayne Scott was three years old at the time - and this gospel tinged tune gave Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper a # 8 Country Chart single almost a quarter of a century later. Co-written with Darrell the waltz paced "What I Really Need Is You" is a straight as a dye, no frills necessary, love song. A live reading of Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues" captured at Nashville venue Douglas Corner closes the collection.

Darrell Scott gathered together a stellar cast of Nashville pickers to help bring his dad's art to the public domain – Messrs. Malone, Dugmore, O'Brien and Powell – and also made significant personal contributions on guitar, mandolin, vox and more. "**This Weary Way**" is one of 2005's "*out of nowhere*" major musical treasures, a low-key, chunk of classic country music. Wayne Scott's writing style and vocal delivery is reminiscent at times of Johnny Cash [one of Wayne's lifelong musical heroes] and also Cowboy Jack Clement – no bad thing there. Don't expect Scott Snr. to be undertaking extensive national or international concert tours anytime soon, but while it is there for the taking I'd recommend that you buy a copy of this recording. Today would be good.

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 09/05.