

David Olney DAVID OLNEY PRESENTS: FILM NOIR

Deadbeat Records

★★★★☆

Across five songs Olney totally nails the essence of this black-and-white movie genre

The literal (French) translation of FILM NOIR is film black. The two-word term is also applied to stylish and visual Hollywood crime dramas, often B-movies if you're old enough to remember those heady days, made during the period 1940 to 1960 (and usually) filmed in black-and-white. Tom Russell referenced the opening sequence of Orson Welles' 1958 noir movie TOUCH OF EVIL in his 2001 song of the same name. Russell and David Olney are acknowledged devotees of the genre, wherein the characters, irrespective of their gender, are usually hard-bitten and cynical thereby adding a palpable sexual (albeit for those days mostly fully-clothed) undercurrent to the storyline. Prime examples are John Houston's classic KEY LARGO (1948) and THE ASPHALT JUNGLE (1950), as well as lesser known B-movies such as PICK UP ON SOUTH STREET (1953) and GUN CRAZY (1950).

DAVID OLNEY PRESENTS: FILM NOIR is a five song, twenty-one minute, 'genre exposition' in word and melody that begins with blues/jazz tinged *Frank Is Gone*. Introduced by a cyclical bass line, and featuring interludes during which Olney whistles, at turns he sings or narrates the lyric, while in the multi-tracked closing sequence he indulges in both. Mystery pervades the whereabouts of the principle character, although mid-way through the song the narrator casually mentions: 'Yeah I know where, but I can't say. Ominous? Or not? Neatly forming a link with the foregoing title, the opening verse of the ensuing *Blue Moon Hotel* delivers the insight: 'Now Gracie says that Frank never made it.' Propelled by a mean sounding saxophone, Olney spices up the storyline by recounting the newspaper headline that described: 'The deal and the double-cross, The how, the who, The phoney and the true, The motive and the means, The profit and the loss.' Supported by a finger-picked mandolin in the slow-paced *\$20 Serenade* unfolds with an escalating degree of wry humour, as the narrator/mugger—"Ever seen a gun like this one mister, I wonder if it's loaded? Don't you?"—accosts a total stranger and scores a wristwatch, a pair of shoes, a wedding band and black Mercedes (parked across the street), all for the princely sum of twenty dollars. Propelled at a similar pace, replete with swampy B5 organ interlude, *The Blues Don't Care* is a tale of love lost. Billy Wilder directed the movie SUNSET BOULEVARD (1950), and also co-wrote the script. It co-starred William Holden as an unsuccessful screenwriter and Gloria Swanson as a faded silent movie star who dreams of reviving her career. Nominated for eleven Oscars, the movie scored three and *Sunset On Sunset Boulevard* references Wilder's movie while doubling as a commentary on the Los Angeles movie industry and its sometimes tawdry underbelly. *Sunset Boulevard* was the early home to many Hollywood movie studios. Presented here as an almost seven-minute long theatrical piece complete with sound effects—an Oscar winning speech and audience applause, police car siren, car horn—this truly inspired and addictive Olney creation made its debut on his 1997 Rounder/Philo album REAL LIES. **Arthur Wood**
<http://www.davidolney.us/>



Kip Boardman THE LONG WEIGHT

Ridiculous Records

★★★

Wait a minute, this is Boardman's third solo album

Bless our English language since, phonetically, THE LONG WEIGHT possesses a double meaning. This is Boardman's third solo effort, his previous outings having appeared in 2002 and 2005. Six years is hardly a long time delay. This new album was produced by Eric Heywood (Ray LaMontagne, the Pretenders, Son Volt) who contributes guitar and pedal steel, while Kip is further supported by a trio of LaMontagne's Pariah Dogs, namely Jennifer Condos (bass), Jay Bellerose (drums) and Ryan Freeland (accordion). His support vocalists include Gia Ciambotti, Claire Holley and Kristin Mooney. Raised in the northeast, these days Boardman basks in the sunshine on America's west coast. Principally a keyboard player, and occasional acoustic guitarist, he's worked as a sideman with numerous acts including Tony Gilkyson, Randy Weeks, Ramsay Midwood and Mike Stinson. The musical approach on THE LONG WEIGHT, musically speaking, is that the ten Boardman originals run the gamut of pop, country and folk stylings. Not much else can be said. **Arthur Wood**
www.kipboardman.com



Henry Dingle THE BOY WHO NEVER LEARNED

Self-released

★★★

Bristol-based Londoner's debut of folk-based melodies

Henry Dingle is a part time English tutor who has spent a great part of the last ten years playing in just about every acoustic venue in London. He recently relocated to Bristol and this is a self-produced/self-financed debut.

Co-produced by Paul Scott, who also plays piano and synth, this album has been two and a half years in the making. For an artist whose websites keep talking about acoustic music it is disappointing that so much of this release features a preponderance of over dominant instruments on many of the tracks. Any emotion or feeling in the lyrics is submerged far too often in a wave of over-production.

Trying to sound like a cross between Nick Drake and John Martyn, I am afraid this collection of songs just doesn't work for me. I find the overall effect bland in the extreme with very little that stands out from the too-busy backings. Take I Woke Up for example, a song about an 'auburn haired girl...' he fancies...but includes lines like: 'said hello to the children of god/redeemed and loved/rock on...' but the lyrics eventually become drowned in some energetic violin playing that loses any sensitivity this track has. One song that does catch your attention at the start is *Diamond Miner* which starts as what appears to be an interesting tale but as Dingle's voice grows louder and more strident, I quickly lost interest as it fought a losing battle with the piano and rest of the backing. Whilst the singing on War at times set my nerves on end. I appreciate that it must be hard in these times to bring out an album that can be noticed and heard above the crowd. But I am sad to say that THE BOY WHO NEVER LEARNED is unlikely to break through the barrier. **John Jobling**
www.henrydingle.co.uk



Josh Kelley GEORGIA CLAY

Hump Head Records

★★★★

Honest and enjoyable country-pop!

Josh Kelley, the American singer-songwriter and brother of Lady Antebellum member Charles Kelley signed to MCA Nashville to begin a country music career following many successful years as a pop artist. Born in Georgia, hence the title of this new album, he and his brother formed a band called Inside Blue in their teenage years, and released a five track EP. Kelley went on to release his independent album CHANGING FACES in 2001 and then after signing with Hollywood Records in 2002 released FOR THE RIDE HOME in 2003. After releasing himself from the contract with Hollywood Records, Kelley released his third album JUST SAY THE WORD under his own label Threshold, which also released the next album SPECIAL COMPANY. Since then he has also released a digital album titled BACKWOODS and TO REMEMBER both in 2008. In November 2009 Kelley signed with MCA Nashville and began recording this, his first country album.

His country drawl is Keith Urban-esque, and while only debuting in the country music scene, he's vocally and lyrically armed for a successful time! Opening with the title track *Georgia Clay* is a strong point on the album, the song powerful and full of narrative and lyrical hooks that really grab you from the start. A song of home and starting out in life, whilst remembering the times gone by and making memories every step of the way is a lyric we can all connect with. *A Real Good Try* is a beautiful love song, soft and passionate, while *Gone Like That* has an edge to it that will have you singing along to the lyrics about refusing to let someone back in your life because they hurt you so bad the first time. *Naleigh Moon* is a beautiful song written for his little girl, adopted by him and his wife actress Katherine Heigl when she was ten months old, this opens up to the feelings fatherhood can bring, even when you didn't know someone who came from the other side of the world could touch your life so profoundly. *Two Cups Of Coffee* is another captivating song about spending time away from a loved one and just trying to sink the emptiness you have inside until you're together again, while *Rainin' Whisky* is a typical fun-loving country drinking song. *Ain't Lettin' Go* is probably one of my favourite songs on the record, although every song really does stand out for its own reasons, this one about finding it hard to say goodbye, is really impressive. Although this might be a debut, Josh Kelley is a fantastic country-pop singer-songwriter with a magical way with words and obviously has some really amazing stories to tell. His songs ring true, his music is honest and above all this record speaks to you. **Laura Bethell**
www.humpheadrecords.com

