



Parker Millsap PARKER MILLSAP Oklahoma Records

Parker Millsap's sophomore set rings the musical changes and sparkles like a diamond.

It's not truly raspy or hoarse to the extent of aurally grating, but Parker's (singing) voice is most assuredly weathered way beyond his tender twenty years. Born and raised in the small town of Purcell, Oklahoma (Pop. 5,884), Parker is another Red Dirt bred musician with a great deal to say for himself. On this self-released (Oklahoma Records), self-titled, sophomore set Parker (vocals, guitar, resonator, drums) is accompanied throughout by *road companions* Michael Rose (bass – upright/electric, bowed saw) and Daniel Foulks (fiddle, strings) plus, to a lesser extent, former Turnpike Troubadour Giovanni Carnuccio III (drums), David Leach (trombone), Marcus Spitz (trumpet) and Eric Walschap (baritone sax). Shawnee based solo recording artist Samantha Crain supplies a backing vocal to *Disappear*.

Based on observing Parker - and the boys - as opening act at the 2013 Wildflower (Singer/Songwriter Stage) in Richardson, Texas and a week later, and a tad further south, at the Kerrville Folk Festival, his clean-cut good looks and unassuming manner belie a stage commanding musician, who's a tornado one-minute and a light summer breeze the next. He earned my wrapped attention on both occasions. Funded via a PledgeMusic campaign, Millsap penned the ten songs featured on PARKER MILLSAP.

As with Parker's debut PALISADE (2012), his sophomore album was engineered, mixed and produced by the award-winning Wes Sharon and recorded at the latter's 115 Recording in Norman, (Oklahoma). Oklahoma City artist Tessa Raven furnished the album cover Parker Millsap cartoon. Rose was Millsap's sole accompanist on PALISADE, the heavily-bearded Foulks joining soon afterwards. Daniel resembles a mountain man, is a 'demon' fiddler in the mould of Lubbock's legendary Richard Bowden. This fresh-faced youngster's lyrics affirm an old soul in a young body. Raised in the Pentecostal Church (but no longer a member), Parker's upbringing is embraced in titles such as opener *Old Time Religion*, plus the ensuing *Truck Stop Gospel* and *Forgive Me*.

"It's good enough for me" is the narrator's summation of *Old Time Religion*, while the eighteen-wheel *Truck Stop Gospel* driver has a "big cross painted on the side of my rig" and aims to "make you a true believer and modify your behavior." Millsap propels the latter at around ninety miles an hour, while Foulks injects dervish fiddle. The pace slows considerably for *Forgive Me*, wherein a sinner contemplates contrition, while *The Villain* weighs up what has transpired and admits "I don't want to be the one that lets you down anymore." *Disappear* finds a young couple devise a plan to elope.

The 'let's mix it up' approach is similar to Josh Ritter's *Folk Bloodbath*, except that Parker's slyly worded *Quite Contrary* employs nursery rhyme characters, a dark, very dark storyline (based on

events that Parker witnessed), plus a growl from Mavis Millsap (she has four legs I understand). Boy does the song rock! Slowing to a waltz pace while retaining an engaging lyric, *At The Bar (Emerald City Blues)* draws from THE WIZARD OF OZ. In *When I Leave* the narrator reviews his life choices, while in *Yosemite* dreams of places he'd like to visit one day, with "*the one I love*." For the narrator a lottery win would be 'just the ticket.' A slide guitar propels album closer *Land Of The Red Man* and the closing line "...*Oklahoma's hotter than hell, but it's better than Texas*" will have concert goers in the South howling approval/dissent.

What can I say.....Oklahoma bred Parker's brand of "*grab you by the scruff of the neck, gut music*" is pretty darned amazing.

STOP PRESS

PARKER MILLSAP won't be released in the U.K. until, at least, the summer of 2014. In a build-up to that event, Oklahoma's U.S./U.K. distributor 30 Tigers will, on 1st April [what's life without a little irony?], digitally release the three-song OLD TIME RELIGION EP featuring *Old Time Religion* and *The Villain* topped off by a live (and previously unreleased) rendition of *You Gotta Move*. The Blind Boys of Alabama recorded this traditional, Negro spiritual in 1953, and it later appeared on the Rolling Stones' STICKY FINGERS (1971), where it was attributed to Mississippi Fred McDowell. The country blues singer and guitar player had recorded the song in 1965. Millsap's rendition was recorded during an appearance on NPR's nationally syndicated radio show eTown from Boulder, Colorado.

<http://parkermillsap.com/>

From the desk of the Folk Villager.

aka Arthur Wood.

Copyright of this work is retained by Kerrville Kronikles 02/14.