



David Olney – WHEN THE DEAL GOES DOWN (Album Review) Deadbeet Records

Olney contemplates life, love and death on this sparkling multi-hued musical collection.

On this Kickstarter funded collection sixty-six year old Rhode Island bred Olney, at turns, rocks with almost punk abandon, then invoking the big band era blithely leaps across musical genres by crooning. The guy possesses class and style. That said, the Ace of Spades playing card and skull appearing on the liner clearly indicate Olney isn't a terminally mundane "*moon, spoon and June*" lyricist. On this musical roller-coaster ride, death apart, the colour blue and memories of Saturday night adventures/misadventures are repeated lyrical themes.

Recorded at Guido's Studios South in his adopted hometown of Nashville, David (vocals, acoustic/electric guitar, guide tom tom, mouth tuba, metal folding chairs) was supported by a core band of long-time sideman Sergio Webb (electric/acoustic/nylon string guitar, lap steel, banjo, charango), co-producer Mark Robinson (acoustic/electric/electric slide guitar, railroad spikes), Justin Amaral (drums, percussion, lumber, metal) and Daniel Seymour (upright/electric bass, mandolin), with lesser input from Jen Gunderman (organ, piano, electric piano, accordion) one time member of The Jayhawks, Tomi Lunsford (backing vocals) and on one song each Neil Konouchi (tuba), Chris West (saxophone), Kevin Rimmer (trumpet) and Oscar Utterstrom (trombone).

Olney opens with the rocking album title song featuring righteous picking from Webb and follows with the gentler "Little Bird (What I Do)" replete with acoustic guitar and banjo support and Lunsford's soaring and cooing chorus. Appearing lightweight, listen closely and the latter lyric delivers depth and subtlety. David has mined many a fine story from the Bible, here, co-written with John Hadley, he invents an 'as if' encounter. Replete with brass section support, on life's highway God and the devil cross paths and "*passing the time of day*" the latter offers to test the former's "Servant, Job." "Soldier Of Misfortune" previously opened David's European only release *Ache Of Longing* (1994). Webb's nylon string guitar and Gunderman's piano prominently feature in his 21st century reprise narrated by a conflict worn soldier "*I had my dreams but then I lost them, And I am weary for my rest.*"

This album's only cover is "Something In Blue." It was written by two Aussie friends of Olney's, Bill Jackson and Ross Jackson, and appeared on the former's 2011 release *Jerilderie*. According to David "*Aussies are very direct sorts and this song has a plainness of language that gives it a kind of spaghetti western majesty.*" Armageddon is poetically evoked in the five-verse "Scarecrow Man" as a demon is exorcised. Nashville based Gwil Owen is a long-time Olney collaborator and their "Why So Blue?" is a simple yet silky smooth, late night ballad that possesses a pre-WWII vibe. The narrator of the slyly worded Olney/Hadley goodtime (sounding) tune "Mister Stay At Home" intends to witness daybreak (on Sunday) and relates "*Here's to Saturday night, here's to neon light, here's mud in your eye.*"

The final four songs are also Hadley co-writes, with Dutch musician Ad Vanderveen also credited on the penultimate "Sad Saturday Night." Olney rocks on the "*me and this mule*" husbandry themed "Roll This Stone." In "No Trace" a man "*come from far away*" utters the doom laden warning "*The life that you have always known, Could vanish with no trace.*" The Vanderveen collaboration is waltz paced, with David's voice and acoustic guitar solely supported by Konouchi's tuba. Where "Mister Stay At Home" is positively heads, "Sad Saturday Night" is most assuredly negatively tails. Olney closes *When The Deal Goes Down* as he began, with the vocally blistering rocker "Big Blue Hole," a philosophical treatise on death.

<http://www.davidolney.com/>

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001. David Olney "*Believe me the deal was this big,*" 2008 Kerrville Folk Festival (Credit: Folk Villager)

002. Sergio Webb, his Precious & a megaphone, 2008 Kerrville Folk Festival (Credit: Folk Villager)

003. David Olney, Radcliffe Centre Buckingham, Sept. 2011 (Credit: Folk Villager)