



Various Artists **"Deadwood"** Lost Highway Records

If you check out the web site of any major CD retailer you'll discover that the Lost Highway label has released two versions of this soundtrack recording, celebrating the first season of the HBO tv series, **"Deadwood."** One version bears the legend *"Parental Advisory – Explicit Lyrics."* The *"Clean"* version features a spoken opening track followed by fifteen musical selections, while the *"Explicit"* version contains an additional seven spoken tracks taken from the soundtrack. The warning *"Explicit Lyrics"* should actually read *"Explicit excerpts from series scripts"* and the main voice heard – in five of the seven excerpts - is that of British actor Ian McShane who played the part of the appropriately named Al Swearengen. Need I say more? From the standpoint of reviewing the musical content the script excerpts have no relevance whatsoever, while for fans on the tv series that is a whole other issue, but not one that will be dealt with here.

The aforementioned opening cut, "No Law," spoken by Clell Watson [actor James Parks] lasts four seconds and amounts to *"No law at all in Deadwood. Is that true?"* A performance of the David Schwartz composed series theme music follows, while the remaining musical contents amount to a marriage of vintage and contemporary recordings that stylistically run the gamut of folk, country, gospel and blues music – jazz even. Like Schwartz's contribution, the instrumentals "Native Funeral" by Reinhold Heil & Johnny Klimek, and "Arriving In Deadwood" from Michael Brook, are representative of music that was specially composed for the series. As for contributions drawn from existing recordings, they include the late June Carter Cash reprising A.P.'s "Will The Circle Be Unbroken," "Creek Lullaby" by Margaret which appeared on an old Library of Congress Field Recording, while, on piano, Jelly Roll Morton delivers a spirited version of "Stars And Stripes Forever." There are also selections from Lyle Lovett, Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee and Michael Hurley.

I guess that it's fair to say that the gritty musical fare presented here is a reflection of the series storylines.

Folkwax Rating 6 out of 10

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