

NEW RELEASES

C. Daniel Boling SLEEPING DOGS

Berkalin Records

★★★

Songs about life and the way it should be cherished and live



New Mexico based songwriter C. Daniel Boling's latest musical offering is the 14-song SLEEPING DOGS. The sessions mainly took place at Kitchen Sink Studio in Chupadero, New Mexico and were recorded, mixed and produced by Jono Manson. The vocal contributions from Andi & Ren Renfree and Bill Ward - aka Two Bit Palomino - were recorded at the latter's SongDog Studio in Houston, while Robert Tepper captured Freebo's tuba at Addison Sound in Los Angeles. Injecting an international down-under flavour John Egenes' mandolin, dobro and Weissenborn guitar were self-recorded in a Port Chalmers studio (a suburb of Dunedin) on the south island of New Zealand. Back on home ground, Daniel (acoustic guitar, banjitar, vocals) was aided on acoustic guitar, dobro, cello, upright bass, harmonica, percussion and support vocal by a coterie of local pickers and singers.

The cautionary opener *Moderation* focuses upon indulging to excess, be it food, spirit, social interaction or some other human addiction. In the closing verse Dan warns 'I'm bound to break if I ever bend 'cause, Moderation is not my friend.' *Unraveled* and *Never Speaks To Me Again* reflect upon family values and boundaries. The love themed *As Young As Your Kiss* reflects upon the passage of many decades, while the later *Nobody's Business* - Bill Ward contributes piano - recalls a distant time of 'outrage and shame' when 'a white girl would take, A Negro's man's name.' Akin to a recurring bad dream, the title song lyric reflects upon 'Moments of the past that won't stay gone.'

Positivity concerning the human condition permeates the lines of *Doesn't Get Better Than This*, while *Hooked* is a cunning tale dedicated to the disciplined art of angling for catfish. *Dark Secrets* explores the way personal revelations can often colour the future of a relationship. 'A holy squirrel,' 'sacred cow,' 'pantheistic pangolin' and 'old agnostic troubadour' feature in the lyrically sly *Pontificating Paradox*, while *Someday* explores a world where celebrity and greed are worshipped,

when we should be celebrating 'humanity's diversity.' The penultimate *It's His Voice She Hears* portrays a woman new to, and unfamiliar with, the world of widowhood. SLEEPING DOGS closes with *Summer Sweetcorn* a seasonal ode to all those jobs we earnestly plan to do but never accomplish. **Arthur Wood**

www.danielboling.com

Colin Mackay DO WHAT YOU LOVE

Colin Mackay music

CM130329

★★★

Colin Mackay delivers rocking songs and subdued reflection in equal measure on this thoughtful and varied album



Regardless of its Nashville roots, DO WHAT YOU LOVE wasn't specifically made to be a country album. Even so, the influence of the genre and producer Bil Vornick are clearly audible on this collection, which should satisfy most listeners who prefer their country served with more than a subtle hint of rock.

Mackay, who hails from Aberdeen rather than the American south, cites a broad range of influences such as Johnny Cash, the Beatles, Dire Straits, U2, Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen. This eclectic mixture comes through on DO WHAT YOU LOVE to some extent.

The material flits from up-tempo rocking numbers to more delicate moments of reflection, and it's this distinction that gives DO WHAT YOU LOVE its overarching character. The first song to greet listeners is the album's title track, which Mackay claims was written in a mere 15 minutes. This might not be the best recipe for success for most artists, yet the song is an attention-grabber that sets the bar high for the rest of the album.

Whisky Morning doesn't disappoint as the second track, as Mackay gets a little more soulful and loses none of the rhythm that will have you nodding your head. However, it's here that things slow down with *Let You Go*, an intelligent self-penned contribution. This offers a neat build-up to Mackay's cover of Mike Reid's *Always Gonna Be You*. He does a superb job on this cover, which is likely to be set to repeat by many a listener.

Those who were hooked by the first two songs have to wait until tracks seven and

eight, *Cold Hard Truth* and *Could You Love Somebody*, for another dose of high-energy material. These could have been spaced out a little more to make the DO WHAT YOU LOVE a bit more accessible to various audiences, though this is no major criticism. *Handle With Care* and *In My Dreams* provide the conclusion to the album, reverting back to a slower pace.

Despite not being a typical Nashville album in certain regards, DO WHAT YOU LOVE should satisfy most country fans. Mackay's vocals are strong and he's ably assisted by Sonny Garrish (steel), Mark Fain (bass), Michael Black (backing vocals) and Vickie Carrico (backing vocals) amongst others. As a whole this is a contemplative album but there's more than enough attitude about it to distinguish it from other recordings. **Ian Horne**

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Ger Costelloe LETTING IN WATER

Self-released

★★★★☆

Ger Costelloe's unique talent shines through on debut album LETTING IN WATER



Ger Costelloe is a very experienced and accomplished singer-songwriter, yet he's waited until now to put together LETTING IN WATER, his debut album. It's clear that a lot of thought has gone into this album, which flits between and across genres seamlessly, all the while offering well-considered lyrics. It is indeed fitting that Costelloe dedicates the album to 'all revolutionaries, lovers and seekers of the truth past and present.'

There are a few things that lend real character to LETTING IN WATER. The first is Costelloe's impressive dedication to his work. Beyond providing the vocals, Ger played all of the instruments used for the album and played a central role in producing it. Even the album artwork is a Costelloe offering, taken from his painting, also titled *Letting in Water*. Secondly, Costelloe's vocals possess a distinctive and inimitable charm that will hook you in.

Costelloe cites a range of influences as varied as Lightning Hopkins, Burning Spear and Sandy Denny, and this range is demonstrated in songs such as title track *Letting in Water*, *Inis Oirr*, *Drink Your Wine*, and *The Plan*. It's clear that Costelloe isn't afraid to experiment, and as a result this