

Songdog – The Time Of Summer Lightning (One Little Indian): What a fantastic line to open an album with, “One day when God begs my forgiveness..”! Also the title of the opening song it explores the possibility of God realising that on the grand scale he’s fucked up big time against the backdrop of the sweet treasures of small personal memories relayed in Lyndon Morgan’s uniquely stirring vocals. Riding a gently pastoral backing of guitar and cello it has an immediate and compelling beauty. Track 2, ‘The Republic Of Howling Wolf’ is equally beautiful but in a rather more cool Lou Reed-like fashion. Fantastic lyrics about getting involved with the cool, dangerous and slightly mad kind of girl who’ll set off fireworks in your heart, take your hand and lead you helplessly into all kinds of danger, finally leaving you worn out and broken. All over sliding bass lines, the ring of a tambourine and sharply atmospheric guitar lines. If everything else on the album was absolute pants it would still be worth twice the price for these two gems alone. And, of course they’re not, the rest of the album is a perfect showcase for Morgan’s downbeat worldview that often takes tiny details of small lives and lights them with a grainy, cinematic splendour. It is hard to resist being transported into the worlds and lives being sung about. Tragic love stories like ‘Fairytale’- a brooding duet with manager Corrinne Frazzoni – in which the protagonists see themselves as “..like the Sonny & Cher of crime” and which has a killer twist at the end.

Perhaps the strangest track is their cover of **Clash** classic Janie Jones. No room here for amphetamine driven guitar chords or Strummer’s throat shredding vocals, it kind of takes the original intent of a bored and frustrated young man, ready to explode and transposes it to the view of an older man, equally bored and frustrated but overwhelmed with a sense of hopeless resignation. An extremely brave and sensitive reading.

There is a heavy mournfulness that gently spreads itself across the songs perfectly capturing how recalling good, even special memories can instil in us an unshakable sadness, ‘Jerusalem Road’ being a perfect example. ‘The Waitress From Yorkville, Toronto’ tells the tale of a chance meeting with astutely observational lyrics, “She pops the bubblegum she blew / I really want her and she knows it too / she’s counting change from a ten dollar note / I’m watching the love-bites on her throat”. Musically the song drifts along failing to reach a conclusion, the lyrics too hitting a dead-end just as you know any potential relationship between the characters must.

The title track recalls a fleeting romance that leaves an indelible mark long after it’s over and those involved have moved on to new loves, “I said level with me Audrey you really going to marry that guy / his ring will hit your finger like a cell-door closing.”

A very special album takes rock lyricism to hitherto unknown heights.

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