

Songdog

THE TIME OF SUMMER

LIGHTNING

ONE LITTLE INDIAN 2005

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Very much a mood album and a lengthy accompaniment to an evening's pondering on life, Lyndon Morgan's album has a captivating set of lyrics that you can consider in depth or let wash over you in a wave of finger picking melancholy, pulling lyrical snippets from the flow as it passes. I say Lyndon Morgan because, although the band is Songdog, he writes all the material himself (except the Clash cover). There is an edge to the lyrics that sweeps them fortunately over the contemporary singer-songwriter breakwater I have built around myself. There seems to be a refreshing absence of self-pity and a bare minimum of whimsy. Perhaps it's because Lyndon, rather than the twenty-something I expected, jumping on the bandwagon, is a veteran of the punk scene and a veteran of three Songdog albums.

It's a gentle and thoughtful set of story-songs, painting pictures and making movies in my head. The lovely "One Day When God Begs My Forgiveness" imagines God giving up and Lyndon consoling him with the good days forgotten and rock and roll. "The Republic Of Howlin' Wolf" is a pick-up song, rolling round the melancholy of lonely people. Lead guitar in classic flavours pokes out now and again to add a bent note or touch of colour. "Childhood Skies" offers the verse:

"She broke the heel off her shoe and walked
barefoot all the way home
She'd like to meet someone in the end
Maybe just a friend
Just someone to miss her when she's gone
She saw a lorry load of sheep bound for hell..."

That's how it is – hard, sad, lonely but redeemed

with fascinating word pictures. Fairytale belongs really to Corrinne Frazzoni with her horribly downcast singing of a prostitute who's "a Renaissance courtesan sleeping off the gin" This one gets almost unbearably sad and is punctuated by electric guitar lines echoing Neil Young's sadder moments. Lyndon is a huge fan of Bob Dylan and Tom Waits and Wait's love of the colours of the seedy side of life and motel images come through here, along with Dylan's love of telling tales.

"My Space-Rock Tape" has more of the same – "someone sprayed a message high on the cliffs so I climbed up, it seemed important I see, but when I got real close all it said was LIMP BIZKIT RULE. That old sadist Time twists his knife again. Another day gone like piss down a drain." "You use up your youth like it's loose change you're giving away. My midnight candle looks pathetic in the light of day." The Clash's Janie Jones is remodelled and re-owned. Taken at a leisurely pace, it becomes almost a Springsteen song! The same resonances and the same tlae of blue-collar workers making it through another day with thoughts of a girl and a car. Kind of makes me re-evaluate The Clash and their place in the time-line of rock.

The album is seventy minutes long and, with it's regular steady pace, I find myself drifting off onto other thoughts now and again, but then some image from the lyrics will drag me back into it. Like "I sucked my stomach in and imagined your nipples hard."

Thoughtful, paced, picturesque, reflective, crafted, worth investigating.

Ross McGibbon