

Sound

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with**

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Neal & The Vipers "One Drunken Kiss" N/V Records

Neal Vitullo brings a maturity and confidence with his guitar playing on this, the band's ninth album. No longer Young Neal, his years of frequent and hard driven live performing has seasoned his playing across a broad spectrum of styles: vintage rock, blues, funk, and more. With the always tight backing of bassist Steven Bigelow and drummer Michael LaBelle, the band delivers on whichever genre a song calls for. And then, there are the vocal tracks of longtime collaborator Dave Howard, gritty and grainy when needed, which is most of the time on this blues and roots album.

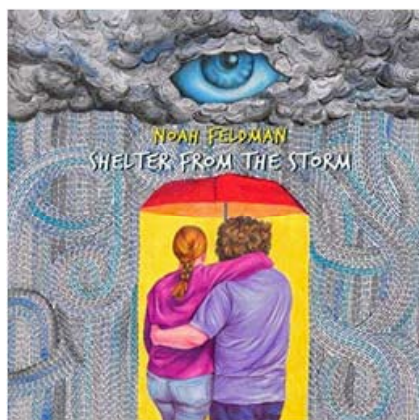
The first of thirteen songs, Slow Down, has a real '50's rock & roll feel, with a bass run that evokes the Stray Cats, but with more character to the vocals. Neal's guitar work at once shows the sophistication of his playing, with solos that show how the '50's could have been. Not One To Complain features a nice shuffle beat behind lyrics like "All that fightin' and back bitin' But you know Lord I'm Not One To Complain." The band is especially tight, with intricate string-bending during Neal's guitar solos.

A cover of the vintage Right Place Wrong Time is carried by the appropriately Dr. John-esque sound of Dave Howard's voice over a funk beat, filled in with guitar solos in place of the piano most familiar to this song. There's A Ghost In My Room, by contrast, has an SRV sound to the guitar work, slow blues over lines like "Feelin' colder than the clay," erupting into fast rhythmic

chords. Those Eyes features some of the most entertaining pure guitar play on this album, slow jazz chords moving into smooth melody, then speeding up, all with intricacy and feeling.

Neal & The Vipers have produced a polished album across a range of blues and roots music, delivered by Neal Vitullo's versatile guitar, exceptional rhythm section, and the power vocals of Dave Howard. The band continues to perform live often, working from their Rhode Island base. More info may be found at www.nealandthevipers.com, or on Facebook under nealandthevipers.

- Jon Persson



Noah Feldman "Shelter from the Storm" Independent

Solo artist and Connecticut native Noah Feldman, also the bassist and keyboardist for the band Fleet Music, recently released his first album comprised of songs written over the past decade. The pop/rock release "Shelter from the Storm" is a beautiful, introspective and poetic album dedicated to his father who recently passed away. Every song is radio-ready, well-written and heartfelt. With vocals reminiscent of Dave Mathews, Feldman also plays acoustic and electric guitars, organ, piano and drums on the album. Other musicians include: Nick Cancelmo on bass; Christian Brunelle on drums, vocals and piano; Nat Ross on piano; Brendan Fox on bass and vocals; Sara-beth Hanykyj on ukulele; Alec Rice on vibraphone; and Danny Fleet on vocals.

The album kicks off with the upbeat and inspirational "I'll be the One," followed by "Whatcha Gonna Say" highlighting prominent organ and bass lines and then "Sealed" with its dry and vulnerable vocals accompanied by simple piano. My favorite track, "Melancholy," is spiritual and soul-searching with sweet harmonies and an impassioned guitar solo. Next is Feldman's cover of the traditional "Wayfaring Stranger." Notables who have also recorded their own versions of this American folk song include Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris, Eva Cassidy, Glen Campbell and Neko Case. It can be argued that the way an artist covers this song, is the artist they are. Feldman proves just that with a brilliant theatrical 70s classic rock version all his own.

Next up is the mystical "On the Vine" complete with haunting piano and then "Run," a passionate rockin' tune. "Sara-beth's Song" is a love song in its truest form with precision pickin', gentle vocals and ukulele. The CD concludes with the rockin' "Umbrella," sounding just like driving rain, makin' ya want for more. Check it out here: <https://noahfeldman.hearnow.com>

- Sue Menhart



Bennett Brothers "Not Made For Hire" American Showplace

The Bennett Brothers hail from Brooklyn, New York, down by the Verrazano Bridge, certainly a place where musical influences mix with life's inevitable experiences. Yet the track of Jimmy and Peter Bennett's music and lives lead them to an extended series of gigs with one of American music's great influencers, Levon Helm. The drummer and singer for The Band, with his deep Arkansas roots in traditional and emerging music, hosted many a band at his Woodstock home and studio, his Midnight Ramblin' shows drawing a performing audience of

some of the great musicians of the last fifty or more years.

Out of this experience, Jimmy and Peter first formed the Alexis P Suter band, with which they played nearly a hundred of the rambles. More recently, they have formed their own band, the Bennett Brothers, Jimmy on guitar and Peter on bass, and have produced a first album, Not Made For Hire. They are joined by John Ginty on keyboards, Lee Falco on drums, plus a host of musicians and vocalist to fill out the tracks. The result is a collection of eleven original songs, all written by Jimmey Bennett, that combine gritty vocals with driving rhythms and melodically engaging guitar and keyboard work.

One of the high points of the album is "I Just Don't Want The Blues Today," a slow number whose feel invokes a Tom Waits song, posing a musical question mark, though with clearer vocals: these are answered by the soulful voice of Linda Pino, topped with a measured guitar solo. Blues # 9, conversely, puts the guitar work of Jimmy Bennett front and center in an instrumental piece that starts with a classic blues feel before spiraling into skillfully controlled distortion, finishing with some fine keyboard work. Walk With The Devil has a strong BB King feel to the bass and drum work, with well crafted lyrics and more of Jimmy Bennett's guitar work.

The overall effect of this album is of energy and skill, the obvious result of many years of playing and performing amid some of the best blues and rock musicians to take the stage. More information may be found at www.TheBennettBrothersBand.com.

- Jon Persson



HannaH's Field "Revolutionary Soldiers" Independent

Reggae roots rock artist HannaH is a vocal coach, Reiki energy healer, trans-