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MUSIC REVIEW: BUCKY HAYES AND THE COMMONWEALTH – ‘100 MILES TO MACON’

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Set to be released in early September of this year, *100 Miles to Macon* is, according to New York City's Bucky Hayes, the result of a period of observation, stagnation, and rebirth. In the album's press release, Hayes mentions that "We may have trials and tribulations, and life may not always be perfect, but as long as you don't give up and keep going, you'll get stronger. It's better to get out and walk if you run out of gas."



The album feels like it come straight out of a movie depicting life on a farm in the Midwest with all its ups and downs. The ups are reflected in the more dynamic tracks, which are mostly good old rock n' roll. "I'll Leave The Light On" begins as a mid-tempo number that builds up into a cheerful, upbeat track featuring vocals bordering on gritty, giving it a sense of authentic joy that comes from singing your heart out all day long. And yet it is a song that is simply built on drums, percussion, guitars, and keyboards. The lack of extra frills serves to enhance its authenticity.

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Similarly, “Loretta Rae” is an uptempo and enthusiastic track, with energetic guitars that relentlessly drive the track forward. “One More Song Before The Morning” celebrates a great night of partying with an uptempo, rock n’ roll last hurrah before its inevitable end. While “Round Round Round” starts slow, it builds up to about triple its initial tempo, turning from a gentle ballad-like number into a toe-tapping, guitar-led, piano-enhanced “good times” country-flavored, rock n’ roll track. I would have thought that, at least in the beginning, the vocals would be a lot rawer than they are, but it’s as if the band chose to be straightforward and unapologetic throughout. The anthemic “We Gonna Get Stronger Somehow” closes the album, a last hurrah leaving listeners inspired and energized.

There is also a good share of slower tracks on *100 Miles to Macon*. The alternative rock ballad “Sweet June” has a melancholic taste to it, which the Americana-inspired “Go Brother Go” is a guitar-led, ballad-like, gentle and shy number in which the vocals come through as particularly raw and emotive. The band’s love for Macon shines through in “100 Miles to Macon” with the melancholy and longing that ooze through every note of the track. It’s yet another rock n’ roll-inspired track but a much, much slower kind.



Some more diversity is added to the album with touches like the soulful “The Times You Chose To Be In My Arms” and the adult contemporary “Fly On”. The former is a slow track using brushed drums with vocals bordering at times on spoken word. The latter is a slow and mellow track that wants to inspire listeners to do just that – fly on.

The overall sound of this album is defined by its vocals, which fluctuate between melodic to gritty. The tracks are all built on the same instruments: drums, percussion, guitars, and keyboard, which suits the genres the different tracks are inspired by. It gives *100 Miles to Macon* a distinct overall sound that makes it clear to listeners from the first track whether they will be fans of the group’s work or not. More

information about the band is available on their official website.

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