

Reviews

Hard Working Americans

The First Waltz MELVIN/THIRTY

TIGERS



Clearly living up to their unabashedly expressive handle, **Hard Working Americans** take a bold step with their sophomore set, offering a live album and DVD that captures them in concert in Boulder, Colo. A shape-shifting communal combo, it finds current members **Todd Snider**, Widespread Panic's **Dave Schools**, Chris Robinson Brotherhood's **Neal Casal**, **Duane Trucks**, Great American Taxi's **Chad Staehly** and new addition **Jesse Aycock** rocking with resolve, mixing a jamband stance with obvious populist appeal. The documentary takes viewers behind the scenes of the making of the band's debut album, but it's their ancestral roots—blending distant ties to the Dead, Allman Brothers and Black Crowes—that come clearly to the fore in “The Mountain Song” and the would-be theme song “Another Train/Working Man Blues.” Aside from the new studio track “Come from the Heart” (with guest **Rosanne Cash**), that closes the album, *The First Waltz* serves best as a dramatic display of musical muscle—a combination of relentless riffing, assurance and swagger that serves their journeyman regimen well.

Lee Zimmerman