

Review: Turnpike Troubadours back with road-honed polish

By Scott Stroud | AP October 26



Turnpike Troubadours, “A Long Way from Your Heart” (Bossier City/Thirty Tigers)

The sound of the road permeates the latest release from The Turnpike Troubadours, a hard-charging six-piece band out of Oklahoma that’s been honing its earthy sound for four albums now — and would displace some of the schlock at the top of the country charts in a world with a little more justice.

On their latest release, “A Long Way from Your Heart,” the band follows singer-songwriter Evan Felker into the space between country and rock with well-crafted tunes that, while they might not break into new and original regions of the stratosphere, do hurtle forward on the wings of muscular playing.

The Troubadours have honed their craft in the honky-tonks of Oklahoma and Texas for years now and it shows. The playing is tight, the songs conversational and engaging. It feels like having a beer with a friend who can’t settle down but tells stories that are warm, personal and funny.

Consider “The Housefire,” a narrative about waking up in a burning house that sounds like it really happened. It’s not deep, just vivid, and like much of the band’s work, honest and straightforward.

The same holds true on the album's best song, "The Hard Way," which matches vaguely confessional lyrics with the band's natural forward propulsion.

"Now I'm headed out with the same unrest," Felker sings with urgency. "Tried to tear it down but it was unimpressed."

Restless? Absolutely. But headed somewhere great? Don't bet against it.

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