

Reviews

Turnpike Troubadours

A Long Way From Your Heart

BOSSIER CITY



Oklahoma-based sextet **Turnpike Troubadours** are an underrated double threat these days: They put on a killer live show

and make polished-sounding studio records. Led by principal Troubadour **Evan Felker**, the group has excelled over the years at writing personal portraits of small-town life, where blue-collar values mingle with blue-collar beer choices on a daily basis. The struggle is real and it's full of joy. That line of thinking hasn't changed too much on their fourth album, *A Long Way From Your Heart*. The album kicks off with the rustic mid-tempo number "The Housefire," a story, about an unexpected tragedy, where time is of the essence. It sets the tone for the next 10 songs, where Felker digs deep into the outlaw life on the desert-rock-tinged "Pipe Bomb Dream," and sings an ode to his bar-owning aunt and gambling on the poignant ballad "Pay No Rent." And on album standout "A Tornado Warning," a story about a pending storm mixes with urgent guitar solos to create a sense of doom on the horizon, Felker bellows that he's "waiting for the sky to fall." Like Jason Isbell, Drive-By Truckers and older alt-country acts such as Whiskeytown and Son Volt, Turnpike Troubadours are grinders, quietly making albums you'll want to spin from start to finish, without fearing that you'll get bored. *A Long Way From Your Heart* continues down that path. But perhaps the band's real motto is hidden within "The Winding Stair Mountain Blues"—"the devil's in the fine detail." *Mike Ayers*