

HEAR THIS: A SPRING FOR STRINGS

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Another popular unorthodox acoustic outfit, Trampled by Turtles, will also release a new album next month (coincidentally on the same day as Leftover Salmon). Back in the fall of 2016, the Minnesota sextet announced an indefinite hiatus, which gave front man Dave Simonett time to exorcise the emotional demons of a recent divorce through the solo project Dead Man Winter. But on the title track of the new record, “Life is Good on the Open Road,” Simonett sings, “The light inside you comes and goes, but it never really goes out,” so it’s no wonder it took less than two years for a band that excels at hosting rowdy hoedowns to reunite.

Armed with traditional strings, Trampled rarely indulges in flashy solos, instead focusing on an old-time collectiveness that’s updated with the rumbles and swells of anthemic punk fury. That bravado is alive and well at certain points on the group’s latest effort, particularly the backwoods speed-metal scorcher “Blood in the Water.” Another fast-paced foot-stomper, “Kelly’s Bar” is a vivid, fiddle-driven, cautionary tale about a blurry night in a north country watering hole.

Those ragged fist-pumpers are fun, but the album also reveals a more relaxed side. As the band’s main singer and songwriter, Simonett uses his rustic tenor to deliver earnest folk meditations (“We All Get Lonely” and “Thank You, John Steinbeck”) and occasional forays into sunny vintage pop (“I Went to Hollywood”). During the harmonized chorus in the bouncy rock shuffle of “Right Back Where We Started,” he sounds energized, as if he and his string-pummeling crew—even after 15 years together—still have unfinished business.

Leftover Salmon will play Red Rocks Amphitheater on May 5 with Phil Lesh and the Terrapin Family; Trampled by Turtles will headline the same venue on July 19, with support from the Oh Hellos and Dead Horses. redrocksonline.com