

Reviews

September 2012

Shovels and Rope



O' Be Joyful DUALTONE

Though they've been performing together for several years, this duo hailing from Charleston, S.C., just released their debut under the **Shovels and Rope** moniker; *O' Be Joyful*. With two guitars and a junkyard drum kit—the pair often switch instruments and share lead vocal duties—this dynamic effort goes a lot of places with its honest and big heart. The harmonizing and compositions lend themselves to a great performance, including the rowdy, horn-spattered “Hail Hail.” The record starts strong with kick drums and tales of the road on “Birmingham.” It runs the gamut from traditional Americana to stripped-down folk tunes (“Lay Low”) and visceral Southern rock and roll (“Tickin’ Bomb”) with country tinges (“The Keeper”), to rollicking foot-stompers (“Kemba’s Got the Cabbage Moth Blues”) and even a surf-rock vibe (“Cavalier”). While some tunes like the closer “This Means War” are more reflective, tracks like “Cavalier” reveal the upbeat, fun nature of the band’s shows—and all show off their creativity, high-energy and songwriting prowess. “Kemba’s” includes a live-recorded band introduction from a gig where the MC asks patrons to give the band their full-attention, which is exactly what all listeners should do—they deserve it. *Amy Jacques*