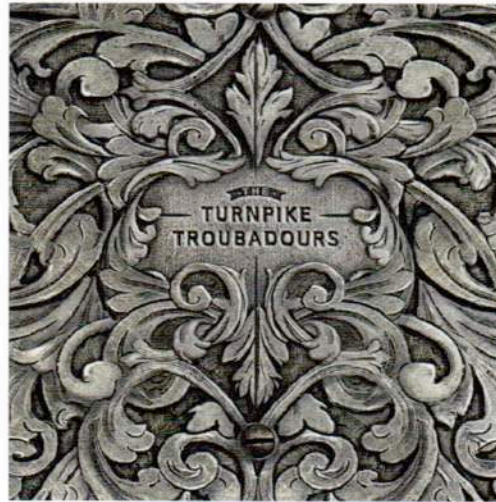


**REVIEWS**

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2015



**TURNPIKE TROUBADOURS**

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(BOSSIER CITY RECORDS/THIRTY TIGERS) ★ ★ ★ 1/2

**FOR A BAND NAMED** Turnpike Troubadours to include a song called “Long Drive Home” on its self-titled album might seem a little too obvious, but this Oklahoma band’s steady rise in popularity has come precisely because it doesn’t take the obvious route. The aforementioned tune, it turns out, has far more to do with the metaphorical road than actual blacktop – though there’s no shortage of references to the traveling life.

These troubadours also belie the notion that Oklahoma origins and Americana sensibilities automatically add up to “red dirt” music. While songs like “Down Here” and “The Mercury” merge rock and twang, they’re certainly not pummeled into any kind of musical mold. The lilt of “Time Of Day” and “Bossier City,” meanwhile, comes right out of Cajun country. Kyle Nix’s versatile fiddling and steel/electric guitarist Ryan Engleman lend musical depth throughout, though bassist RC Edwards and drummer Gabe Pearson certainly hold up their end.

But on this album, it’s the lyrics that truly elevate the proceedings. Not to mention tear at your heart. On “Fall Out Of Love,” the ache is palpable as he sings, “You bet your heart on a diamond, and I played the clubs in spades/ We gambled and lost, guess we both paid the cost/ Look what a mess I have made.”

“A Little Song” is almost more bittersweet. With just an acoustic guitar and his voice, Felker vainly tries to stall the inevitable as he sings, “Well I got a little tune that I could hum to turn back time. Back to all our better days and nights/ Well now, what a fool to figure that forever you’d be mine.”

For men who spend their lives as turnpike troubadours, it’s no surprise that they’d have a few ticks in the losses column. But as we’re reminded in “Long Drive Home,” “You want something bad, you gotta bleed a little for it.”

– LYNNE MARGOLIS