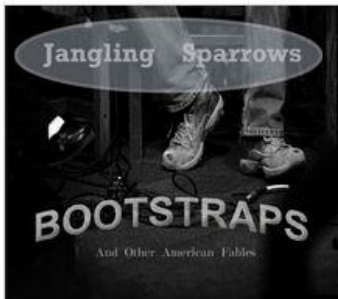


New records you should give a listen to



Courtesy

Then there's the punk-rock approach to roots music, an approach perfected by Uncle Tupelo and practiced by countless others, including Paul Edelman and his band Jangling Sparrows.

Edelman likes an anthem, and "Jangling Sparrows Bootstraps and Other American Fables" has them, influential statements ripe for a pumped fist and shout-a-long.

It's a record loaded with punk-rock grit and Southern-rock drive, and as a lyricist Edelman comes across as a rough-around-the-edges bar-room poet spouting off advice and inspiration with a load of sneer and a take-it-or-leave-it attitude.

From the punchy opener of "Estuaries," where Edelman screams, "You've got to get out from under yourself" to "Hey Harriet Tubman" and its calling out the bar-room politicians and questioning the ideas and definitions of freedom, he's created a record that rocks as hard as it is smart, tapping into human emotion via storytelling and observation.

Cuts like "Highway Jawn" sing of "the romance of the ramble and them honky-tonking nights"; it's Southern rock theater all the way down to the guitar leads, and a cut like "Bootstraps" nods to the inspiration of Townes Van Zandt; it's sad, beautiful and real.

"I've always had a knack for digging into the drama of something rather than just handing it on a platter," Edelman said. "Instead of saying, 'I'm sad,' I might try to express that in something a bit more. Like what's around me right now, what am I doing, what is this character doing?"

A take-it-as-it-is album, it was recorded as live as possible in an approach as real as the music.

"I developed this body of work, and these are the songs that came out," he said. "The whole idea was as little overdubbing as possible, this is just a raw snapshot in time."

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