



BOOTSTRAPS AND OTHER AMERICAN FABLES Jangling Sparrows
(independent) *****

This band from North Carolina makes ragged-ass rock & roll that will have you thinking Crazy Horse, Bob Dylan, Tom Petty and John Prine, often at the same time. The casual swagger, passion and imperfections of *Bootstraps And Other American Stories* is what makes it so damned perfect.

"*Bootstraps* is a wall of sound rock & roll record designed to be your companion through trouble and triumph" says singer/ guitarist Paul Edelman. "The painful, the ridiculous, the confusing, the frustrating, the crazy, the strong and insecure. It's all here, large and loud, to match the big American rock & roll heart." This is rock & roll with some country spit and twang that you would expect from a group with 'Jangling' in their name, with the looseness of 60's-era Rolling Stones. The disc was produced, recorded and engineered by Amos McGregor at Marshall Sound Studio in North Carolina and mastered by Derek Brown; kudos to both for a superb job at capturing such a natural sound.

The songs on *Bootstraps* cover a surprising range of topics too. *Estuaries* is a plea to ride out the storms that life throws at us, and *Follow Me Down* is about women who are attracted to intensity until they get too close to it. And though I don't usually get my history from rock records, *Hey! Hey! Harriet Tubman* is about the woman born into slavery who escaped to help some 300 slaves to freedom via the underground railroad. "The upbeat feel and lyrics of the song are meant to recall the spirit of a rallying cry, and be an admonishment of much of modern culture" Paul notes. "It isn't so much about her as it is talking to her."

Bootstraps has an organic, down-home feel to it, even when the band is ripping it up and blasting away. Edleman, the principal songwriter here, has a way of digging deep without preaching, telling stories within his songs that encourage us to be our best selves. This is also the kind of record where you can pull back from that and just enjoy how it sounds or feels. Either way, you're in for quite a ride. www.janglingsparrows.com

KEY CUTS: *Bootstraps*, *Hey! Hey! Harriet Tubman*, *Estuaries*

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