

A STRONG DEBUT FROM NO TIME FLATT

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You've heard of Lester Flatt, of course, and up-and-comers Flatt Lonesome, but what about *No Time Flatt*? The west Tennessee-based band recently released their debut album, a self-titled effort filled with a number of classics and more recent bluegrass favorites.

The traditional-leaning group has selected songs from Don Reno, Carter Stanley, and Flatt and Scruggs along with tracks penned by Jimmy Fortune, Harley Allen, and other more recent writers. Bass player Patrick Cupples and guitarist Kevin Wright contribute one original apiece. It's a well-thought out album that allows the band to introduce its own style while still providing a sense of familiarity for new listeners.

A pair of Blue Highway covers, both from the pen of Wayne Taylor, are highlights of the album. *Keen Mountain Prison* has clear harmonies on the chorus and a nice mournful feel. Tasteful banjo from Steve Moore backs the verses, while Kevin Keen and Becky Weaver offer strong solos on mandolin and fiddle, respectively. Wright and Weaver provide a wistful opening for *Before the Cold Wind Blows*, pairing well with the song's story of a farmer caught up in big city trouble.

There's a bouncy, straightforward cut of Harley Allen's *Suzanne*, faithful to Allen's recording with Mike Lilly from several decades back, and a fine rendition of New Grass Revival's *This Heart of Mine* with standout banjo courtesy of Moore. Also enjoyable is the acoustic version of Alabama megahit *Dixieland Delight*. I wouldn't have ever said that *Dixieland Delight* needed to be re-recorded, but No Time Flatt's rolling, easy-going take on the song is actually really good. The fiddle breakdown at the end is a nice touch, as well.

Most fans will be familiar with tracks like *Say Won't You Be Mine* and *Dim Lights, Thick Smoke*, both of which are accurately rendered. *Somehow Tonight* is spiced up a bit, with a saucy mandolin intro from Keen and Jimmy Martin-style drums courtesy of Cupples. The drums are a bit unexpected, but I like the swagger they provide to the song. *Long Gone* is a little more Lonesome River Band than it is Reno & Smiley, but that fits with the group's overall modern traditional sound.

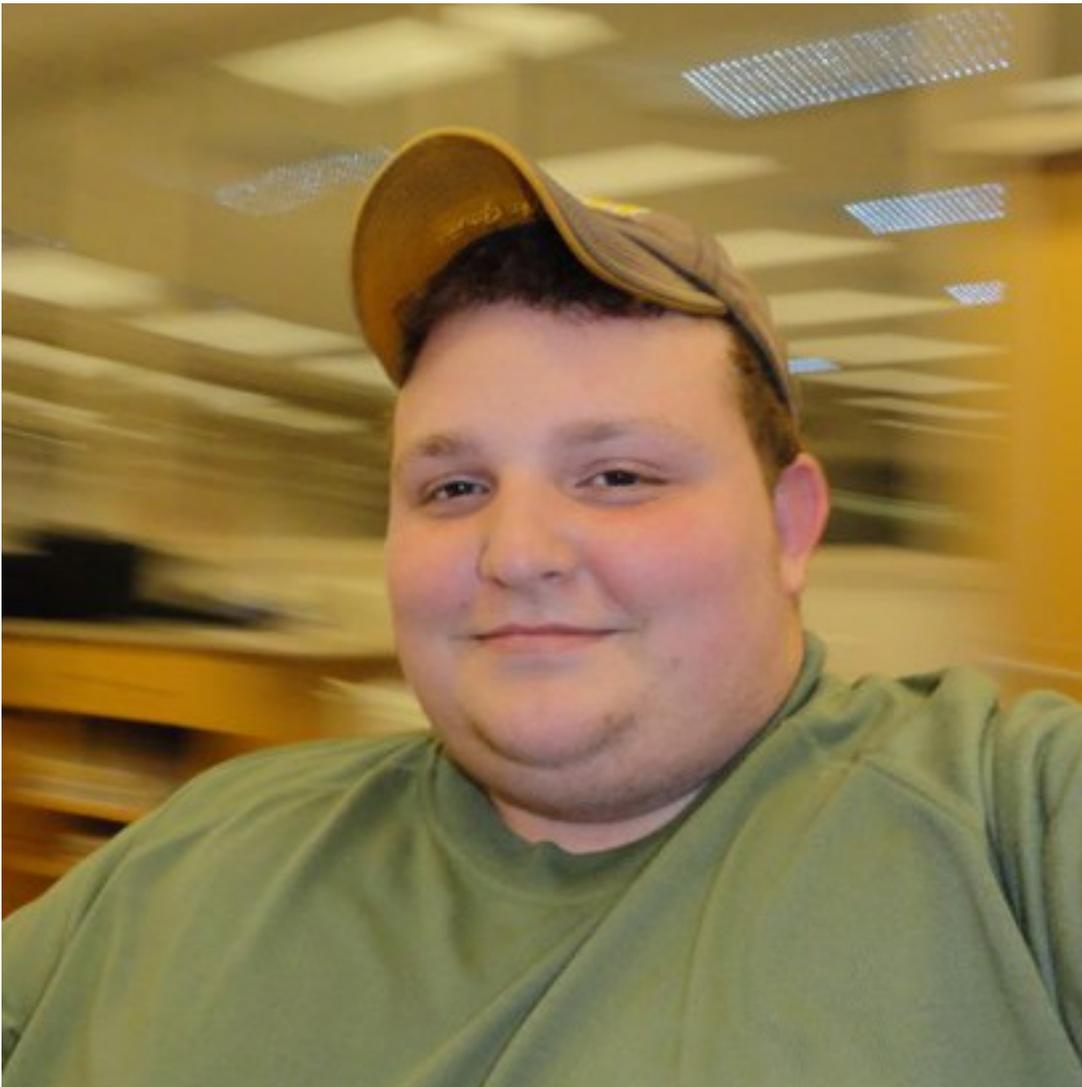
The album's two originals include a crisp instrumental from Wright, *Roundup*, that moves along at a nice clip, and an intriguing piece from Cupples's pen. Titled *Dollarhide*, it tells the story of a Kentucky moonshiner who falls upon hard times. It has more of an Americana or folk flair than the rest of the album, with a catchy repeated chorus of "The holler's got three choices, he'd say it all the time: coal mine, moonshine, or move it on down the line." On the surface, it seems to be a well-

written ode to one of bluegrass music's favorite careers; however, fans of the Loretta Lynn biopic *Coal Miner's Daughter* will recognize it as a tribute to a minor character in the film who is friends with Lynn's husband.

No Time Flatt makes a solid debut here with strong instrumental work and several vocalists who handle lead and harmony duties. I'd definitely like to hear more originals from them, and perhaps see them dig a bit deeper into the bluegrass catalog. Fans of the straightforward modern traditional sound should certainly find something to enjoy here.

For more information on No Time Flatt, visit them online at www.notimeflatt.com.

About the Author



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John Goad is a graduate of the East Tennessee State University Bluegrass, Old Time & Country Music program, with a Masters degree in both History and Appalachian Studies from ETSU.