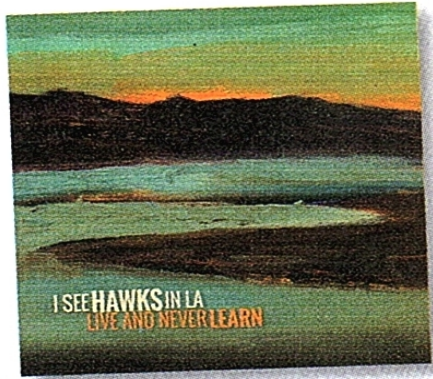


I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. *"Live And Never Learn" reviews*



MOJO

I See Hawks In LA



Live And Never
Learn

BLUE ROSE. [CD/DL](#)

**The house band for the
hippy diaspora deliver
another gem.**

For 17 years and eight albums, country-rock quartet I See Hawks In LA have expressed ecological concerns, irreverent wit and oft-psychedelic perspective in unequalled and distinctly American music. Lead singer Rob Waller's powerful, unpolished baritone is backed by soaring harmonies from the others – as if to say to each other (and the listener) "We're here for ya." Perfectly tasty lead guitarist Paul Lacques and Waller wrote most of the songs – literate, eccentric, sort of a rural Steely Dan – while drummer Victoria Jacobs talks/co-wrote the delightfully black-humoured My Parka Saved Me. Loss of personal and collective natures is a recurring theme on this striking new collection. In Ballad For The Trees, they question "Facts that come too easily/Friends we never see" – indicating losses from technology, the kind many so-called civilised people might understand.

Michael Simmons

UNCUT

I SEE HAWKS IN LA Live And Never Learn

SELF-RELEASED

8/10

*Cosmic Californians lay it all out
in comeback bid*



After receding from view for years, with members suffering family deaths and more, I See Hawks have now doubled down. Utilising roots, rock and psych styles and transcendent steel guitar to channel life's agonies, *Live And Never Learn* zigzags from tears to grins to epiphanies. It finds them funnelling bluesy ZZ Top ("King Of The Rosemead Boogie") and revisiting with frivolity a life-threatening car crash ("My Parka Saved Me"). The deeper the dive, the stronger the imprint: "Tearing Me In Two", "Poour Me" and "Stop Me" all intricately pit mortality against existence, and are simply haunting. And "Stop Me" would sound fantastic as a Glen Campbell cover. **LUKE TORN**

<http://www.uncut.co.uk/>



<http://www.rock-n-reel.co.uk/>

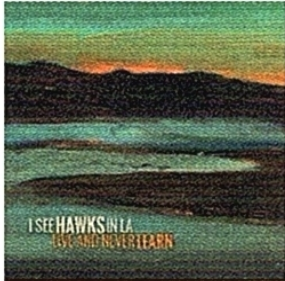
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I SEE HAWKS IN L.A.



Live And Never Learn

(WESTERN SEEDS) www.iseehawks.com



Sometimes reviewing seems like a thankless, pointless use of time. No one has anything new to bring to the table; they work the same

riffs and progressions until they're as tired as a junior doctor. Then you get a record by a band like I See Hawks In L.A. that can hustle a handful of freshness out of the clichés and truisms that drag lesser bands down.

By concentrating on the small things they manage to inject more humanity into four minutes than most bands manage over the course of a career. On the face of it this is a straightforward country-rock record with songs like 'Last Man In Tojunga' demonstrating a straight-up rock'n'roller's gutsy grasp on a tune, balancing the more laid-back ease of something like 'Ballad For The Trees'.

Even the most lightweight of these songs carries an honesty that turns them into something transcendent. 'My Parka Saved Me' is a case in point, a Shangri-La's-style tune that turns on a pin, from cod melodrama to a paeon to parental love, then back. These guys know how to have serious fun and *Live And Never Learn* is balm for the soul.

Greag Mac a' tSaoir

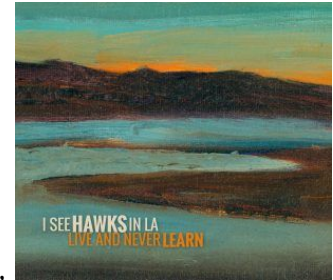
FolkWords

http://www.folkwords.com/folkwordsreviews_105605.html

The alternative folk/ country Americana world would be a darker place without **I See Hawks In L.A.** – it's unlikely that anyone else could deliver their tight harmony vocals, skilled musicianship, inspired melodies and richly hooked, eminently memorable songs – and their latest outing 'Live And Never learn' is the band on top form on all counts. The raw honesty remains, as do the songs that effortlessly touch those heart and soul parts of their listeners that consistently bring them closer to the depths of the messages.

The human problems that life throws up and that everyone faces from time to time weave their way through the lyrics, from the title track 'Live And Never Learn' through 'White Cross' to 'Stoned With Melissa' and 'The Last Man in Tujunga' there's a visceral edge that quite simply pulls you into their songs. It's inevitable that 'favorites' get a mention in any review – for me 'Ballad For The Trees' is up there, as is 'Planet Earth' and 'The Isolation Mountains'.

-- Tom Franks



3 COAST rd. MUSIC

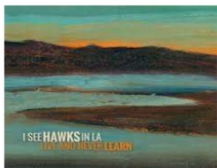
#237/328 MAY 2018

JOHN THE REVEALATOR

FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #224

None Of The Hits, All of The Time

This month's' number 1



FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #224 REAL MUSIC PLAYED FOR REAL PEOPLE BY REAL DJs MAY 2018

- #1 I See Hawks in LA: Live and Never Learn (Western Seeds) (*TR, *TG, *OAM, *MF, *JML, *JM, *FH)
2. John Prine: The Tree of Forgiveness (Oh Boy) (*TR, *TG, *OO, *MN, *JM, *DB, *BS, *ATC)
3. Willie Nelson: Last Man Standing (Legacy) (*TR, *OO, *MN, *GS, *ATC)
4. Dave Alvin and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Downey to Lubbock, Yep Roc (*PK, *JP, *DB, *AB)
5. Sarah Shook and the Disarmers: Years (*GM, *DB, *BS)
6. Ry Cooder: The Prodigal Son (Fantasy) (*OO, *MF, *JP, *AB)
7. Dallas Moore: Mr. Honky Tonk (Sol) (*TG, *EW, *ATC)
8. Lindi Ortega, Liberty, Soundly Music (*PK, *DB, *BB)
9. Joshua Hedley: Mr. Jukebox (Third Man) (*FS, *BB, *ABA)
10. Darci Carlson: Wild Reckless and Crazy (Self) (*FS, *EW)
11. Western Centuries: Songs From the Deluge (Free Dirt Records) (*OAM, *MN, *BB, *ABA)
12. Lloyd Green / Jay Dee Manes: Journey to the Beginning Steel Guitar Tribute to the Byrds (Handdrawn) (*FS, *EW, *AB)
13. Peter Rowan, Carter Stanley's Eyes, Rebel (*JA, *GS)
14. Sean Burns and Lost Country: Music For Taverns, Bars and Honky Tonks (Self) (*TR, *BB, *ATC, *AB)
15. Gerry Spehar: Anger Management (self) (*MF, *JM)
16. Mary Gauthier: Rifles & Rosary Beads (Proper) (*TR, *JM, *ARC)
17. Carter Sampson, Lucky, Continental Song Services (*PK, DC)
18. Country Heroes: Honky Tonk Tears (*OAM, *ABA)
19. Ike Reilly: Crooked Love (*GM)
20. El Coyote: El Coyote (*OAM)
20. Jesse Dayton: The Outsider (*JP, *GM)



<http://www.maximumvolumemusic.com/review-i-see-hawks-in-l-a-live-and-never-learn-2018/>

BY ANDY THORLEY - JUNE 19, 2018

They have been famed, over the 17 years that they've been releasing albums – their debut came out on September 11th, 2001 – for their lamentations on the natural world. So it perhaps doesn't come as much of a shock that Southern California's I See Hawks In LA usher in their first album in five years with "Ballad For The Trees". But for all the talk of "the acacias, the honeybees" and whichever species of tree they mention elsewhere, this is a song for the people of the world.

Perhaps because they have been through so much in the last few years since their last album – 2013's "Mystery Drug" (a couple of the band have lost their parents) this is a more personal record than before. Viewed through this prism, everything else makes sense. "Good intentions, are well and good," sings Rob Waller on the title track, "but they won't get you out of the neighbourhood" and it's almost as IF those traumatic experiences have led them to reflect on their existence – I can certainly recall that when I lost my mum, everything else but that seemed to need thinking about.

Waller and Paul Lacques harmonise wonderfully on the absolute knockout "White Cross" (written with Good Intentions' Peter Davies), with the deep, rich tones coming straight out of Muscle Shoals, while their apparent desire to play with the formula sees "Stoned With Melissa" – and I See Hawks have always liked an anthem to weed – switch from rock n roll to something more psychedelic, but the twist it takes at the end is most unexpected (and to be fair, I am always going to love a record that has the phrase "sitting in Melissa's basement with a black and white TV, watching Trading Places, she hates Eddie Murphy" at its heart).

"Poour Me" (sic) is a classic country strum, and an ode to getting roaring drunk – at least ostensibly, but then you need to remember that these boys and lady are a little too subtle for that. There is more of that feel on "Planet Earth", which is elevated above the norm by some absolutely stunning Lap Steel playing.

Perhaps the best example of their ability to look at things in a way that no one else would is "The Last Man In Tujunga", it has all the devil may care ebullience of Chuck Berry, but it concerns the fires that saw bass player Paul Marshall almost lose his home (and it has a little Stones homage too). This left-field thinking, though, is natural, not forced, and when they are looking at graves at the start of "Singing In The Wind" it all makes perfect sense.

Drummer Victoria Jacobs narrates her own story on "My Parka Saved Me" and it almost has an air of "The Leader Of The Pack" as she does, while members of Old Californio appear on "King Of The Rosemead Boogie" which rocks and pulses along with a rare urgency.

“Tearing Me In Two” with its Celtic touches is another highlight, as are Jacobs’ vocals on the 60s, West Coast infused “Spinning” that follows in the spirit of The Byrds and their ilk and seems to be floating along. And the fiddle work of Dave Markowitz is quite brilliant on the equally blissful – but in an entirely different way – “The Isolation Mountains”.

“Stop Me” ends the record on a warm, airy note. Its widescreen sounds seem to suggest that anything is possible, and such is the ambition on this album that you couldn’t disagree with the premise.

“Live And Never Learn” is one of those wonderful records that reveals itself in different ways with each passing listen. I could review it tomorrow and hear different things – that’s just how it is made. It is these textures, though, these different strands, that make it so special. Rating 8.5/10



<https://rootstime.be/index.html?https://rootstime.be/CD%20REVIEUW/2018/JUNI1/CD12.html>

September 11, 2001 ... a day that none of us will soon forget. It was also the day when I See Hawks in L.A. released their untitled debut on the world and immediately conquered the hearts of everyone who liked roots music. The fact that Dave Alvin took part in it was an argument to open many doors, just like the presence of fiddler Brantley Kearns: a band that gets that ready at its debut.

Over the years the group expanded and today you have as base: Rob Waller (guitar and lead vocals), Paul Lacques (guitar, lap steel and vocals), Paul Marshall (bass and vocals) and Victoria Jacobs (drums, guitar and vocals), which is complemented by Richie Lawrence (accordion and piano), Dave Markowitz (fiddle), Danny McGough (keys) and Dave Zirbel (pedal steel guitar). Four vocalists and three songwriters in the band is a great luxury, and that shows once again on this first new CD in over five years: most of the songs come from the pens of Waller / Lacques, but drummer Victoria Jacobs also contributes with her "Spinning", a wonderful piece of psychedelic folk, and the story behind her "My Parka Saved Me": she narrates the story and the other band members make it a great country rock song, layered with the most fantastic doo-wop background vocals and a Hammond feast for the ears. Look next month especially to the specialized charts: they will score very high in it, for sure!

-- Dani Heyvaert



<https://americana-uk.com/i-see-hawks-in-l-a-live-and-never-learn-western-seeds-2018>

'*Live and Never Learn*,' the first album in five years from I See Hawks in L.A., certainly has that early Eagles country rock feel running through the core of its 14 tracks. The title track offers up a microcosm of what is to come, rhythmic, mid-paced tempo, reverby Telecaster and easy on the ear. The quality of musicianship is spot on throughout the album and much credit for that must go to five-times Grammy-winning mixer Alfonso Rodenas.

Most songs have been written by the combination of band members Paul Lacques, who also produced, and Rob Waller, with many of the songs a direct reflection of the personal angst that the band have lived through over the last few years. Using trouble and strife as inspiration for songwriting is a staple of course but The Hawks have the knack of using subtle humour to mitigate some difficult subject matters. For an example look no further than the unique and distinctive '*My Parka Saved Me*' which features drummer Victoria Jacobs narrating the true story of a car crash she suffered as a teenager when it was only the thickness of her coat that saved her from the glass.

'*The Last Man in Tujunga*' tells the tale of a breakup unfolding over a mobile phone call as the flames of a Californian wildfire inch ever closer. There is more than a touch of Mike Nesmith in the vocals here and, again, the subject matter is made even more poignant by band member Paul Marshall's own recent experience of having to evacuate his Tujunga home during the fires of 2017.

On an album full of great sounding tracks it is two songs that were co-written with Peter Davies of the UK's Good Intentions that really stand out and showcase that Eagles sound at its best. '*White Cross*' and '*Singing in The Wind*' have the Hawks' trademark intelligent and clever lyrics, great melodies and harmonies. That said, it would be unfair to label the Hawks as a simple Eagles soundalike band. There are boogies, '*King of The Rosemead Boogie*,' the traditional sounding country of '*Poor Me*' and '*The Isolation Mountains*,' as well as the folksy and dreamlike '*Spinning*'.

I See Hawks in L.A. have succeeded in recording an album that both showcases their own distinctive musical talents whilst, whether by design or accident, tapping into some of the heart and soul of 70's California. And that is no bad thing.

-- Peter Churchill



<https://rockingmagpie.wordpress.com/2018/05/22/i-see-hawks-in-l-a-live-and-never-learn/>

A Rare Treat for the Ears and the Soul

Live and Never Learn, the eighth album from these California Country rock ‘n’ rollers is a wonderful treat for both the ears and the soul. I’ve previously heard comparisons to that other west coast band, the Eagles, but I don’t hear it here. The Hawks are fearless where the Eagles take it easy, and their harmonies take more from doo-wop and bar-room country than, say CSN&Y. The Hawks could easily accomplish musically the Eagles sound, but they’re smarter than that, they take more chances, their sense of humor is near boundless. A case in point: The Eagles would never, could never, create such songs as “Ballad for the Trees,” “The Last Man in Tujunga,” or especially the wonderful, hilarious, and all-important “My Parka Saved Me,” which I’m going to go ahead and say is most likely the best song of 2018 so far. Seriously. We’ll come back to that in a moment, first, the rest of the album.

Novelty songs have long been a rock ‘n’ roll tradition. Remember “Flying Saucer Rock and Roll,” “Splish Splash,” or “Purple People Eater”? Yeah, novelty crap humor; but they rocked. This is important. “Wooly Bully” rocked. “I Put a Spell on You” rocked. But that doesn’t mean it’s an easy thing to accomplish. One wrong turn at Albuquerque and suddenly you’re in “Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini” or “The Chipmunk Song” territory. Humor in rock ‘n’ roll is important and vital. Otherwise everything is Pink Floyd and the National—fine bands yet not what you go after when you want a rollicking and fun trip. And humor is something the Hawks seem to have no short supply of, from the way Robert Waller’s vocal on “Last Man in Tujunga” rapidly descends on the word “collapsing,” stretching it out further than any fully sane singer would ever attempt—but it works, the song needs it to be effective—to the utter lack of any sense of irony on many of these songs. They play it straight, knowing full well how to milk the laughs with a poker face. Smart, humorous lyrics and quick asides from the band such as they way the charge into a single bar of the Stones’ “Satisfaction” right in the middle of “Tujunga” and then continue on as if nothing happened, or the way the pedal steel supports the vocal in “Pour Me,” adding more layers to this wonderful tale of woe.

On several of these songs the Hawks, with Rob Waller’s river bottom vocals and the band’s inherent quirkiness, are reminiscent of the Handsome Family, yet the Handsome Family never rocked this hard, especially on “Stoned with Melissa” which is a fast-paced rocker that starts out making you laugh but takes a sudden turn down a dark alley. Life’s not all fun and games and the Hawks know this, even if it gives them pause to wonder why at times. “Spinning” is dreamy Alt-psychedelia, while “King of the Rosemead Boogie” is a barn spinner of an uptempo blues, and the title song, “Live and Never Learn,” is smooth, smooth Country. The Hawks are all over the map, yet fully in sync, the songs never sounding forced or contrived.

And now we get to “My Parka Saved Me.” Every great album needs a song worthy of putting on repeat and this is the one. We start off with the band opening the door for the organ swells which bring us right in to a rather funny and also rather harrowing true story narrated by the

band's drummer, Victoria Jacobs, in a voice sublimely caught somewhere between the Mid-West and Valley Girl: She got high. She broke up with her boyfriend. She went for a drive down to the lake. The lake was frozen and there was lots of snow. Suddenly, a drunk driver hits her and she "spun like a donut! There was glass everywhere!" All this backed perfectly by the band in a sawdust floor bar-room band manner while a countrified doo-wop section plays the part of Greek chorus, repeating her story line by line in a perfect straight-man sort of way. No time for irony here, just the facts, ma'am. Jacobs' story continues as she parries back and forth with the band as they break out and begin to embellish on her tale. "That's not true!" she regales them, but they continue on unabated, facts and memories now distorting into one another as the song and continues on with a catchy refrain and a wonderful keyboard backdrop, which works very much like Al Kooper's organ on Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone," in that it percolates and bubbles throughout, creating even more interest, drawing the listener in.

This is an amazing song and indeed, album. All the disparate parts fit together wonderfully, telling a story that is tragic, comical, and all too true, in a way only a band as brilliant and as fearless as I See Hawks in L.A. can.

-- Roy Peak



<https://www.paris-move.com/reviews/live-and-never-learn/>

Alternative country, Americana ... These generic terms now cover a galaxy of formations and artists as diverse as varied. From Uncle Tupelo and Giant Sand to Jayhawks and Calexico, their only real common denominator remains the thematic distance maintained with the original idiom, but also the formal permanence of its musical heritage. Originally (as their name implies) from Los Angeles, I SEE HAWKS IN L.A. employ pedal-steel, fiddle and dobro, as well as guitar picking borrowed from bluegrass and country rhythms. But DNA from local predecessors such as the Byrds and other Flying Burrito Brothers, as well as ecological concerns close to those of their ancient neighbors of the Grateful Dead circa "American Beauty" ("Ballad For The Trees") are easily identified in their genealogy ("Live And Never Learn", "Planet Earth"). They also count in their ranks a true veteran of psychedelia in the person of the bassist Paul Marshall (ex-Strawberry Alarm Clock, where he partnered with Ed King, future Lynyrd Skynyrd). Should we see the cause of lysergic incursions such as "Stoned With Melissa" or "My Parka Saved Me"?

The general climate of "Live And Never Learn", their eighth album, lies between Gram Parsons' country-rock and Townes Van Zandt ("Last Man In Tujunga", "Tearing Me In Two"), and the neo-country of Gourds ("Pour Me") and Asleep At The Wheel ("King Of The Rosemead Boogie"). While Rob Waller is responsible for most of the lead vocals, his three accomplices turn out to be accomplished choristers (including the new drummer, Victoria Jacobs, who is also capable of singing vocals). In short, legitimate perpetuators, who do not hesitate to loosen the shackles of a genre long threatened with sclerosis.

-- Patrick Dallongeville, Paris Move, Blues Magazine

ROOTSVILLE

BLUES, JAZZ & ROOTS INFO

<http://www.rootsville.eu/2018%20album%20reports/reports/i%20see%20hawks%20in%20la.html>

(Belgium) 'I See Hawks In L.A.' is one of the most underrated bands in California. Their music is and remains always fascinating and honest and so we are glad that we can now listen to their latest album 'Live and Never Learn'. Their previous 'Mistery Drug' is already 5 years old. On this new album we find 14 originals and they include guest musicians like Richie Lawrence on accordion and piano, Dave Markowitz on fiddle, Danny McGough on organ and synthesizer and Dave Zirbel on pedal steel.

Most songs were written by Paul Lacques, who also produced, and Rob Waller. The daily problems in the lives of the various band members were an inspiration for writing new material. Numbers where the quality always takes the upper hand. Songs in which the humor of I See Hawks in L.A. disguises the reality such as 'My Parka Saved Me' in which drummer Victoria Jacobs tells the true story of a car accident that she suffered as a teenager.

'The Last Man in Tujunga' is again the story when band member Paul Marshall had to evacuate his home during the Californian wildfire in 2017. 'White Cross' and 'Singing in The Wind' are songs that show the personification of these 'Hawks'. Songs with high harmonies, a bit like the Eagles did at the time that does not mean that you have this 'I See Hawks In L.A.' to identify with it.

'King Of The Rosemead Boogie' is the pepper and salt on this beautiful album, where they clearly choose the country-folk side with songs like 'Poour Me' and 'The Isolation Mountains'. They end with the Americana flavored 'Stop Me', something they do not have to do about me.



<http://www.lonestartime.com/2018/05/i-see-hawks-in-la-live-and-never-learn.html>

(Italy) The Roots scene in Los Angeles for almost sixty years has been one of the most vibrant cornerstones in America. In the warm Californian sun, generations of musicians have matured and they have been able to unite with great skill country, folk and bluegrass with rock, opening often unusual ways and

experimenting with brilliance those sounds. I See Hawks In L.A., since 1999, have been among the best flag-bearers of the bonds between rock and country music, with eight discs that refer to the golden years (1960s and 70s) of West Coast music. Personally, their approach often reminds me of the first New Riders Of The Purple Sage release, those who, under the aegis of Jerry Garcia, a great fan of country and bluegrass, added their personal touch of rock and soul (from Bo Diddley to Johnny Otis) and a pinch of psychedelia to flavor everything.

Rob Waller and Paul Lacques have helmed the band from its beginnings and over the years have kept high the bar, never failing to compose excellent country songs forming a repertoire very pleasant and very consistent. The guitarists are joined by bassist Paul Marshall and drummer Victoria Jacobs in a compact and cohesive quartet augmented by the talented Richie Lawrence on keyboards, Dave Zirbel who with his pedal steel retraces the style of the great Buddy Cage (from the New Riders) and Dave Markowitz on the fiddle. "Live And Never Learn" is a record full of excellent country songs like the song that gives the title to the album. "Pour Me", "The Last Man In Tujunga" and "White Cross" in particular stand out, with the great love for the environment of "Ballad For The Trees" and "Planet Earth", rock and psychedelic that follow one another in the funny "Stoned With Melissa", the delicate and poetic "The Isolation Mountains" and the nostalgic "Stop Me", gems of a collection that confirms I See Hawks In LA are among the most valid independent roots bands. And what a name!

-- Remo Ricaldone



Words About Music
From
Greg Burk & Friends

I See Hawks in L.A., "Live and Never Learn." Even music lovers who've never been drunk & divorced will appreciate this country apotheosis, as creative as it is polished. Singer Rob Waller may tell a torn tale, but his beatific resignation and the inspired guitar of Paul Lacques make us feel we'll persevere, crying and laughing at the same time.



<http://www.countrystandardtime.com/d/cdreview.asp?xid=6706>

This is the storied, rather unheralded band I See Hawks in LA's first release since 2013's "Mystery Drug." "Live and Never Learn" continues the legacy of a band that's been together for almost two decades now. They channel Gram Parsons, New Riders of the Purple Sage and the Byrds/Burritos into their singular brand of psychedelic country rock with the superb lead vocals of Rob Waller, capable players in the core lineup as well as guests. Among the guests are: Dave Zirbel (Commander Cody) on pedal steel, Dave Markowitz on fiddle and Richie Lawrence on accordion and piano. Together, they flush out a laid-back hippy vibe, the hallmark of ISHILA's sound.

Emerging from a string of family deaths, California wild fires and various struggles, the band found some solace in finally being able to record again. The songwriting team of Rob Waller and Paul Lacques receives contributions from bassist Paul Marshall and drummer Victoria Jacobs on this outing. Members of Old Californio deliver "King of the Rosemead Boogie" and via email from Peter Davies of the U.K.'s Good Intentions we have "White Cross" and "Singing in the Wind." The latter takes us to the shores of Northern Ireland. Jacobs sings on her psychedelic folk oriented "Spinning" and recounts a tragic tale from the winter on Lake Michigan in "My Parka Saved Me."

"Last Man in Tujunga" is native territory as the story unfolds about a breakup conversation over a cell phone as the flames from a fire draw nearer. Although the song was written years ago, it is frighteningly timely as Marshall was forced to evacuate his home in the recent fires twice - lyrically stated as "almost out of minutes" as the "flames were licking at the gates."

The band has long been noted for its sense of humor which we hear on the self-pitying "Poour Me," their requisite ode to weed in "Stoned with Melissa" and their interest in conservation with "Planet Earth" and "Ballad for the Trees." Markowitz's fiddle and Lawrence's accordion drive both "Isolation Mountains" and "Tearing Me in Two," both outstanding tracks.

I See Hawks in LA are consistent with terrific story songs and solid musicianship. After the hiatus, they sound as good as ever, maybe even a little better.

-- Jim Hynes



<https://www.wintersexpress.com/arts/live-and-never-learn-with-the-hawks-at-the-palms-on-thursday/>

"A reeling but seamless blend of fantasy and reality"

You know that moment of slight trepidation before biting into an apple? Sure, it looks good, and you really like apples, but will the first bite reveal this one to be nice and crisp or a mushy mess?

Magnify that frisson of suspense 100 times. That's me about to listen to a new album by a band I like.

In an odd way, it's harder for me to really enjoy a new release from a favorite band, especially on first listen, than to get into records from acts new to me. While I wouldn't want anybody to duplicate previous efforts, it usually takes me a while to cotton to new material.

Of course, I have to like how the music sounds. But what I'm really after is *feel*. Where does the music take me, what moods and memories does it evoke, who do I get to be while I'm listening and – trickiest of all – does the new music work a similar kind of alchemy as previous releases? It's a tall order.

I welcomed the news this spring that the country rock quartet I See Hawks In L.A. was gearing up to release their eighth album on June 29. But I have to admit to that old shiver of suspense before playing "Live and Never Learn" the first time.

I all but imprinted on the Hawks' 2004 release "Grapevine" and have a soft spot in my heart for 2008's "Hallowed Ground." I don't have enough fingers and toes to count the times I've seen them play. My phone is so full it thinks twice before saving anything on the calendar app, but I still can't quite bring myself to remove several must-have Hawks songs from the phone's music player. Hey, it's just prudent to keep "Humboldt" handy. So, yeah, I like this band.

There's exuberance in their music, regret, hard-won wisdom, humor and wit. I can blast "Wonder Valley Fight Song" and feel like a badass for four minutes and 53 seconds, or call up "The River Knows" to float on the sense that current difficulties will become less pressing. There's connection to community and location.

There's an imagined place their music lets me visit. It's Mojave-esque but the details are hazy and variable. Sometimes there's a road; sometimes the lyrics suggest a trail. The drums may sketch a distant train. There are mountains and playas, rocky escarpments, a lot of sky and few people. I feel good there and unconsciously hope for another trip, another view, with each new Hawks release. Some give glimpses; some offer vistas.

It isn't that the Hawks' songs are all about the desert, but this is the landscape the music most frequently conjures in my mind. The second-place finisher is a fictionalized version of Los Angeles that, frankly, is probably closer to reality than the monolithic sprawl of my Northern Californian perception. To borrow a lyric, where they lead, I will follow. And I'm most satisfied with Hawks releases that give a sense of where we're going.

I cue up the preview copy of "Live and Never Learn," index finger hovering over the play button. Will this one be a ticket to my nebulous desert sanctuary? Is this apple a keeper?

I hit play. Oh, *yeah*. This record and I were good friends after just a listen or two. We're practically making plans to go camping together next weekend. I know just where we'll go. The music suggested it. This one's a keeper right to the core.

With spirited three-part vocals, evocative lyrics and arrangements that soar, groove and occasionally growl, I See Hawks In L.A.'s sound springs from the intersection of rock, country, psychedelia and

folk. They have a big stylistic range and yet always sound like themselves.

There's Hawksian variety on "Live and Never Learn," but the album hangs together as a coherent whole, perhaps more than any of their previous releases.

I asked the band what defined their music. Lead singer Rob Waller said he had "no idea. I have a vague idea of the limits of the property," he said, "but I've never had the stamina to hike all the way out there to try and find the fence."

Lead guitarist Paul Lacques volunteered, "At our best, we're a cool party for misfits." Fair enough.

In more mundane terms, I'd say the vocals are at the core of the quintessential Hawks' sound. There's soul in Waller's delivery, a sense there's a human being expressing something, not just a singer trying to hit the notes and articulate the words. His voice often has an undercurrent of wistful yearning, giving additional heart to the songs.

Lacques and bassist Paul Marshall, both baritones, fit their harmonies around Waller's lead, trading off who sings high and who sings low. Their voices blend so well it's difficult to unbraid the harmonies.

And there's a new featured voice on "Live and Never Learn." Drummer, singer and songwriter Victoria Jacobs, the newest Hawk, contributed harmony vocals to three earlier songs, and steps to the front twice on this album. Perhaps because she's introduced alternating with Waller on "My Parka Saved Me," adding this new voice to the palette works.

The Hawks' instrumentation supports the vocals. Lacques' lead electric, acoustic and steel guitar lines are as explosive or delicate as needed, with Waller's rhythm acoustic as counterpoint. Marshall's bass lines embroider the songs, providing understated complexity. Jacobs can rock propulsively or play with a smooth country cadence.

"'Mystery Drug' [the Hawks' previous release] featured Victoria drumming on four tracks," said Lacques, "kind of a transition, but 'Live and Never Learn' is the first album she's on every cut, and she's songwriter or co-songwriter on three songs. Her style is a major influence on the sound. She's a very subtle, groove-oriented drummer, religiously avoids flashy fills."

Jacobs said that she came from a rock background, "and now I'm playing shuffles and train beats," describing the change as both fun and a challenge. "When I first joined I would try and copy what was being played," she said. "Now I feel comfortable with adding my own feel or style to songs."

While the Hawks have been busy touring and working on other projects, "Live and Never Learn" is the band's first release since 2013.

"Somehow five years had gone by in a flash and we were ready," said Waller. "I also particularly wanted to capture the sound of the Hawks with Victoria behind the drums. We've definitely evolved over these last few years and had something new to say both musically and lyrically."

"The spirit moved us last year," said Lacques, "and we came up with quite a few songs. And we worked up a couple of oldies and finally got good versions."

It's been a rough few years personally for the Hawks. "I lost my mom in 2015 and Paul L. lost both his parents in the last year and a half," said Waller. "I think those kinds of primary losses really cause a major shift in perspective," he reflected. "A generational shift."

According to Lacques, the material on the new album "isn't so much about specific losses or crises, but is certainly informed by it. Many of the songs are about acceptance, or dualism – life throws you impossible choices, and you choose."

Of the new songs, "'Planet Earth' is the most directly about loss," said Waller, "about leaving the planet and thinking back nostalgically about how great and easy life was, reflecting on the good parts."

But that's not to say the record comes across as a collection of mid-tempo musings on mortality. Far from it. There are waltzes, ballads, shuffles, rave-ups and romps about topics as varied as card sharks, trees and mountains, and getting dumped via cell phone during a wildfire.

That song about one hell of a bad day is "Last Man in Tujunga," which is premiered here. Marshall

says, “like a lot of Hawks songs, it’s a reeling but seamless blend of fantasy and reality.”

And how exactly did Waller and Lacques hit upon this combination of topics as the premise for a song? “Rob might remember,” said Lacques, “but the song seems like it was one of those spontaneous combustions that often happen when we’re jamming.”

While Waller and Lacques wrote the song in 2004 or 2005, the Hawks hadn’t been able to get a satisfactory recording of it. Fast-forward to 2017, when wildfires forced Marshall to evacuate his Tujunga home twice.

“The fires were certainly an inspiration and a reminder,” said Waller. “We first did it again at a gig last fall, and it sounded so good with Victoria I really wanted to record it. It felt really good to resurrect it.”

“Playing this song now is like experiencing a musical collage of the song’s long existence,” said Marshall, “and my most recent adventure of last summer, saying to myself, ‘Well, I guess I gotta go now,’ as the 30 foot high flames approached within a couple of blocks of my home.”

“It’s kind of funny with the dated phone plan lyrics,” said Waller. “No one has to worry about ‘burning’ through minutes anymore! But that’s all more charming to me and fits with the theme of living and never learning quite well.”

While Waller and Lacques are the band’s principal songwriters, they don’t eschew collaboration.

“Rob and I have always worked with other writers, notably my brother Anthony,” said Lacques, “and Paul Marshall and Victoria have had songwriting [credits] or co-writes on a number of albums. A big new addition on “Live And Never Learn” is Peter Davies, from UK folk band The Good Intentions. We’ve co-written an entire album’s worth of songs with Peter, which we’ll release as a Hawks/Intentions collaboration CD later this year or early 2019. We liked two of the songs so much that we stole them for this record.” Members of Old Californio co-wrote one song.

The Hawks are hitting the road for a string of album release shows in the US and UK, including one tonight at The Palms Playhouse in Winters, Calif. Singer, songwriter and guitarist Rick Shea will open that show and join the Hawks. Lacques says Shea is “one of the fifth Hawks, and we get him up on stage whenever we can.”

-- Kate Laddish



<https://www.moorsmagazine.com/muziek/pop-rock/i-see-hawks-la-live-and-never-learn/>

I See Hawks in LA is the somewhat unusual name of a Californian country rock band that makes typical Westcoast pop, with the Eagles, Crosby Stills Nash & Young and similar bands, but then you have to let go of that idea right away, because the Hawks, as we call them here for the sake of convenience, just like those bands sing beautifully in harmony and write nice songs, but then the comparison ends.

The Hawks are just a bit more adventurous and above all more humorous than all those other

Westcoast bands. Intelligent and above all very funny texts are sublime, with many small jokes hidden in the arrangements. In the middle of the song "Last Man In Tujunga," suddenly a piece of Satisfaction from the Stones comes along, after which they continue as if nothing happened. And as the pedal steel guitar in Poor Me manages to get the matter wholly over the top, that is nothing short of hilarious.

A good example of the adventurous and at the same time humorous approach of the Hawks is the song "My Parka Saved Me," in which Victoria Jacobs, the drummer of the band, talks about a car accident she had in the past - she dryly narrates the tale while the men of the band repeat and comment as a kind of Greek chorus. At a certain moment the men take off with the story and she calls "That is not true", but the men sing their version of history dry and unperturbed. I have not heard a funnier song in ages, and that is largely due to the way it is brought.

The irresistible country rock 'n' roll of the Hawks has many more sides, because they can also rock hard, with beautiful guitar riffs, suffused with blues, and sometimes some psychedelics, and it's always good.



<http://bit.ly/2MImRCL>

While it has been a mere 17 years since their first release, Hawks have been one of my private pleasures during those years. While I have tried to expose as many folks as possible to them, it seems we remain a cult. A cult that hearkens you back to that wonderful acoustic amalgam that was the 1970s. In terms of themes and style, they embody the West Coast version of that decade. With McGuinn and Hillman about to venture forth on their Sweetheart tour, this'll get you in the mood.

What other band could do a memorable song about a borrowed snow parka? "My Parka Saved Me," begins with Rob Waller and drummer Victoria Jacobs trading vocals — "I got stoned after breaking up with my boyfriend/And he became a born-again Christian" — before going into the car crash that follows. It's not played for chuckles, but rather as emblematic of those random events of that decade that were on first glance just an ordinary occurrence, but upon reflection, something ethereal. Like this band, and especially this record. -- Amos Perrine



<https://glidemagazine.com/208837/i-see-hawks-in-la-mix-shades-of-byrds-dead-on-live-and-never-learn-album-review/>

For the past 20 years or so, **I See Hawks in LA** have purveyed an essential country-rock crossover formula brewed as authentic Americana, so authentic in fact that it might give those boys from Bakersfield a run for their money. Adding a prerequisite touch of twang, soaring melodies and a rugged and rowdy pastiche, the current incarnation of this West Coast-based band consists of vocalist/guitarists Paul Lacques and Rob Waller, bassist/vocalist Paul Marshall, and drummer/vocalist/sometime guitarist Victoria Jacobs, with various guests sitting in. Theirs is a sound that summons the wide open spaces of America's sprawling western expanse, from the forlorn barroom moan of "Pour Me," to the swampy set-up of "White Cross" and the upbeat exchange delineated in "Stoned with Melissa," along with all sorts of realms that collide in-between.

In many ways, I See Hawks in LA offer a throwback to an earlier era, one which found rock and country finding common ground in the songs of the Byrds, the Burritos, the Dead, and the New Riders of the Purple Sage. Their forthright vocals and sweep of pedal steel guitar boast a high lonesome sound, one that echoes with the original optimism of days gone by. "Every year is without precedent, every hour is a great unknown," opening track "Ballad for the Trees" proclaims, its steady pace providing a way forward. Indeed, these Hawks fly high on an adroit blend of optimism and insistence, a sound that culminates in the rocking refrains of "The Last Man in Tujunga," a ready rocker that's full of sentiment and sincerity, and "My Parka Saved Me" a nuanced narrative that relates a harrowing tale of a near-fatal mishap.

Suffice it to say, *Live and Never Learn* ought to be essential listening for any admirer of authentic Americana. Its title aside, this is one band that's lived and learned their lessons well, while eagerly offering them to others.

-- Lee Zimmerman



counterpunch
Tells the Facts, Names the Names

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/07/06/city-of-angels-fallen-and-otherwise/>

City of Angels, Fallen and Otherwise

by Ron Jacobs

Bakersfield, California has Buck Owens, Luckenbach, Texas has Willie and the boys, Los Angeles has I See Hawks In LA. This latter band continues its original take on a sound that originates in the canyons, parched yards and beaches of Los Angeles. Reminiscent of Buffalo Springfield, the Flying Burrito Brothers and New Riders of the Purple Sage, their California sensibilities, incredible guitar playing, pleasing harmonies and sublime pedal steel come together once again on their new album *Live and Never Learn*. Although it's hard to believe they have been putting out music for seventeen years, this fact is also a useful marker of time. If one thinks about the album title a bit out of the context of the song—which is about a love gone wrong—it's quite obvious that the world certainly has not learned its lessons over the past seventeen years.



I See Hawks in LA is one of the most musically accomplished groups in the genre now known as Americana. The intricate guitar interplay between Rob Waller and Paul Lacques continues to shine. Indeed, the playing is once again seamless and sublime. Likewise, the vocals define harmony as it can be at its most exquisite moments. Guest appearances on various tunes by Peter Davies on Telecaster, Danny McCough on B3 organ, longtime collaborators Dave Markowitz, on fiddle and accordionist Richie Lawrence sweeten this collection like a shot of top-shelf bourbon sweetens a good night at a bar. Then there's the master picking of pedal steel player Dave Zirbel. At times his pedal steel playing is pure country, other times it reminds this listener of Jerry Garcia's manipulation of country music's most interesting instrument on his first solo record. In other words, the sound is surreal, ethereal, and damn near psychedelic in and of itself.

The songs on *Live and Never Learn* are a classic mix of I See Hawks in LA humor, social commentary and human emotions. In terms of musical genres, they run from serious rockers to pure country, with a bit of psychedelia thrown in there too. "Pour Me" is a song about lost love and liquor that feature Zirbel's pedal steel playing. "Pour Me" evokes the sense of tragedy one finds in almost every song about failed love, whether it's the latest hit on the Top Forty or something more serious, but it also understands the reality that life goes on. No one is dying in this tune, just falling on the floor from too much libation. A Song for the Trees is a Byrds-like melody addressing a constant topic of I See Hawks in LA –the environment and its destruction in the name of progress. Spinning, written by new member and drummer Victoria Jacobs (no relation) is wistful psychedelic folk that turns the mind around and around in the most pleasant manner.

There's a song titled "White Cross" on this disc. For those who don't know what the song is referring to, white crosses are little amphetamine pills that used to be popular with truck drivers, cross country travelers and all-night diner workers. They were bootleg, cheap and effective enough to get the job done. Lowell George refers to them in the Little Feat tune











“Willin’” when he sings about weed, whites and wine—the other popular name for the drug was whites. Anyhow, one line in the aforementioned song “White Cross” goes like this: “The first one goes down bitter/then you begin to like the taste.” Like many of the songs on this work, that line describes how life is in this postmodern, postindustrial land epitomized perhaps best by the often desperate and lonely contradiction that is the City of the Angels.

Los Angeles is a vast city. It revels in corruption and crime; oppression and inequality poison its streets. Yet, it remains a sunlit magnet that beckons those the world over to its oil-flecked shores. Full of loneliness and love like any modern metropolis, it is up to its artists, poets and storytellers to expose its glories and its shame. I See Hawks in LA’s latest and Lombardo’s debut novel do so with wit, wonder, and a bit of wisdom.

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1		American Aquarium <i>Things Change</i> New West	93 pts. BK,TJ,JB
2		Gretchen Peters <i>Dancing With The Beast</i> Proper Records	56 pts. ML,GF
3		Patrick Sweany <i>Ancient Noise</i> Nine Mile Records	51 pts. FC,RK,BM,CVL,TK
4		Dave Alvin & Jimmie Dale Gilmore <i>Downey To Lubbock</i> Yep Roc	47 pts. SP,JBO,JJC
5		Melissa Carper & Rebecca Patek <i>Brand New Old-Time Songs</i> Independent	34 pts.
6		Ry Cooder <i>The Prodigal Son</i> Perro Verde Records	33 pts. DH
7		Jenny van West <i>Happiness To Burn</i> Independent	32 pts. RST,NC
8		Brooks Williams <i>Lucky Star</i> Red Guitar Blue Music	30 pts.
9		Levi Parham <i>It's All Good</i> Continental Records	29 pts.
10		I See Hawks in LA <i>Live and Never Learn</i> Western Seed Records	26 pts. WR

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