



photo credit: Michael Mesfoto

Whitey Morgan & The 78's

*Hard Times
and White Lines*

Whitey Morgan and the 78's are back and prove it with *Hard Times and White Lines*. This stellar 10-song set finds Morgan back behind the board as producer.

Morgan is always unwavering when it comes to his craft. Now with five albums to his name, he's forged his own sound, one that encompasses honky-tonk music, classic country songwriting, and more than a little rock 'n' roll spirit. "It's not like my vision happened overnight. I've been chipping away at it forever," he says. "It's slowly evolving and it's going in a little bit different direction. It's not so straightforward anymore. This record definitely has a wider path, it's broader, but it still sounds like a Whitey Morgan record."

Hard Times and White Lines begins with "Honky Tonk Hell," a dark narrative about getting caught up in the addictions of

the touring life, written with Jason Hursey. In “Bourbon and the Blues,” Morgan defiantly sings, “I’m a stubborn kind of crazy that keeps my head here in the noose.” Meanwhile, “Hard to Get High” delivers a twist of phrase that would please any country purist. By putting his own perspective into stories of the common man, Morgan cites Kris Kristofferson and John Prine as major songwriting influences—and their inspiration is evident in the album’s revealing lyrics and unexpected melodies.

A superb cover of ZZ Top’s “Just Got Paid” showcases the bands righteous slide guitar skills, while “Around Here” conveys that devastating moment when the bottom falls out. A different kind of downfall is the inspiration for “What Am I Supposed to Do,” written by Morgan’s friend Don “Dupe” Duprie, about the auto manufacturing layoffs in Detroit. Because Morgan’s father worked for General Motors, the lyrics hit close to home. Although Morgan’s grandfather is from Kentucky and his grandmother is from Tennessee, their families moved to Michigan when they were young to find work in the auto industry.

“If you’re from the South and you come to the North, you’re still going to live like you’re in the South,” Morgan says. “That’s how I grew up. I’m eating the food that my grandmother made. We were a very tight family. I was over there all the time. Me and my grandpa were best friends. He taught me to play guitar when I was really young. When I was with him, no matter where we were going, we were listening to bluegrass music because by the time I was old enough to be around, he had quit all his honky-tonking and drinking, and he was going to church. So, I learned to play that stuff when I was really young. That’s where it all comes from.”

When Morgan was a teenager, he started playing drums in a punk/hard rock band. However, after his grandfather passed away, Morgan inherited his record collection and a 1969 J200 Gibson guitar.

“I would sit on the edge of my bed and play Hank Williams songs and Merle Haggard songs, and listen to these records. It was the most enjoyment I ever got out of music,” he recalls. “All through my teens, I was playing drums, playing in front of these crowds going nuts, stage diving and being an idiot, but I had never emotionally connected to a song like I was starting to. You know, I went through a couple break-ups at this point. I was 19 years old. It was like I could understand these songs now.”

Morgan got rid of his drums, found some musicians who liked old country music, and started playing shows. In his early 20s, he quit both of his jobs (driving a FedEx truck and working at a body shop), sold his tools, and bought a van and trailer. After a couple of years on the road, Whitey Morgan & the 78’s released their 2008 debut album, *Honky Tonks and Cheap Motels*. A self-titled project arrived in 2010, followed by *Grandpa’s Guitar* in 2014 and *Sonic Ranch* in 2015.

Over the last five years, Morgan candidly describes a rough patch that resulted in a divorce, blowing out his voice every night, and reckoning with a dangerous drinking habit. He’s since remarried and now spends his off time hiking in the woods near Yosemite. He says, “I’ve been drinking a little bit less and I got my kid at home now. I’ve been enjoying playing music so much more the last couple years than I did probably five years before that. I was having a little too much fun. There were a lot of nights where I didn’t want to be up there. It was because I was living too hard. I was pushing it to the limit too often. Now that I’ve backed it off, I’m enjoying it so much more. I’m singing better now than I was then, too.”

On *Hard Times and White Lines*, a cover of Dale Watson’s “Carryin’ on This Way” conveys the vagabond life of a touring musician, while the concept for “Tired of the Rain” came to Morgan in a hotel room. (He co-wrote that song, as well as “Bourbon and the Blues” and “Around Here,” with Travis Meadows.) “Wild and Reckless” is a character study of Morgan composed by his steel guitarist, Brett Robinson. Concluding the record, Morgan co-wrote “Fiddler’s Inn” with Ward Davis after an afternoon of day-drinking in a bar just across the parking lot from that enduring Nashville hotel.

Morgan realizes there’s no shortage of hotels down the road, although all these years later, he still finds satisfaction in the work. “The reward of touring so much is seeing people singing songs that I wrote – songs that mean something to me and the boys, and then it means something to them,” Morgan says. “You can’t compare that feeling to anything else.”

**For more information, please contact
Asha Goodman or Nick Mallchok,
615.320.7753 or Carla Sacks, 212.741.1000,
at Sacks & Co., asha.goodman@sacksco.com,
nick.mallchok@sacksco.com or carla@sacksco.com.**