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New Music Spotlight

David Tomaloff

David Tomaloff has one of the most powerful voices that I have heard in a long time. He commands respect when he sings. What appeals to me the most about David's music is its soulful country rock tone. The singer/songwriter is not afraid to share his emotions with his fans, and it clearly shows through his lyrics and vocals. Recently, Jennifer L Bahling, David's Manager, set up an online interview with the artist.



David Tomaloff

Here is what formulated from this online meeting.

Isaac: Elaborate on who you are and your upbringing.

David: Well, I was born in Racine, Wisconsin and have lived here all of my life, save for sleep-time. I don't remember if my first love was music or the sheriff's daughter who lived next door to my Grandmother's house; or was it my Green Machine? Maybe it was Star Trek. Who can remember? My formative years were spent amongst a stack of records that my parents owned; they seemed to balance out some of the chaos. Those earliest years were tough, but the middle years brought a little more balance. I played the role of son in two working class family environments; the second of which gave me a brother and we fought as such. Daily. Largely typical, I suppose. I generally despise much modern technology but surround myself with it in almost all aspects of my life. I hate iPods; though, I rarely leave the house without one. My cats think I'm a pretty swell guy and I haven't yet drummed up the courage to tell them otherwise. I play the guitar, but usually only as a means to an end; call it a divining rod, if you will, used in

conjunction with my voice to channel what have you, usually in the form of a song. It's a real operation we have going here; though, the pay leaves something to be desired.

Isaac: Was there any one musician that spoke to your heart so profoundly, you were inspired to do your own thing?

David: I wouldn't say so, no. I don't think any particular artist was responsible. If anything, I'd say it was the songs themselves that inspired the change. The direction really kind of chose me rather than the other way around and you don't fight the muse.

Isaac: Which singer/group would you say you would most like to do a duet with?

David: Off hand, I'd probably have to say Jolie Holland. She's just got a voice that just oozes out of the speakers and I think she really "gets" a lot of what's great about earlier forms of American music. In a writing/production sense, I'd love to work with someone like Joe Henry.

Isaac: What singer/songwriter do you most connect with?

David: In the sense of bodies of work, probably Bob Dylan; especially the stuff he's done in the last 14 years or so. He and, as I said, Joe Henry. Those two guys are certainly top of the list as songwriters in my world.

Isaac: Out of your entire song collection that you've written thus far, which song(s) would you say is/are the most personal/meaningful to you?

David: Well, they all mean something to me obviously, but the songs that make up Birds on Wires are, by far, the most meaningful to date because they are coming from a very different place than much of my previous work. I wouldn't call any of them autobiographical in the classic sense, but I think I can safely say that those characters are being brought to life through me in some way, therefore living in some part of me.

Isaac: Which singers/groups do you enjoy/like from some of today's music genres?

David: Again, I'm a big fan of Joe Henry's work, in particular, as well as some of the acts he's produced; Mary Gauthier comes to mind. I like Ryan Adams, Jolie Holland, The National, Jeffrey Focault, Kathleen Edwards, The Gaslight Anthem, John Vanderslice, Jakob Dylan, Old Crow Medicine Show, Trail of Dead, Wilco, Yarn, Calexico...I could really go on; there's a lot of great stuff out there.

Isaac: What charities are you involved with or support?

David: I support and donate to the National Wildlife Federation, the ASPCA, and the World Wildlife Fund.

Isaac: Have you (or would you ever consider) writing a song about any of today's

particular world issues/problems? If so, what world issue would speak to you the most to write about?

David: I don't tend to write in those directions; at least not in any literal sense. I tend to write a little more on the gut level, I think. The bit players in the music may be experiencing some of the outward pressures of world issues in some way, shape, or form but I don't like to take specifics into the music; there is just nothing that puts a freshness date on a song faster than some really overt world topic. I really think a great song should mean many things to many people and still have room for the shadows of what's going on in the world to sort of serve as a kind of backdrop.

Isaac: Why should people listen to your music?

David: Well, honestly, I can't think of a single good reason. None of it will cure cancer or fix the current global economic crisis. I'm just some guy with a need to write songs and that's exactly what I do; they speak to me and I assume, as a human being, that they may speak to some percentage of other human beings as well. It feels a little cheap and maybe even silly to try and put some kind imperative on that, given where it sits in the context of a world view. Besides, the people who I think might like this record the most are the people who don't need to be told why; I think they'll know.

Isaac: Well worded!

Isaac: What has been the greatest moment for you as an entertainer thus far in your career?

David: Well, this new record is sort of an extended greatest moment for me, I think. I have had many previously recorded songs see radio and television airplay and have done some really fun things, but seeing the work I put into Birds on Wires actually come to fruition really has to be it right now. It's really a different world and a new mindset for me; I'm really enjoying it at the moment.

Isaac: How far into the creation of a song do you share any of it with anyone? Who would you play it for? Would it be a chorus, a verse and chorus, or a complete song?

David: Generally, it's a whole song, give or take some minor fleshing details; though, this can really depend on the situation. For example, while I'd rather an audience hears some general form of a finished song, I don't mind sharing the bare skeleton of a song with someone I might be collaborating with. This was certainly the case while working with drummer, Chris Garges, on Birds on Wires. Those songs were pretty skeletal, but generally had a proper direction and basic arrangement.

Isaac: How much do you let others "mess around with" one of your new songs?

David: I'm not generally in a position where that's much of a concern. I generally keep a certain amount of control over what I do in any situation. In context to something like

recording, where I do generally work with other people, I try to work with musicians whose sensibilities I feel I can trust to deliver something to a given song that will serve to move it forward rather than just kick it around the room.

Isaac: Do you have to be a tortured soul to be a singer-songwriter?

David: As I understand the phrase, no.

Isaac: Do you prefer to write music from your own personal experience, life's issues, or a little of both (explain why)?

David: As a preference, I'd have to say neither. As a matter of fact, I suppose I'd have to say both. I never really set out to write autobiographically but I'm sure some of it must happen on a subconscious level. For me, the process of writing is pretty much the process of figuring out what it is I'm writing about. It generally starts with some idea; some melody or some lyric that kind of rings true for me; like those guys looking for change with those metal detectors you used to always see at the beach. You swing it around until you get something, then you zero in on it and start digging. Somehow, with me, things often seem to feel ghostwritten; like somebody is transmitting from somewhere far away and my job is to catch it all and try to put everything where it belongs.

Isaac: How long does it take you to process your emotions and turn them into songs?

David: Again, I'm not sure it works like that for me. I mean, it must to some degree but it's never done on any conscious level. I generally don't set out to process something that has happened to me and turn it into a song. Every single time I have tried to write that way, it's been a terrible disaster.

Isaac: The best piece of advice you actually followed?

David: WU-TANG Clan ain't nothin' to f*@& with. That, and a good friend once told me a long time ago not to get too precious. I try my best to respect both concepts as I understand them.

Isaac: Give Shutouts to your family and friends.

David: Well, I have found that it just doesn't pay to keep friends; too many loose ends and such. Unless maybe they are very rich friends. That said; I am currently accepting applications for new rich friends as the last batch has not been working to full projected potential.

Isaac: Last but certainly not least, what are you working on, now?

David: Right now, I am currently working on promoting this new record for the most part; though, I have also been working on writing a new batch of songs for the next one and finishing up a book that I plan to self-publish at the end of the year (unless anyone

out there is a publisher looking for such a thing, of course.) My plans to challenge Bill O'Reilly to a combination knife fight/arm-wrestling match have been temporarily put on hold due to time constraints...on both of our parts, I'm afraid.

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