

The Midnight Ghost Train - Cold Was The Ground (2015)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Along The Chasm* 02. *Gladstone* 03. *BC Trucker* 04. *Arvonía* 05. *One Last Shelter* 06. *The Canfield* 07. *Straight To The North* 08. *No. 227* 09. *The Little Sparrow* 10. *Twin Souls* 11. *Mantis* Steve Moss – Guitar, Vocals Brandon Burghart - Drums Mike Boyne – Bass

Few bands are able to really capture a feeling with their music; this is particularly so when what they're doing is trying to be evocative of not only a state of mind, but also of a time and place. This is especially so in the realm of stoner metal, where plenty of people (perhaps now more than ever) are trying to re-create the feel of the excess of the 60s and 70s, although devoid of most of the flower-power stuff that filled those psychedelic years. Kansas' The Midnight Ghost Train (TMGT) are here to face that challenge.

Cold Was The Ground is an album full of the kind of southern/stoner rock goodness that seems to have been made to transport you beyond your bedroom (or wherever it is you're listening to it) and place you in the middle of an opiate-infused evening somewhere in the Arizona desert, or perhaps behind the wheel of a convertible as you speed down a desolated highway(yeah, I put a lot of thought into that).

Plenty of fuzzy guitars are scattered throughout the album, producing a plethora of bluesy riffs (there are plenty of hat-tippings to the likes Kyuss and Clutch), as well as enough stoner passages to get you high as a kite. Actually, Cold Was The Ground seems to have been engineered to do just that, to transport your mind to somewhere far away in the cosmos, whether you're ready to go or not.

Steve Moss' voice is really enjoyable, and works great for the sound of the band, sticking to a

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style that, while not being a growl, is definitely not clean. It's an interesting take, and which reminds me a lot of what the guys of Kadavar are doing, although in a much "growlier" style, where most of the lyrics seem to be yelled, and not so much sang. While Moss' voice comes off really aggressive, it still manages to be melodic and to convey a good amount of feelings and emotions, which is no easy feat (even if a good number of them can be summarized as "fuck this shit!"). Even his shot at spoken-word poetry with "The Little Sparrow", declaimed in a growly-tone, works really well (even if it comes out of nowhere).

The production of the album definitely works to the band's advantage. Drums, bass and guitar are clear in the mix, although they leave plenty of space for Moss' voice to shine. It's clear that these guys work well together, and the album demonstrates that they seem to have a really cohesive thing going.

While TMGT are not exactly inventing the wheel here, since their sound follows a formula that has been used plenty of times before, for every band that nails it there are dozens that come short of making anything worthwhile; well, TMGT have certainly managed to leave their mark.
--- J Salmeron, metalblast.net

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