

Barefoot Movement

by Mississippi Chris Sharp

CD: *Rise and Fly*

Artist: **The Barefoot Movement**

Artist Website: thebarefootmovementofficial.com

Label: Bonfire Recording Company/Bonfire Music Group

Label Website: www.bonfiremusicgroup.com

Reviewer: Mississippi Chris Sharp

There's something to be said for an EP release of your new CD. With a limited number of songs, one can make sure that each song is dynamite, which is what I'd unreservedly call the five songs on **The Barefoot Movement's** new EP release, *Rise and Fly*. There's only five songs, and easily five favorites.

This CD came into my hands the other day, along with several others, and I was encouraged to listen to it a hard listen. I looked at the stack of CDs I'd been handed, then looked at *Rise and Fly*. I shrugged my shoulders at the EP, noting only five songs. After listening, I wished there was at least five more, sure that if there had been, the additional five would have been as enjoyable as the five included.

The Barefoot Movement bills themselves as an Americana/Bluegrass/Roots/Rock Influenced band; that covers a lot of ground, so much ground as it really has little meaning. What I am certain of is that what I heard on the EP was fresh, new but not too new, as for some reason I could not help thinking of the late 60's Folk-Rock/Celtic group Fairport

Convention as I listened, which many of you boomers like me recall as your first fine taste of guitar master Richard Thompson and his wonderful vocals and arrangements with the late Sandy Denny. If you do recall, you'll know this is some heady company. Whispers of Fleetwood Mac gave me a few gentle caresses, too: more heady company.

Of the five songs on this EP, four are originals by two bandmates, fiddler Noah Wall and guitarist Alex Conerly. The rest of the band consists of Tommy Norris on Mandolin, and bassist Katie Blomarz. All band members share in the vocals. The EP information indicates Josh Hunt played the drums, and from the sound of it, a true percussionist and not a mere drummer, which is a sincere compliment.

I learned from the band's website that they were the recipients of 2014 IBMA Momentum Award. The momentum has apparently lagged a bit as six years later, I have in my hand this five song EP. I hope the momentum is gaining steam, that the fire is stoked, and the boiler pressure is on the rise. This is the first encounter I've had with this group, but I'd sure like to hear more. As for not being familiar with the band, I live in an apparent vacuum since the number of bands I have not heard of can only be counted in scientific notation.

Three of the songs were written by Wall: *Doin' Alright*, *Every Little Thing*, and *At the End of the Day*. One song was penned by Conerly: *Lonely Mississippi Blues*. Any guess as to which was my absolute favorite? Hands down, *Lonely Mississippi Blues*. I'm assuming Conerly belts out the lead vocals on this song, which makes me nostalgic for my beloved Mississippi, even though I'm in Mississippi as I write this. My nostalgia should be easily satisfied as I listen once more to Conerly belt it out, making me think of the great Alabama band Wet Willie, and their lead singer, Jimmy Hall, with faint echoes of Little Feat.

The lead single, *Early in the Morning*, is billed as a

traditional song. I've never heard it before. The rousing a *capella* rendition was delightful, but not the single I would have picked for initial release. No doubt, this is the song that will come the closest to satisfying the traditionalist's tastes. Perhaps this is the reason for its release as a single. I can only speculate.

There's no indication of who's doing the singing on *At the End of the Day*, but it was a beautiful rendition of a poignant lullaby to send me off into the ether, having enjoyed several listens as I write this.

Congratulations, to **The Barefoot Movement**. They look to have an a active touring season coming up. Maybe I'll get to see them. I'll be looking forward to it. Whenever your hard-to-define Americana/Bluegrass/Roots/Rock-Influenced band dredges up echoes of Fairport Convention, Fleetwood Mac, Wet Willie, and Little Feat, I'd say you were doing something right, even if defining the music isn't so easy. In fact, it is far easier to like that it is to define.

I like that about it.

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