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## JD Malone and the Experts

*“Avalon”*

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JD Malone influences read like a 1970s FM radio play list.

There’s a little early Springsteen in the mix, some Tom Petty and Creedence, and some twang in that redneck ex-con Steve Earle sort of way. And, songs like his bluesy “She Likes” veer into George Thorogood territory.

Add a three-guitar line-up and you’d have just another B-list bar band if Malone and his Experts weren’t so earnest, and if they weren’t such great musicians.

On this set of mostly originals, it also doesn’t hurt that Malone’s big voice can rumble along like his clear hero, John Fogerty, or reach skyward with a high lonesome falsetto in songs like “Still Loves You.”

“Sixty minute shower/ And I still can’t get myself clean,” he wails in that song.

“Avalon” is the Pennsylvania band’s debut and was produced by Grammy-winner Phil Nicolo, who put some sizzle in mid-career albums for artists like Bob Dylan and Billy Joel. Nicolo manages to both capture the thunderous energy of Malone’s live shows while keeping things tightened up and slightly polished.

It works perfectly on cuts as different as the seven-minute “Emmit Meets a Demon,” with its grinding Mick Taylor guitars, and the countrified, mandolin-sweetened “Leave Us Alone.”

**- Chris Jorgensen**