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JD Malone & The Experts: Avalon

Tired of albums that are produced to the nth degree, leaving a collection of songs that have had all the fun sucked out of them? Well let me introduce you to the debut full length release *Avalon*, from JD Malone & The Experts, where the vibe is simply a joy to behold. Steeped in the music of the likes of Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, or Creedence Clearwater Revival (actually tracks from both outfits appear at some point across this double disc release), JD and his aptly named Experts serve up prime time rock in a manner that is genuine, heartfelt, at times raucous and at others melancholy, but in the end always utterly captivating. Like the Heartbreakers, the frontman's name may precede the band's, however also like Tom and his minstrels this is a group effort where the compelling electric guitar work of Avery Coffee, the roaming bass work of Jim Miades, or the precise percussion of Tommy Geddes and multiple instrumentations, including 12 string, lap and pedal steel, high string acoustic and baritone guitar, mandolin and dobro from Tom Hampton, are every bit as captivating and vital as JD's acoustic guitar and rich vocals.



Across the thirteen songs that make up the album proper, varied highlights roll out thick and fast, with the insanely catchy "Silver From", a stonking version of CCR's "Fortunate Son" and "She Likes" illustrating the album's serious rock credentials, while the more Americana feel of "Avalon", "Ballad Of Mr. Barbo" and "Emerald Lake" offer a far more considered approach, giving this collection of songs a mature and refined air. Vocally Malone has the authority and range to sound confidently comfortable in either setting, with his tone sitting somewhere between

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either setting, with his tone sitting somewhere between Steve Earle, a more tuneful Petty and on the odd occasion a less pretentious Michael Stipe. His voice remains impressive throughout, however when JD teams up to form beautiful little vocal harmonies with Hampton the results really are quite wonderful. Over and above that, the expertly crafted guitar interplay between Malone's acoustic, and Hampton and Coffee's electric guitars raises these songs to another level through interesting, yet sympathetic arrangements.

Not content with thirteen excellent tracks, the CD also adds a radio edit of "Just Like New" and four "live in the studio" cuts in the shape of the aforementioned "Silver From" and "She Likes", along with non-album track "I Think It Was Monday" and a Petty cover "I Should Have Known It". All four of these live cuts also show up on the bonus seven track DVD that accompanies *Avalon*, which running at nearly forty minutes is almost worth the price of this album on its own! If the vibe of the CD is a joy, then to watch this five piece interact live in the studio is inspirational. In fact the extra half star needed to make *Avalon* a no brainer five out of five album is earned for this excellent disc which I just can't stop watching. Malone marshals his troops into giving a simply sublime run through of the four songs already mentioned, as well as album tracks "Just Like New", "Black Yodel" and "Still Love You" and as before all three benefit from the enormous amount of fun that the band are visibly having with the songs.

JD and his Experts have previously released an EP together, but considering that *Avalon* is their debut full length CD the results are actually quite startling and the only problem they may find is how to follow an album that sets the bar so high and put quite simply, is the best release I've heard in this genre for quite some time.

Track Listing

1. Silver From
2. Still Love You
3. Leave Us Alone
4. She Likes
5. Sweet Evil Things
6. Just Like New
7. Avalon
8. Ballad Of Mr. Barbo
9. Black Yodel
10. Fortunate Son
11. Do What You Can Do
12. Emerald Lake
13. Emmet Meets A Demon
14. Just Like New – Radio Edit
15. Silver From – Live
16. I Think It Was Monday – Live
17. She Likes – Live
18. I Sould Have Known It – Live

DVD

1. Silver From
2. I Think It Was Monday
3. She Likes

4. Just Like New
5. Black Yodel
6. Still Love You
7. I Should Have Known It

Added: July 13th 2011
Reviewer: **Steven Reid**
Score: ★★★★★
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» **SoT Staff Roundtable Reviews:**

JD Malone & The Experts: Avalon

Posted by **Mark Johnson, SoT Staff Writer** on 2011-07-13 08:45:34

My Score: ★★★★★

"JD Malone & the Experts are a combination of gritty Americana and classic rock not unlike many of the house-hold names we all love – Mellencamp, Springsteen, Petty, Creedence. The individual parts contribute to a whole new sound that is both fresh and immediately familiar. Band members who play in other groups like Poco, Pure Prairie League, Marshall Tucker, etc. add the experience and sophistication that make this music purely American" (<http://www.jdmalone.com/>, 2011).

The band is made up of JD Malone, on lead and backing vocals and acoustic guitar; Tom Hampton on 12 string electric guitar, baritone guitar, lap and pedal steel guitar, dobro, mandolin, high – string acoustic guitar, and backing vocals; Avery Coffee, on electric guitars; Jim Miades, on bass; and Tommy Geddes on drums.

This is an excellent debut album, with an accompanying DVD included in the package. If you were a new band and you wanted to launch your band in a way that would capture the attention of fans and at the same time document the excitement and enthusiasm of that launch, you'd want to create something like this package. It's complete in every way from the original album on CD, to a DVD with the band in the studio playing some of their favorite tracks live from the studio, with accompanied jeering and fun, to covering Tom Petty's classic 'I Should Have Known It'. They do a superb job on both Tom Petty's song and the classic "Fortunate Son", from John Fogerty of Creedence Clearwater Revival.

JD Malone has vocals that are a good mix between Steve Earl, Tom Petty, and Bruce Springsteen, and he has assembled a great band that mixes the mandolin well with the pedal steel giving their music just the right tinge of

twang without being overtly country. An excellent debut album. If only every new band put as much effort into their launch.



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