

JD Malone and the Experts

JD Malone & The Experts *Avalon*



When **JD Malone and The Experts** entered Philadelphia's famous Studio 4 to record their first full-length album, *Avalon*, they knew exactly what they wanted. The Philadelphia-based roots rockers wanted to record a studio album that would capture the grit, excitement and warmth of their live performances. They also wanted an album that would sound well-produced but organic. And they got their wish. With its classic yet timeless sound, *Avalon* captures the energy and vitality that has made JD Malone & the Experts' live appearances such a hot attraction on the roots rock circuit.

Malone co-produced *Avalon* with Dean Sciarra, president of the Philadelphia-based indie label ItsAboutMusic.com, and Grammy winner Phil Nicolo who is among Philly's most respected producers. Nicolo has worked with everyone from Santana and Bob Dylan to Aerosmith and Taj Mahal and he clearly understood what Malone's band needed.

"The band sounds really good live," Malone explains, "and we knew Phil would be able to make *Avalon* reflect our live sound. He has a reputation for recording bands and making them come alive in the studio."

Avalon, a two-disc set consisting of a generous 79-minute audio CD that includes 5 bonus tracks that are not available for download, and a 37-minute bonus DVD which documents the band in studio rehearsals, not only shows Malone to be an expressive, charismatic

vocalist but a prolific, insightful songwriter whose heartfelt material really captures the essence of what roots rock is all about. Malone brings a long list of influences to the table, including Tom Petty, Dylan, Springsteen, Steve Earle and Mellencamp. Malone loves classic country (the iconic Hank Williams, Sr. is one of his inspirations), and on "She Likes," one also hears echoes of great Chicago blues. But ultimately, JD Malone doesn't sound like anyone else.

Except for the roaring remake of Creedence Clearwater Revival's 1960s classic "Fortunate Son," Malone wrote everything on Disc 1 himself. The bonus DVD, meanwhile, finds Malone and friends putting their spin on Tom Petty's "I Should Have Known It." Malone's poignant "Emmit Meets a Demon" is about the tragic, racially motivated killing of Emmitt Till, a 14-year-old African-American youth in Mississippi in 1954. But most of the songs on *Avalon* were inspired by events, people, places and friends in Malone's own life. While "Ballad of Mr. Barbo" fondly remembers a dog who was accidentally shot by a hunter in Malone's home state of Vermont, "Black Yodel" was inspired by Malone's struggle with cynicism in the past and his desire to not give into that cynicism. "She Likes" is an ode to Malone's wife, and "Sweet Evil Things" underscores Malone's realization that what is good to you isn't necessarily good for you.

"Sweet Evil Things" is about the things in life that you shouldn't do, but you do them anyway," Malone notes. "It could be something as simple as eating an ice cream sundae, drinking too much coffee or drinking too much beer. We're all human beings, and we're all trying to feel good; we want to feel good as much as possible, and sometimes, people make bad choices when they're trying to feel good. Things that make us feel good can be bad for us if we overindulge. Most of these songs are a reflection of my own life, but hopefully, the listener can connect with them and relate them to their own lives and their own experiences."

Malone has been savoring the pleasures of roots rock for many years, although he didn't always do it in Philadelphia. Born and raised in Bennington, Vermont, Malone spent six years in the Navy after graduating from high school before moving to Philly. Malone became a fixture on the Philly scene and in 1993 formed the pop-rock band Steamroller Picnic which enjoyed an enthusiastic regional following, recorded an independently released album titled *Grow* in 2002. Malone and singer Gerry McWilliams then formed the duo Malone & McWilliams, and two albums followed: *Malone & McWilliams' Greatest Hits* in 2005 and *Los Angeles* in 2006. Malone formed JD Malone & the Experts in 2009 uniting Malone with guitarists Tom Hampton and Avery Coffee, bassist Jim Miades and drummer Tommy Geddes.

Philadelphia has very high standards when it comes to music; everyone from Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes to John Coltrane to Todd Rundgren to Will Smith made their mark in Philly, whose musical audiences can be as demanding as the city's sports fans. But winning over Philadelphia's notoriously tough audiences was a challenge that JD and company were more than well-prepared for. Their live performances have earned them a reputation for going that extra mile on stage, and when the time came for them to record their first full-length album, they knew they had a lot to live up to.

"We wanted to take the energy and excitement the band had developed and try to grab that energy on this album," Malone asserts. "Music is a strange, beautiful and powerful thing, and I'm really happy with the way *Avalon* came out."



Contact: Randy Alexander
Randex Communications
906 Jonathan Lane
Marlton, NJ 08053
ph 856.596.1410
randex@randexpr.com
www.randexpr.com

