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Eric Blakely

****Still Life at Full Speed****

People may say they live for music, but with Eric Blakely, the adage rings true. "Those 45 minutes or more when I'm on stage playing for people is what it's all about for me, and why I do this," says the Austin, TX-based singer, songwriter and guitarist.

An independent musical artist, Blakely has forged what many musicians would consider to be a dream career. Over the course of what is now five albums, he has enjoyed critical acclaim. His video for "Uncle John's Farm" has been in rotation on CMT, his music has taken him around the world, including Texas, California, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, and Paris, France, and he has toured with such other songwriters as Steve Wynn, Mary McBride and fellow Texan, Susan Gibson. He has also enjoyed the buzz of playing Rolling Stones songs onstage in Las Vegas with Stones saxophone man Bobby Keys.

With *Still Life at Full Speed*, his latest CD on his own Folk Reels label, Blakely delivers yet another stunning set of what England's Bucket Full of Brains praises as "bright, witty and erudite country-pop songs."

It's a collection that runs the gamut of human emotion and experience and fulfills the praise he earned from the Houston Post on his debut recording as "one of the most promising young Austin songwriters." Within its 12 songs (and one bonus track) are the cogent, philosophical ruminations of the title tune and breathtakingly beautiful love songs like "Since I Found You" and "I'll Be Yours" that resonate with the beating of the human heart. Conversely, there's also story songs like "The Ballad of Lester & Mary" and "Hangin' Tree" that feel as old and authentic as the hills, and the cheeky wit of "Another Friday Night at the Laundromat." When Blakely sings that his life has "Been A Long Road," he displays the life lessons he has learned and a musical and lyrical facility that captures the essence of human experience.

"It's a turning 40 record that also reflects where I am and what I feel in a post 9/11 world," he explains. "As the title implies, it's a song collection about how everything's going on around you and you can't seem to do anything about it. I like to write about my life because for me there is an emotional connection rather than making something entirely fictional."

Blakely's musical road began in the cultural hotspot of Berkeley, CA, where he was born and raised. A grandmother who wrote songs and poetry was an early inspiration along with a band from his neighborhood that rose to superstardom: Creedence Clearwater Revival. "It made me think, well, if they can come from my town and make it, why can't a kid like me," recalls Blakely, who salutes the group lyrically and musically on the song "Kensington." CCR's John Fogerty, alongside John Lennon, John Mellancamp, and John Prine - whom Blakely likes to refer to as the "four Johns" -

served as models and inspiration to create his own meaningful music.

By his mid teens, Blakely left school to play in bands across Northern California. He polished his craft during stints performing with groups in Paris and Los Angeles before landing in Austin in 1989. There, the well-traveled rocker fell in with the city's fertile singer-songwriter scene and began honing his original works to a well-sharpened edge. He quickly landed a gig hosting the open mike night at the legendary Austin Outhouse and opened his Folk Reels studio to record his own music and such other artists as Slaid Cleaves, Guy Forsyth, Erik Hokkanen and Bob Livingston, to name a few. He also became an in-demand guitarist and ended up back in Europe playing with Austin cult legend Pat Mears.

Blakely's debut album, ***Uncle John's Farm***, made an immediate splash with critics and music buffs in America and overseas. When his video for the title track landed on CMT, Blakely became known as one of Austin's rising artists.

Determined to maintain his artistic integrity and independence, Blakely continued to forge his own way on another album of evocative and resonant songs, *Growing Into My Father's Clothes*, followed with a celebration of his rock and pop roots, *Levity*. A collection of his best work titled *The Payne Anthology* - the double entendre title comes from his studio on Austin's Payne Avenue - won Blakely further fans and praise for the way he spins family dysfunction and his life's journeys into wisdom, insight and humor.

Now with ***Still Life at Full Speed***, Blakely offers his most assured and winning effort yet, blending pop, rock'n'roll and roots music into his own distinctive style. As he says, "When you get an audience and connect with them, it makes it all worthwhile." And connecting with Blakely on this album should be a worthy experience for anyone who loves great music, fine writing and a distinctive sound that comes straight from the heart.

www.ericblakely.com