

Radio Nationals

PRESS

“...*Place You Call Home* centers the group at a blissful meeting point between the sonic pillars of Crazy Horse’s muddy guitar rock and the fiery bar-band attitude of the Bottle Rockets. Underneath that spit and kerosene is Clifton’s keen songwriting, delicately tracing the often disheartening discoveries made on the path from his roots in small-town West Virginia to the Pacific Northwest... A vast travelogue within the bounds of Americana terrain emerges on *Place You Call Home*: the luscious country fields of ‘Katie Dear’, the bleeding-finger garage-rock crunch of ‘Reverend Jim’, the dirt-road tavern appeal of ‘Backseat Queen’, and the heartbreaking, unsentimental folk of ‘Black Lung’...”

Brian T. Atkinson, *No Depression Magazine*, January 2004

“...Radio Nationals offer the more rocking aspects of the country-rock hyphenated genre. Their driving, brawny songs work wonders in a live setting, where their bar-band looseness and perfect songcraft combine for raucous shows that always get the crowds excited.”

Nate Lippens, *The Stranger* (Seattle, WA), May 2004

“It takes about a minute of the opening track *Anywhere* to appreciate just how much Seattle band Radio Nationals enjoy doing what they do. ...the band play with a real sense of freedom that you can’t help but enjoy. Radio Nationals are the ‘not quite country’ cousins of the Counting Crows. Both have a laid back guitar sound but where the Crows are street-wise and slightly world-weary, *Backseat Queen* shows Radio Nationals to be fresher and hungrier. Experience hasn’t quite kicked all fight out of them yet... *Place You Call Home* is a solid piece of work from a band which knows which end of a guitar is the business end... But *Black Lung* and *Reverend Jim* raise the stakes. One the compelling and moving story of a miner’s plight and the other a cautionary homage to the bottle have a desperate air of tragedy hanging over them. And it’s that ability to extract a little more and go a little deeper that makes *Place You Call Home* thought-provoking, intriguing and highly original.”

-*Maverick Magazine* (United Kingdom), February, 2004 (Four-star rating, of possible five)

“‘They don’t make movies about people like us, dear,’ Radio Nationals guitarist/vocalist Jared Clifton growls in ‘Anywhere,’ the rowdy opener to the group’s new CD [*Place You Call Home*]. Oh yes they do. The characters that come tumbling out of these vivid alt-country tales of woe could just as easily be wandering around the set of ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ or ‘The Last Picture Show.’ The band not only has a knack for storytelling, viewing everything with a sort of college-educated redneck-ism, but band members have a way with updating rock, country and pop while keeping them all happy in bed together. The rip-roaring ‘Backseat Queen’ veers between Hank Williams country pathos and Ted Nugent big guitar rock. The coal-miner saga ‘Black Lung’ takes the same path from its old-timey beginnings to its angry guitar rant and back again. ‘Gone’ has more of an R.E.M.-like pop hook. As far wandering as the band is musically, it works mostly because of Clifton. There isn’t a hint of pretense in his voice, no forced twang like so many alt-country fakers. He’s as natural crooning the pedal-steel-soaked broken-love ballads like the traditional ‘Katie Dear’ as he is blasting the rockers.”

-Chris Jorgensen, *Billings Gazette* (Billings, MT) January, 2004

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PRESS pg. 2

“[*Place You Call Home* is] a mighty impressive slab of gritty country-rock ranging from blistering twang-rockers to pensive, moody ballads.”

– **Don Yates, Program Director, KEXP 90.3FM (www.kexp.org), October 2003**

“West Virginia-born singer and guitarist Jared Clifton has a great, aching voice that breaks in all the right places and flares to meet the harder songs' edges. The group's latest album, *Place You Call Home*, is better and bolder than anything they've done before. It has a raucous energy that's met with some of their most accomplished songwriting, for an album that's strong from start to finish.”

– **Nate Lippens, *The Stranger* (Seattle, WA), October 2003**

“Radio Nationals is fast gaining a reputation as one of the most tenacious live acts in town, playing with cowboy-punk rage.”

– **Tom Scanlon, *The Seattle Times*, 2001**

“With a name that somehow manages to conflate wishful pop superstardom with old, broken-down little red wagons, you'd be forgiven for guessing that Radio Nationals are an alt-country band. They've been compared to Wilco, but their love for crackling distortion and overdriven amps marks them closer to Jeff Tweedy's old band, Uncle Tupelo. But while there's a definite aggression to the Radio Nationals' attack (reminding us that Black Flag were once as important as Loretta Lynn in the alt-country canon), they just as easily slip into a tear-in-my-beer heartbreak mode, reminding us that Hank Williams was tuffer than Henry Rollins ever was.”

– ***Seattle Weekly*, April, 2003**

“How 'bout some good old-fashioned roots rock to start off your Sunday? Hell, sleep in and skip church; you'll feel the spirit moving plenty right here. Fans of Wilco and Neil Young, prepare to meet your favorite new band: Radio Nationals.”

– **Laura Learmonth's Bumbershoot Picks, *The Seattle Weekly*, 2001**

“...Radio-friendly tracks like ‘Golden’ and ‘Ghosts in the Room’ will surely receive countrywide college-radio play, but deeper cuts like ‘Black Lung,’ about the procession of coal mining generations, or the rearrangement of the traditional ‘Katie Dear,’ will resonate with critical aficionados. Reminiscent of a high-octane Son Volt or a slightly countrified Big Head Todd, *Place You Call Home* is likely to stay on your heavy rotation.”

– **Cotton Mayer, *Tablet Magazine* (Seattle, WA), October 2003**

“[Radio Nationals' *Exit 110*] sits right up in its chair, built of 1986 late X/Dave Alvin rock-and-holler, and hits harder – even in the spots where its predecessors tended to let up or fall back into stale blues jamming. The singer has one hell of a diaphragm and isn't afraid to use it; these guys could start a firestorm live. This is what Uncle Tupelo and their spinoffs should have sounded like.”

– **Grant Cogswell, *The Stranger* (Seattle, WA), 1999**

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Radio Nationals

PRESS pg. 3

“...From the get-go I remember nodding my head along with the music, nothing out of the ordinary. Fifteen minutes later I got off the bus while ‘Black Lung’ was playing. Immediately I was hooked. I remember thinking ‘Damn, these guys are really good,’ and the rest is history. The remainder of the week and into the weekend I couldn’t stop listening to the album. Now, it’s not alt-country’s Pet Sounds or White Album or Dark Side. What *Place You Call Home* is, on the other hand, is a damn great album along the lines of Neil Young’s Harvest Moon. Listening to this album gives you an idea why Peter Buck joined them onstage at the Crocodile while they were covering REM’s ‘Driver 8.’ These guys write some intensely moving songs. Heck, they moved this author enough to be inspired to actually open up to the genre people call alt-country.”

-Keith Hodo, *Rainy Dawg Radio* (Seattle, WA), April 2004

“A little bit of country and a little bit of rock n' roll, the Radio Nationals are about as grass roots Americana as you can get - unless your name is Neil Young. Who, not too oddly enough, this band can easily draw comparisons to. Featuring a solid grounding in rock, the Radio Nationals' sound skews into pop, country and - dare I say - bluegrass territories as well... It's the kind of sophisticated songwriting that made John Cougar Mellencamp so famous - his songs about small town America helped evolve a whole new side of rock ... something which the Radio Nationals emulate on their sophomore release.

A follow up of their debut EP, Exit 110, the Radio Nationals have fused several musical styles and subject matter together to create a powerful CD. *Place You Call Home* is a gritty, pensive collection of tracks that evoke equally as powerful emotions - much like Neil Young, Mellencamp and, to some degree by comparison here, Bruce Springsteen.

Backed by incredibly skilled and technically superb playing from his band, lead singer Jared Clifton - quite simply - has the pipes. His voice ranges from heartbreaking highs to growling lows. Clifton's vocals are painfully soulful and resonate inside your mind long after the CD has come to an end. His band... provide[s] the musical backbone by which Clifton is able to flesh out the vibrant hearts of their songs. With an amped-up sound that is as liable to drop some distortion into a tune as it is to mix in acoustics, Radio Nationals could easily be called an ‘alt-country’ band, but they're not. Theirs is a sound all their own, though the groundwork was laid by some pretty impressive names.

Place You Call Home is 14-track collection of tunes that isn't just satisfied to sound good - the songs try to say something important. ‘Ghosts in the Room’ and ‘Anywhere’ are very radio friendly, and will find a home in the right markets. ‘See You In New York,’ is a great track that will probably be licensed for a tv property in the future. However, it's ‘Black Lung’ and ‘Katie Dear’ that anchor the CD's tracks in their creative roots. Despairing the fate of a family that lives and dies in a coal mine, ‘Black Lung’ is a sad epic, which was probably inspired by Clifton's upbringing in West Virginia. ‘Katie Dear,’ a traditional offering meanwhile, is a love song that couldn't have been done better by Hank Williams, Jr. or Sr.”

-Brian Dukes, *Up & Coming Weekly* (Fayetteville, NC) Jan. 28, 2004

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