

The best Americana songs are those that are subtly familiar, with melody lines and lyrical nods that hint at the deep roots bringing forth strange new flowers. On their latest album *Come a Reckoning*, The Stubborn Lovers demonstrate an intimate familiarity with the craggy contours of country music history, while managing to avoid the pitfalls of nostalgia or revivalism. Their music may be anchored in train beats and twang but is never beholden to tradition, as the group melds pop songcraft, E Street swagger, the gutsy bravado of heartland rock, and air-tight vocal harmonies, complementing plenty of big choruses and undeniable hooks.

Portland, Oregon is home for the band, the core of which is bassist and songwriter Jenny Taylor, a New Jersey native whose love of the Garden State's finest musical export (The Boss, if you had to ask) shows in her attention to detail and anthemic sensibilities; singer/guitarist Mandy Allan, whose Tennessee roots ground the band in an authentic Southern style; and drummer Michael "Pearl" Nelson, a Pacific Northwest lifer with a storied history in jazz and rock. The group's synergy is real, with Taylor's love of language and natural musicality filtered through Allan's old-school vocal prowess, anchored by the dynamism and experience of Nelson.

*Come a Reckoning* is a record that seamlessly bridges the gap between alt-country punkishness and razor-sharp songcraft. With it, The Stubborn Lovers have crafted an album that is both timeless and of its moment; one that will satisfy longtime fans while winning over plenty of new ones in the process. It's the sound of a band playing on their own terms at the height of their powers, not beholden to any particular genre stamps or tropes—and it's a sure sign of even better things to come down the road.