

Even from the beginning, songwriter/singer Steve Bedunah received high praise for his work. Robert Oermann, Nashville's most acclaimed critic, wrote in *Music Row* about Bedunah's "The Johnstons" in his first CD *Hand Me Down Land*, "The first thing that catches your ear is the band laying down a twangin', thumpin Cash-like groove. The second thing that you notice is that you're in the presence of a major songwriter. This dark dramatic word portrait will haunt you."

Brian Owens, in *Metronome Magazine*, remarked, "It wouldn't be surprising to see Bedunah nominated for Best New Country Act for this outstanding album." Jim Beal of the *San Antonio Express* notes that Bedunah is "among the best when it comes to chronicling the clash of urban and rural Texas."

The best advice about listening to Bedunah's second album *Plug It In and Play* is indeed to "**plug it in and play, play loud as you can**" as the verse says. *Plug It In and Play* mesmerizes with an assortment of country and suburban characters who value their land, their music, their relatives, and their whiskey as they battle their way through a life they didn't choose. These carefully crafted vignettes capture the pathos of our times perfectly.

Bedunah's songs create a tension between a dark, overwhelming world and the sometimes fiery but always individualistic characters who seek to gain some margin of hope. The CD's foreboding atmosphere is balanced by its high energy and Bedunah's superb use of imagery and metaphoric language, raising his songs to poetic heights. Despite their dark trappings, the songs uplift the listener and make him think.

Plug It In and Play offers a variety of styles ranging from blue grass to country to blues, but may be best classified as Americana. "**Down to This River**" moves from a ballad rhythm to a "foot stomping groove" as an exasperated homesteader tries to get away from the big city with its canned paradise. "I pick up pieces of the city after every rainfall." "**Little Sister**" has an upbeat blue grass vein and is combination prison and celebratory prodigal son (in this case daughter) song. The detail of Aunt Hazel's "best pecan pie" is truly American.

If you want a pure foot stomping rhythm try "**Plug It In and Play**" about a musician who can't seem to give it up. If you need an edgy drinking song to go with your whiskey, try "**Down the Drain**." If you're on the road again, move to the highway rhythms of "**Albuquerque's a Long, Long Way**."

"**If You Need to Help**" is a finely crafted, slow paced vignette about a man dealing with depression and alcoholism and his hope that love can save his soul. "I turn, and I turn, and I turn, till I can't sleep no more," he cries as the night winds buffet his world. "Is your touch like a candle? how far will it reach?/When the achin' comes, it runs hard and lives deep." And don't forget the poignant "**Lady with the Sad Face**." And there's more.

Bedunah can move from a foot stomping, can't keep your foot still rhythm to lullaby at the drop of a hat and it all makes sense. If you love songs that echo in your head long after you've listened to them and you have a wide range in musical taste, Steve Bedunah delivers on both counts. Try one of his albums. It won't be a casual "this is nice" listening experience.. It will be a unique Americana "slice of life" experience you will treasure over and over again.

On a dark winter night sometime in the near future, some guy sitting in his cabin or lonely home will need something to pick him up. The best thing he can do? Drink a couple of Jack and Cokes and plug in this album.

Steve Bedunah was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and grew up on its western edge overlooking the Trinity Valley to the grasslands of the West, a rugged and rattlesnake infested place. But he spent many of his weekends and summers in East Texas on his grandfather's farm. He learned much about the Texas spirit from his hardworking, tough spirited relatives. He formed a band when he was in elementary school and started writing his first songs. He's never been able to put down his guitar or his pen for very long. Bedunah like Texas is large and powerfully built with a low, strong voice. You can find Bedunah singing all over the Southwest's many bars, honky tonks, and music festivals.