

"I've had the great pleasure of catching the early mixes of North Country. This is the authentic sound of a band stripped down to its acoustic core, discovering its essential nature and becoming reinvigorated, reborn as a duo that has found its true voice. Or, to be more precise: true voices. For it is the intertwining vocals of Stan and Ann that sets Mulholland apart. The playing's first class too – guitar, fiddle, accordion to the fore – but the voices are what define it: always country, sometimes rootsy, and occasionally, as on their cover of Warren Zevon's Don't Let Us Get Sick, nudging into mellow folk harmonies that hint at the depth of both the on-stage and off-stage partnership.

The rest of the album's songs are Mulholland originals where the influences are clear – mid-period Nashville Dylan, latter-day Civil Wars, a dash of Cash country, and hints of a host of others from The Byrds through to Willie Nelson.

But Mulholland are no mere copyists. The influences are exactly that, just influences, and undertones, signposts that don't detract from the band's own distinctive sound and the drive Mulholland want to take you down.

En route through this varied set you'll encounter a mysterious stranger in Black Feathers, wistful yearnings in My Wasted Heart, an apologetic blues song, and a closing rocking road song in Highway 101. It's what you might expect if a Bible-thumping gospel preacher teamed up with the Drive-By Truckers.

Somewhere in the middle of it all there's a sweet love song too, Summertime, that wouldn't have been out of place on a Robbie Robertson album. Lovely stuff that captures the live excitement of the band and matched it with some excellent studio work.

It's a thrilling set from a duo that is really hitting its stride"

**David Nicholson**

**YorkMix Jan 2016**