



Steve Conn, *Flesh And Bone*

(Not Really Records)

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Steve Conn is a brutally honest songwriter. For his fifth album, *Flesh and Bone*, he discloses dark secrets that others would rather croak first than reveal.

There isn't much the gifted pianist holds back on these dozen originals that delve into lost loves, crying days and a miserable protagonist you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy. The songs are largely autobiographical with vivid imagery unfolding before your very eyes.



The shuffling title track represents the overarching theme—Conn questioning his existence while striving to be the best person possible. His most outwardly brilliant

and wittiest composition is the rollicking “Famous,” on which a protagonist reflects on his career with a jaded perspective. He realizes time is running out and will settle for any posthumous recognition but, of course, with overinflated illusions of grandeur. That is until he’s jolted back to reality by the demoralizing punch line: “There’s a clean-up on aisle two.”

Sure, it’s heavy in places, but it’s ingenious in others. “Good Times Are Coming” is based on a 2003 original, “Down on Rigolette,” but is told from a different perspective. On “You Don’t Know,” the arrangement shifts into a momentary cinematic swirl as the protagonist dreams about better days.

Just because Conn’s a longtime Nashville denizen doesn’t mean the Louisiana expat has lost his groove thing. Check out the funky zydeco number “Around and Around” (one of two tunes featuring Sonny Landreth), the best rug cutter of the disc. Lyrically, it’s an unusual pairing, with the subject matter being the unending debate between religions. Overall, *Flesh and Bone* offers a thinking set of tracks.