



## Claydon Connor – ‘Under The Big Sky’ EP Review

BY [STEFAN ARMITAGE](#) · SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

I’ve perhaps never been more delighted than to find a local talent such as [Claydon Connor](#). Originally growing up in Oldham, Connor then became one of my own, relocating to the [Isle of Wight](#) to join the competitive hive of music talent.

As many people know, Country music is one of my favourite genres. From [Johnny Cash](#) and the Carter Family, to K-Rose on GTA, all the way forward to Taylor Swift (‘s earlier stuff), there are very few things I enjoy more than listening to Country music.

And out of nowhere, I find out the Island is playing host to one of the best up-and-coming, modern Country music stars I’ve heard for a while.

Like Cash, Kenny Rogers, Hank Williams or many of the other Country greats that come before him, Connor’s music is focused entirely on telling a story. And released last month, every track in *Under The Big Sky*, has come together to create a musical odyssey of Claydon Connor’s love life. And after listening to it, it’s clear why it has been getting worldwide radioplay.

This is *Under The Big Sky*.

**1. Just Another Lover** – *‘Everybody needs to love someone, but you’re just another lover and it all went wrong’* – an oddly upbeat track, considering it’s carrying the message of a break up. Most likely due to the way it was produced, I found listening to this track through headphones makes it so much more pleasant than out of speakers.

And perhaps that’s also because this is such a personal track, as it casts your mind back to past lovers and being able to smile through it, hold your head high

and move on. A catchy bridge and chorus – it's a great kick off to the album.

**2. The Kind of Man I am** – Once again, another track filled with love and emotion. *'If I had my way, I'd still marry her today. I guess that's just the kind of man I am'*. The pace is much faster, with perfectly used sporadic choric backing vocals and slide guitar. Overall, the song recreates a chase, and it's a chase towards that girl who you want to share every other journey with.

I think it's important to point out Connor's vocals. They are pleasantly soft, almost raspy. Sure, they're not the strongest, but they are recognisable. And this means so much when listening to Country music.

And check out the music video – filmed in my hometown.

**3. We Could Have it All** – *'Love is friendship set on fire, and this fire I don't mind'*. Connor slows the pace down in Track 3. This track executes additional percussion incredibly well – all creating a certain “epic” feel; a feeling that you only discover with around a dozen tracks a year. If you're ever camping under stars one night, on a beach with friends, pop this track on.

**4. A Love Unknown** – Once again, the tempo is turned right down, and with the addition of some slow harmonica, this song forces one to reflect. *'To leave me alone with the thoughts in my head, everything reminds me of a time I'd rather forget.'* there's very little I can point out about this track other than it is simply wonderful.

**5. Who Would Have Thought** – Whoever broke Claydon Connor's heart – I both hate and thank you. From the plucking of the guitar, to the way Claydon sings, this song sounds incredibly playful, as if to hide the heartache within the lyrics. Put simply, this track is about the pain of a break up. Because, *'Who would have known that love would be this hard?'*

**6. Whiskey Nights** – A classic Country song staple. Drinking whiskey. The slow beat and slide guitar create that groggy feeling of being drunk. And why's Connor drinking? For a reason we all have – because of a girl. *'The nights are forgotten, the days are a blur. My stomach is rotten, but so is the world'*. Absolutely ideal and delightful lyrics. They carry so much pain, as Connor realises *'these whiskey nights will never let me go.'*

**7. A Little Piece of Heaven** – Without a doubt one of Claydon Connor's greatest achievements and a mid-album highlight when considering the poetic art within these lyrics. I can't actually pinpoint a moment in this track where the lyrics are

better than another – it's 4:14 of sheer pleasure throughout. Ironic it should be called 'A Little Piece of Heaven'. A hidden gem and a must-listen for *everyone*.

**8. Makes Me Wonder** – Track 8 turns the tempo right up again. An enjoyable track, catchy chorus; perfectly positioned on the album. *'I've taken punches, got scars and bruises. But I'm still here to tell a story'* – and I'm glad you are Claydon.

**9. The Sweetest Thing** – *'Love, love, love – is the sweetest thing'*...In case you were wondering, Claydon loves someone. Under a few cliché metaphors, this track really does have some shines of brilliance; from the air-punching, climactic build of the instrumentals, to some great lyric sequences within the verses. It's not an album highlight for me, but it's certainly not album filler either. Definitely not a track that should be skipped.

**10. Have You Got Heart?** – The penultimate track and it's a slow, gorgeous piece of Country music. There is a wonderful connection between the slide guitar and plucking of the lead – and neither suffer without the rhythm guitar. It's a track where simplicity conquers, as Connor asks the familiar questions he needs to know; *'Do you feel love? Do you know pain? Or am I wasting my time again?'*

This track is perhaps the best example of how a Brit can achieve such a seamless connection with Americana music

**11. Under The Big Sky** – Title track! And from listening to the rest of the album, I was expecting great things. From the start, I was greeted with classic Country strumming, and the lovely lyrics, 'Hello Sun, it's nice to meet you, you're the one. Hello sun.'

Then... fuck me.

This is an impeccable Pop Country song!

Everything comes together – bass, electric riffs, melodic backing vocals – and most importantly, superb lyrics that paint a wonderful love story that all takes place Under the Big Sky.

*Under The Big Sky* is truly written from the heart, and not one mention of a train, cowboy or prison (how rare from a Country album?).

Claydon Connor is a rare breed of Country music talent, and I am proud that he is not only British, but an Islander too.

It's funny how so many artists in so many other genres start green, and then hone their talents to grow to become better. Whereas, with Country music, very often the best artists showcase their impeccable talents from the very beginning, and this is definitely what Connor and this album represents. He is a refreshing wave for the Country music genre, and has reignited so much personal passion for modern Country. He has learnt from his predecessors, and also seems to know exactly where the genre is leading. I simply can't wait for more.

*Under the Big Sky* is available can be heard on Connor's [Soundcloud](#), and is available to purchase on iTunes (which I bought immediately). And if you want to catch Claydon live, visit his official [Website](#), [Facebook](#) page or [Twitter](#) by clicking the links.