

Album: *Outlaws & Saints*

Artist: Woody Woodworth & The Piners

Woody Woodworth & The Piners joined forces in 2016 with the lofty desire to bring forth a sense of longing in their music to match the multifaceted culture of Virginian music and Appalachia through a succinct infusion of Bluegrass, Country, and Southern Rock. With *Outlaws & Saints*, the six members should rest assured that they have successfully achieved their heartfelt aspiration. Entrenched deeply into the core of this collection is a haunting common thread that intertwines a sense of danger, urgency, and unshakeable heartbreak that can often be attributed to pursuing a life of art.

This is in part due to the superb craftsmanship of Woodworth's songwriting that ranges in diversity and depth of subject matter with an intricate, often delicate approach to lyrical structure. Yet, the driving force here is that undeniable voice. Woodworth sings with the pain of earned regret, the sorrow of deep understanding, and the kind of tenacity that is reminiscent of The Hag. Lucky for Woodworth, he isn't alone. His powerful instrument is matched with the talent of an invested band that understands the scope of what they are attempting to accomplish.

"When Them Dogwoods Bloom" is a thumping classic road anthem that matches the gritty, ill-fated romance of Rock-leaning "Ballad of Danny and Bobby." Though Woodworth and the band are fully capable of slowing it down and giving space to let the meaning of a song linger as evident on the stellar "Quittin' Kind" which is a tender moment that finds the band intimately in step with one another. However, the album standouts here are those that inspired the title itself. "Hard to Be An Outlaw" and "Saint on Sundays" both serve as honest, soulful laments of the complicated nature of the often romanticized lifestyle of Outlaw Country musicians.

Outlaw & Saints gives honor to regional culture yet still remains fresh with forward thinking concepts and ideas. This is a testament to Woody Woodworth & The Piner's clear devotion to the craft, and further their passion for bringing vivid stories to life just as others have done in their region for generations.