

## Barton Carroll - *Avery County, I'm Bound To You*



Dear friends,

The world of fiction is a wonderful place. And on my previous albums I definitely prescribed to the notion that fiction is the only place where you can tell the truth: what Werner Herzog calls "The ecstatic truth." The truth of narrative, rather than the lifeless quality of facts and data. So far it has made me feel a lot more free at the writing table (not to mention with questions like, "So who was that song about?").

But my method changed with this record. And while I would still insist that the stories and details are too nebulous to be literal, the title of the album is *Avery County, I'm Bound To You*. And I did indeed grow up in Avery County, North Carolina. And I do indeed feel bound to that place.

Perhaps I'm going through a mid-life crisis. Actually, I'm sure of it. It's so damned scary when you get your first glimpse of the end of the road that you tend to look back hard at the journey so far. As much as I've resisted writing autobiographically on my previous work, I just couldn't get around it on this album. I didn't even try. So these songs are reflections of an upbringing in the Appalachian Mountains seen through the lens of several years of city life on the West Coast. Like when Tom Waits sings, "I never saw the East Coast until I moved to the West."

My musical memories always echo with Doc Watson, Ralph Stanley and other Old Time voices. But while working on the songs for *Avery County, I'm Bound To You*, I had records by Bad Religion and The Jam on the turntable and in my headphones. Bad Religion for directness, clarity and boldness of language, and The Jam for regional loyalty, passion and unashamed use of dialect. Those guys put the vocals up front and sing it like they mean business. It's something I think they have in common with folk music.

Literature is also a big influence. After the long, blank-page sessions waiting for the lyric-muse to make an appearance, I would read Nabokov, Martin Amis, Saul Bellow, and Norman Mailer. Authors who can stretch words to the edge of their meaning. I did my best to channel them on songs like "The Straight Mile" and "Laveda." I re-read "To Kill A Mockingbird" and studied Harper Lee's unique voice for "Mama's Making Something On The Loom."

The music on "Avery County, I'm Bound To You" was played by a fantastic and diverse group of characters. The rhythm section is Matt Weiner (Blue4Trio, Hot Club Of Cowtown) on upright and electric bass and Dan Peters (Mudhoney, Screaming Trees, Nirvana....briefly) on drums.

The horn and woodwind section were made up of Hans Teuber (Bill Frisell, Wayne Horvitz, Ani DiFranco) and Steve Moore (Jim White, Earth, sunnO))), Laura Veirs). These two multi-instrumentalists covered a lot of sonic territory with flute, piccolo, alto flute, clarinet, trombone, Wurlitzer and Hammond Organ.

And we did our best to keep our roots with a few local Folk and Old Time players: Charlie Beck on banjo, Nova Devonie on accordion, and Jakob Breitbach on fiddle.

The production team was veteran producer Martin Feveyear (Mark Lanegan, Jesse Sykes, Hey Marseilles, Mudhoney, etc) and Matt Weiner who produced my 2010 release, *Together You and I*.

Speaking of *Together You and I*, my previous record brought in some nice reviews and got me some great shows. The highlight was probably the UK tour opening for Mudhoney (yep...just me and my acoustic guitar. How punk is that?!), but I was also lucky enough to share a bill with folks like Eilen Jewell, Crooked Fingers, Alela Diane, and The Cave Singers.

We so very much appreciate you for listening to *Avery County, I'm Bound To You*. Please let us know if there's anything else we can do for you.

All the best,

Barton

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**Artist:** Barton Carroll

**Album Title:** *Avery County, I'm Bound to You*

**Release Date:** October 15th, 2013

**Label:** Skybucket Records

**Press from *Together You and I***

"Barton Carroll is the kind of songwriter that gets taken for granted. In a modestly fragile tenor, he relates real stories instead of impressionistic poetry or woe-is-me folk confessions, full of acute observations and complex emotional developments. It's literary in the sense that he has a strong grasp of character and voice, not in the sense that he favors big words or clever turns of phrase."

– Pitchfork (7.4 rating)

"...with each album Carroll obviously pursues his own muse. *Love & War* seemed a perfect sound for Carroll to settle into for a while, but *Together You and I* finds him already pushing at the edges to create something that teases a little more, but which is every bit as satisfying in the long run."

– PopMatters (7 out of 10)

"Barton Carroll has outdone himself with his latest record... he has moved beyond Appalachian troubadour and made his way to places his contemporaries would fear to tread. Covering musical ground that spans almost a century of American music and filled with songs that are dressed in Carroll's seemingly unique ability to capture deeply empathetic stories, *Together You And I* is an immediately epic record. There are few things to be considered hooks in these tales of woe and human endeavor, but the stories will stick with you, echoing in your heart and mind for days after listening."

– Hybrid Magazine

"To those who think folk music has to be alt-folk or some other hybrid in order to be relevant in the 21st Century, no stronger rebuke to that notion could be offered than North Carolina's Barton Carroll, a now-Seattle-based singer-songwriter of uncommon lyrical gifts and a low-flame intensity that commands a listener's attention even with all the other distractions of modern life."

– *The Bluegrass Special*

"Barton Carroll crafts hardscrabble folk music populated with emotionally haunted souls. In a plaintive voice recalling Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Freedy Johnston, Carroll sings about world-worn characters struggling to survive but not surrendering...Carroll's sharp-eyed, unflinching story-songs serve to separate him from the troubadour pack."

– *American Songwriter*

"Strong on words and strong on music...Carroll's musical character is distinct, if not easily defined. Sometimes this album sounds sounds like Phil Ochs wandered into a Van Morrison session."

– *Vintage Guitar*