

Across Tundras

Sage

Neurot Recordings

Birthered from the open spaces of the western United States and now nestled in Nashville, Tennessee; Across Tundras has been a band which has always been able to convey the feeling of being in the presence of severity through their music. Their fifth and most recent release, "Sage," accomplishes this in a way unfamiliar to even the most loyal of 'AT' listeners. Over six years, since the band's initial release, "Divides," a massive dirge which never relented upon the listener, many have attempted to pigeon-hole this band to genres which fit the readers of their particular 'zine or blog. Fitting in everywhere and nowhere all at once. The simple truth of the matter is, few bands have ever been able to combine and compact such a wide variety of influences and make what is simply, original art.

Their latest effort, "Sage," easily proves to easily be their most personally artistic yet. Listening to this record you are hearing a band that has grown into what it always dreamed to be. The album brings together those influences that make Across Tundras so unique, the classic vibes of Johnny Cash and Neil Young, to the ominous heaviness of Black Sabbath and Neurosis, all points visited between, in a cohesive and natural way. It's organic, progressive, and heavy as all hell.

The classic power trio of guitarist/vocalist Tanner Olson, bassist Matt Shively, and drummer Nathan Rose have delivered a honest and powerful statement of new American music; while layered the ghosts of those who never escaped the perils of the Badlands, or were strung and hanged for the deeds of more powerful men. The poetic song-writing and creative structures are as powerful as ever, cited in songs like the opener, "In the Name of the River Grand" which drags the listener through the dust of West Texas at a rate just ahead of one of the band's most loved tunes, "Tectonic Shifts", from their critically acclaimed previous record, 2010's "Old World Wanderer". As the album moves along, the traditional influences are really showcased on the Skynyrd approved "Hijo de Desierto," and the third track, "Buried Arrows," where guest vocalist Lilly Hiatt makes her first appearance with the "Dust Bowl Choir," and offers spine tingling vocals akin to Dolly Parton or Loretta Lynn. By the end of the song you're no longer entranced in a psychedelic haze, but rather left with a feeling more like you've just left a Southern Baptist revival. Your now in the rolling hills of Tennessee and the religious euphoria continues by way of laid back grooves and '65 Fender Twin' tremolo on the opening section of the aptly named "The Book of Truth." But it's not long before the calm shatters and riffs are exploding everywhere, sending you running even deeper South. Welcome to "Tchulu Junction, Mississippi," a 'make a deal with the devil hymn' taken horribly further. It's without a doubt the darkest piece in the 'AT' catalog. The percussion is heavy, intentional, and direct. The bass pummels you, and the lyrics are so hauntingly familiar; who among us hasn't thought, "...my soul to give for the skill to play." The album closes with two new, massive compositions: "Mean Season Movin' On" and "Shunka Sapa," showing no shortage of new ideas or inspiration for Across Tundras to continue building on as they ride into the future.



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You can rest assured, that this band took no shortcuts to obtain the wisdom that is "Sage." The band has worked tirelessly since its inception; touring the USA up and down in a white van named 'Puff' and practicing 'til their fingers bleed at their organic produce farm on 10 beautiful acres Northwest of Nashville. Plans to tour the entire planet earth and beyond are in the works to support the new album, and don't miss them when they come to your town, because 'AT' absolutely kills it live in a way that harkens back to the powerhouse rock bands of 1970's. We can only hope Across Tundras continues to remind us of what was, and the struggles endured by those who stood before us, as we struggle now, and ahead.

