



## REVIEW: Mike Aiken's "Wayward Troubadour" Features Legendary Friends And Songs Of Bard Life

Reviews

📅 June 25, 2018 👤 Melissa Clarke

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Mike Aiken's new release *Wayward Troubadour* (Northwind Records), is one of those summertime Americana "kick back and hang out" collections perfect to pop in the stereo and launch into the season. Featuring super talented friends: Kenny Vaughan (Marty Stuart) on guitars [\[to read a little about Kenny Vaughan click one of these bolded words right here\]](#), David Roe (Johnny Cash, Chet Atkins, Jerry Reed) on bass, and with songs co-written by Henry Paul (Outlaws), who also contributes mandolin and vocals; and Chris P. James (Burrito Brothers), the songs are, as expected, stories of the life of a singing bard and nostalgia, with some amusing songs thrown in for good measure.

"Everything Changed" is a two-step shuffle with snappy beats, and wailing old timey fiddle; and then "Nashville Skyline" describes the homesickness and longing for people and places, and "Hangover Helper" is another precise one, with drummer Tim Hurst popping crisp and clear over entertaining lyrics. "Two Lane Highway," "where cokes were just a dime," from the place where maybe all soda pop is referred to as "a coke" and the highways are mostly all two lanes, taking you "up around the bend." You'll notice Henry Paul and Amy Aiken's nice high harmonies on this one, too. "Travelin' Bone" continues the troubadour theme with some more jug band style weaving guitar thanks to Kenny Vaughan. "Chesapeake" was rerecorded from one of Aiken's earlier releases; this song was picked by *Sports Illustrated* for their list of "All-Time Top 40 Sport Songs," a song about sailing and is just a cool little song.

If you take a good look at the album cover you'll see the ocean themes, which are a testament to Aiken's sea captain credentials. He became a licensed USCG Captain, and has logged more than 30,000 Bluewater miles sailing on his boat. So for Mike Aiken, the troubadour label has

multiple layers of truth to it. Aiken ran away as a teenager to play music. Later, between the sailing and the many more travels to play music, he's earned the title.

Aiken co-wrote six, and wrote another two of the eleven tracks solo here, and then provided interpretations of three others: "Real Mean Dog" (Robbin Thompson, Gregg Wetzel); "Dead Man Runs Before He Walks" (Mark Collie, Shawn Camp) and "Penelope" (Christopher Hynes) with some throwback "yeah yeahs" over rubboard. All in all a groovy album with plenty of great musicianship and the kind of solid songs that'll bring you back at least a couple decades to our roots beginnings.

The rest of Aiken's band includes Amy Aiken – vocals, rubboard, African gourd, congas, tambourine and assorted noisemakers; Amy pulls a lot of the vocal weight on this project. And there's Tom Hurst on drums; Michael Webb on the Hammond B3; Ben Probus' fiddle work; Skip DeRupa on guiro, and jaw harp; and Randall Thomas on background vocals; with Tim Buppert on guest vocals. Give it a listen, and get your copy, [here](http://www.mikeaikenmusic.com/music-2/).

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