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### Bronze Radio Return - Old Time Speaker

Reviewed by: Gregory Robson (08/07/09)

**Bronze Radio Return - Old Time Speaker**

Record Label: Self-released  
Release Date: June 23, 2009

There's a certain soul and grit in music that's hard to imitate and/or fake. Some musicians are just born with it. Ray LaMontagne has it. Damien Rice has it. My Morning Jacket has it. And the list goes on and on. Quite surprisingly, a Hartford, CT quintet named Bronze Radio Return also has it. On their debut full-length *Old Time Speaker*, the band offers acoustic-based laments on a broad range of subjects, from finding solace in nature, to the woes of digital technology.

#### Author's Rating

Vocals	8.75
Musicianship	8.75
Lyrics	8
Production	8.5
Creativity	8.25
Lasting Value	9
Reviewer Tilt	9

Final Verdict: 86%

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The best example of this is the crunchy, mid-tempo opener, "Lo Fi," which borrows a lot from Virginia's The Alternate Routes, but seems to step away from them in both lyrical material and the ample use of keys. On lead single, "Digital Love," Henderson unfolds an infectious saga about the influx of modern technology and sets the caper to a budding romance. This is a method that can most certainly fail, but with this band, that's the exact opposite of what happens. Beginning with a Jack Johnson-like groove, the song begins modestly before letting the organ and a surging rhythm section to take over.

Third track, "Its Okay Now" is playful and jumpy, possessing the kind of lightweight, freewheeling romp that has made Ben Harper a mainstream mainstay for the good part of the last two decades. One of the album's high points is the cerebral and slow-moving ballad "Strawberry Hill," a supple and warm meditation on the impact of nature to cure life's woes. Henderson lets his throaty vocals settle down and finds the lower half of his register and the results are nothing short of revelatory. Of all the ballads released so far this year, "Strawberry Hill," is arguably one of the best of that very deep stock.

On the punchy rocker "Play it On Me," Henderson and crew display a flair for kicking it up a notch, that calls to mind folk-rockers Stephen Kellogg and the Sixers. On the heels of that, is "Wolves," the album's undeniable apex. Beginning with the lines, "*Thick fog it hangs, it hangs in the air;*" "Wolves," rattles from the very beginning and never lets up. The building crescendo rises subtly through the first two minutes, until Henderson explodes and the song takes on a life all its own.

The acoustic sendup "Worth Wondering," is a light-hearted jaunt that serves mostly as filler but is so aurally engaging and catchy, it becomes far much more than that. On the gospel-tinged "Cannonball," the Nutmeg quintet throws it back to the 70s and revisits the ghost of Percy Sledge. Possessing more Hattiesburg than Hartford, more Biloxi than Bristol, "Cannonball," has a decidedly Southern bent that's brimming with soul and emotion. The country jangle of "Pullin' on the Reins," has a slap-happy shuffle despite its dark and dreary subject matter. The folksy vibe of "Reins," seems to harken back to a different era, and that sentiment is something that seems to be the grand theme of *Old Time Speaker*. From the album title, to the struggles with technology on "Lo Fi," and "Digital Love," to the enchantment of "Strawberry Hill," Bronze Radio Return seem to draw on the soul and grit of rock music's heyday.

Produced by under-the-radar Oklahoman Chad Copelin, *Old Time Speaker*, is a delight from the very first note. That the band chose to work with Copelin is an interesting and noteworthy development. Having worked with Doug Deyberry (Dave Matthews, Bruce Hornsby) on their debut EP and managed by former singer/songwriter Rory Lowe (bassist Dan Travis used to play in Lowe's band) Bronze Radio Return certainly had their choice in picking a producer. That they went with someone under-the-radar and unknown is a true testament to their innate music ability. That simple fact, and knowing that their career decisions are in capable hands, makes the future of music that much brighter.

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Bronze Radio Return is  
 Chris Henderson (vocals, guitar)  
 Patrick Fetkowitz (guitar)  
 Matt Warner (keys)  
 Bob Tanen (bass)  
 Craig Struble (harmonica)  
 Rob Griffith (drums)

Track Listing  
 1. Lo-Fi  
 2. Digital Love\*  
 3. It's Okay Now\*  
 4. Strawberry Hill\*  
 5. Play it On Me  
 6. Wolves\*  
 7. Worth Wondering  
 8. Cannonball\*  
 9. Pullin' on the Reins\*  
 10. Stone's Throw Away  
 \*Recommended Tracks

Recommended If You Like  
 Stephen Kellogg and the Sixers, Augustana, Wild Sweet Orange, The Alternate Routes, OAR

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09:22 AM on 08/07/09 #2

[Keagan2387](#) Offline  
 I never wanted this to happen User Info. ▾



This has me intrigued.

10:30 AM on 08/07/09 #3

[S9Dallasoz](#) Offline  
 ishestaffyet? User Info. ▾



I can get down with that RIYL, need a little something like this before Needtobreathe's new one later this month.

10:48 AM on 08/07/09 #4

[Gregory Robson](#) Offline  
 Album Reviewer User Info. ▾



Originally Posted by [Keagan2387](#) →  
*This has me intrigued.*

You'd be a fool to pass it up.

11:37 AM on 08/07/09 #5

[TijuaniSwanny](#) Offline  
 Registered User User Info. ▾



These guys put on an awesome live show as well. If you're ever in Hartford when they play at Black Eyed Sallys, check em out. The energy is outrageous.

11:45 AM on 08/07/09 #6

[Keagan2387](#) Offline  
 I never wanted this to happen User Info. ▾



Originally Posted by **Gregory Robson** →  
*You'd be a fool to pass it up.*

Well I'm not a fool so I guess I'll have to give it a chance then.

01:02 PM on 08/07/09

#7

**splat out path**  
Immense

Offline  
User Info. ▾



Wow, this looks a lot different from that awful EP they released last year.

01:05 PM on 08/07/09

#8

**Gregory Robson**  
Album Reviewer

Offline  
User Info. ▾



Originally Posted by **splat out path** →  
*Wow, this looks a lot different from that awful EP they released last year.*

I wouldn't call it awful. But this is certainly better.

06:12 AM on 08/09/09

#9

**jordalsh**  
First day of the rest of my life

Online  
User Info. ▾



I actually really like that album cover.  
lol

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