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## **American Gun - Dark Southern Hearts (stepoutofthelinemusic)**



When the first flush of youth for punk faded, and it had to grow up and learn how to play, it spawned a new wave of energetic rock 'n' roll. The bands that survived and prospered, took the spirit of punk and put it to work to revitalise music. At its best it was a thrilling ride, at its best it sounded like American Gun's debut album Dark Southern Hearts.

The band claims to have drawn influences from country, folk and blues and in a sense Dark Southern Hearts backs up that claim. Heart Locket for one, is a country rock song, but there's country rock and there's American Gun's version. What the bald claim doesn't fully explain is that the band has taken the genres out into the backyard, kicked them around in the dust until they're good and dirty, then shot a bolt of lightning through them. The songs of Todd Mathis and Donald Merckle are fresh and exciting. But that excitement is not just down to the headlong rush of Picture and American Gun which get the album off to rip-snorting start. It's as much about the layers that build and build Little Sister into a beautifully faceted song. The songwriting talents available to American Gun, rather like very early REM, opens many roads to it.

But it's the attitude that fuels Tears that will drive the band on. What could have easily been a well written, good rock song is toyed and played with, the band, even on its debut, is not prepared to settle for mediocre formula, Tears represents a desire to twist and turn the music to see what lies beneath the obvious. Whether it's the towering riffs that cast a long shadow over Someone To Blame, the bleakness of the warning implicit in Scent Of Alcohol or the sheer joy of playing that shines through on Sound Of Blue, American Gun has taken a firm grip on the anarchy of punk and harnessed it to the disciplines of rock n roll. As Dark Southern Hearts begins to kick open doors, it may just become unstoppable.

[www.americangun.net](http://www.americangun.net)