

THE UNIVERSITY STAR

This World We Live In can't get Radney Foster down

By Maira Garcia
The University Star

Stars
Radney Foster
This World We Live In
Dualtone Music Group

Radney Foster is hopeful. He sings about love, mistakes and always ends it with a shot of whiskey. Even though things go wrong, Foster is a believer in things getting better.

His latest release on Dualtone Music Group, *This World We Live In*, has all the essentials for a classic country album. The difference between him and the rest of the country catalog is he knows how to turn things up with a bit of rock.

Foster begins the album with “Drunk on Love,” a rocking song with licks of blues guitars. Love and alcohol play a recurring theme on *This World*, not to mention how they seem to work against one another.

“The Kindness of Strangers” takes a different approach on love, illustrating a chat between a man down on his luck and a hooker willing to listen. The acoustic ballad is soft, sweet and channels a country-folk sound. The song is made complete with the backup vocals of Emily West, whose alluring vocals complement Foster’s well.

The album takes a break from somber subjects and shifts to pop-country with the song “Big Idea.” Complete with an organ in the background, courtesy of Rami Jefferies of the Wallflowers, the song is hyper, cheerful and a bit silly with lyrics about P.T. Barnum and Buffalo Bill.

However, Foster goes back to being downright depressing, especially with one of the last tracks, “Fools that Dream.” Even if it is “a love that’s doomed right from the start,” Foster still believes that it is true love. He is a dreamer. He is full of hope, which he sings about with passion.

The album ends with “Never Gonna Fly,” the final testament to Foster’s ethos of believing in hope. Foster sings, “You better dream big/if you want to touch the sky.” Foster’s music that speaks of hope, determination and love gives a good prescription of what we need to survive in this world. He matches these themes with country music attitude, a great rock guitar and a bit of blues. Together it makes for a good album in a genre cluttered with artists with less substance.