



HA HA TONKA

DEATH OF A

DECADE

RELEASE DATE: APRIL 5, 2011

"Never. Never ask for what ought to be offered."
—Daniel Woodrell, *Winter's Bone*

There's a certain wisdom that exists in the hills of the Ozarks. It's a wisdom that spits out of the mouths of Woodrell's characters; it's a wisdom that is found in the lyrics by Woodrell's fellow West Plains, Missouri natives, Ha Ha Tonka; and it's a wisdom that's found on the band's latest full-length LP, *Death of a Decade*.

"They say that if you don't change where you're going / you're gonna end up right where you're headed." —Ha Ha Tonka, "Made Example Of"

Death of a Decade is the culmination of years of hard work for this Ozark quartet. They wowed us with their 2007 debut *Buckle in the Bible Belt*, matured on 2009's *Novel Sounds of the Nouveau South*, and without a doubt, take their stand as one of the best young bands in the US on this LP. And as with Ha Ha Tonka's previous releases, the band marries authentic Southern songs with modern edges on *Death of a Decade*, without ever coming across as gimmicky.

The album was recorded in a 200-year-old old barn in New Paltz, NY with producer **Kevin McMahon** (**Titus Andronicus**, **The Felice Brothers**, **The Walkmen**), who made sure to capture the barn's aural imperfections in creaking floorboards, and then mixed in Kansas City, MO by **The Ryantist**, who manipulated synthetic, sonic threads into this organic tapestry. The sound of *Death of a Decade* is where authentic meets modern, acoustic meets electronic, and tradition meets innovation.

Lyricaly, *Death of a Decade* is less "story-based" than the last two albums (which pulled heavily from Missouri history and folklore for its lyrics), with the band now focusing on the transition into manhood—something that doesn't automatically come once you pass a certain age: "*I realize that youth is wasted on the young*," lead vocalist **Brian Roberts** sings on "Westward Bound," "*Oh, I now know that my wasting days are done*."

However, Roberts says, *Death of a Decade* is not meant to be a requiem for lost youth, but rather an embrace of the notion that

the passage of time is better than the alternative. There you have it again: the wisdom of the Ozarks.

Even if the album's songs aren't specifically of the Ozarks, the sound is—still there is traditional instrumentation (just listen to guitarist **Brett Anderson**'s killer arpeggio mandolin lines on "Usual Suspects" and "Made Example Of"), with bassist **Lucas Long** and drummer **Lennon Bone** rounding out the rhythm section to stampeding affect. Still there are the heart-stirring four-part gospel harmonies, a signature sound that sets Ha Ha Tonka apart from every other indie band-cum-Southern rock group that seems to be shambling out of the suburban woods these days.

Ultimately, what makes Ha Ha Tonka brand of Southern rock so special is that it's authentic, it's effortless, and it never comes across as forced. They're masters at bringing together the traditional and the modern. They sit at the crossroads of Americana and indie, where Alabama meets Arcade Fire, shakes their hand and takes them out for a drink.

So, back to Woodrell's Ozarkian wisdom from "Winter's Bone," being considered one of the best bands you'll discover (or rediscover) in 2011 isn't something Ha Ha Tonka will need to ask for—it will be offered.

MORE ABOUT HA HA TONKA:

Named after Ha Ha Tonka State Park in their native Missouri, the group's relentless touring has seen them become one of the most buzzed-about young bands in America, appearing at **Lollapalooza**, **Sundance Film Festival**, **SXSW**, **CMJ** while touring nationally as a headlining act, as well as supporting many great bands such as **Old 97s**, **Murder By Death**, **Langhorne Slim**, **Cross Canadian Ragweed**, **Someone Still Loves You Boris Yeltsin**, **Ludo**, **Meat Puppets** and more.

On April 11, 2011, Ha Ha Tonka will be a guest on The Travel Channel's flagship show, "**Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations**." Ha Ha Tonka will continue to tour nationally in 2011, starting with SXSW festival in Austin, TX, a headlining US release tour in March/April (**see dates on other side**), a performance at **Wakarusa** and other major music fests TBA.

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HA HA TONKA SPRING US TOUR

March 24 - Hollywood, CA - Hotel Cafe
March 25 - San Diego, CA - Soda Bar
March 26 - San Francisco, CA - Hotel Utah
March 29 - Portland, OR - Doug Fir Lounge
March 30 - Seattle, WA - Tractor Tavern
March 31 - Boise, ID - Neurolux
April 1 - Salt Lake City, UT - The Woodshed
April 2 - Denver, CO - Hi-Dive
April 5 - Grand Rapids, MI - The Intersection
April 6 - Newport, KY - Southgate House
April 7 - Columbus, OH - Rumba Cafe
April 8 - Washington, DC - The Red Palace *
April 9 - Philadelphia, PA - M Room *

April 12 - Allston, MA - Great Scott *
April 13 - New York, NY - Mercury Lounge *
April 14 - Pittsburgh, PA - Club Cafe
April 15 - Cleveland, OH - Beachland Ball Room
April 16 - Chicago, IL - Subterranean
April 21 - Iowa City, IA - The Mill
April 22 - St Louis, MO - Off Broadway
April 23 - Kansas City, MO - The Record Bar

* Co-headlining with *The Spring Standards*
March 25 - April 2 - *Hoots and Hellmouth* support
April 5 - April 23 - *The Spring Standards* support

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ABOUT HA HA TONKA ...

"Ha Ha Tonka is truly one of the best young bands in America."—PopMatters.com



"Ha Ha Tonka take the rudimentary things of great roots music – the full bodied feel of The Band, a splash of Tom Petty's widescreen storytelling, the graceful arcs of Wilco—and inject them with young man hunger and back-to-basics bar band aesthetics." —Jambase

"*Novel Sounds* ... is violent, literate, unapologetic Southern rock: With its angelic organ and snarling guitars, 'The Outpouring' conjures the Allmans, 'Hold My Feet to the Fire' drops gospel harmonies over a boogie-woogie backbeat, and the fingerpicked 'Close Every Valve to Your Bleeding Heart' builds from tender to raging without a false note." —Spin.com

"What's perhaps most amazing about Ha Ha Tonka is that [*Novel Sounds* ...] is so

full of confidence that you would think it came from a band that has been around for many years. This is the kind of concept album that can give the idea a good name. Of all the young bands worth watching these days, Springfield, MO's Ha Ha Tonka is at the top of my list." —Popdose.com

"It's practically hopeless for me to try and compare [*Buckle in the Bible Belt*] or band to someone else. Everyone today is trying to be new and different, so as to have an edge on the competition. Well, Ha Ha Tonka has done it." —Hybrid Music

"A precocious, stammering rock record that bridges sweet-water gospel folk with sweltering Southern rock." —CMJ Essentials

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Please visit:

<http://www.bloodshotrecords.com/mediakit/ha-ha-tonka>
to download hi-res album art and promo photos



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