

JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

NOTHING'S GONNA CHANGE THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT ME NOW

On a rainy Nashville Thursday last October, Justin Townes Earle leapt onstage at the famed Ryman Auditorium to accept the 2011 Americana Music Award for *Song of the Year*. The triumphant evening capped a turbulent twelve months for the gifted young musician categorized by significant hardship as well as notable achievement including debut performances at New York's Carnegie Hall and on The Late Show with David Letterman.

Just one week later, Earle retreated to the western mountains of North Carolina to record his next album, *Nothing's Gonna Change the Way You Feel About Me Now* - an intriguing title given the importance of change in Earle's approach to art. "I think it's the job of the artist to be in transition and constantly learning more," he says. "The new record is completely different than my last one, *Harlem River Blues*. This time I've gone in a Memphis-soul direction."

Those who've followed Earle's growth since releasing his debut EP *Yuma* in 2007 won't be surprised he's shooting off in another direction. For an artist whose list of influences runs the gamut from Randy Newman to Woody Guthrie, Chet Baker to the Replacements, and Phil Ochs to Bruce Springsteen, categories are useless.

"Great songs are great songs," Earle says. "If you listen to a lot of soul music, especially the Stax Records stuff, the chord progressions are just like country music. And just like country music, soul music began in the church, so it has its roots in the same place."

Perhaps then it's also not surprising Earle chose a converted church in Asheville, NC to record *Nothing's Gonna Change the Way You Feel About Me Now*. Recorded completely live (no overdubs) over a four-day period with *Harlem River Blues* co-producer Skylar Wilson, the album sheds the rockabilly bravado of previous records in favor of a confident, raw, and vulnerable sound. Says Earle, "the whole idea was to record everything live, making everything as real as it could be, and putting something out there that will hopefully stand the test of time and space."

The result: songs like "Down on the Lower East Side" and "Unfortunately, Anna" are equally timely and timeless. The former finds Earle channeling *Closing Time* era Tom Waits while the latter echoes the dirges of Springsteen's *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. That said, gentle heartbreakers like the album's title track and "Am I That Lonely Tonight" are uniquely Earle, solidifying his role as one of his generation's greatest songwriters.

Nothing's Gonna Change the Way You Feel About Me Now comes out March 27th via Bloodshot Records.