

MD McNally

Crimes

On *Crimes*, the new EP from heartland songwriter MD McNally, soaring folk nestles up alongside choogling big-sky blues and mesquite-smoked ballads. Each track feels comfortable in its own stylistic skin, yet they are all cut from the same fundamental cloth. Shimmering guitars dance like starlings over subtly urgent rhythms. Stacked vocals shout raw emotion over churning, fuzzy melody, all wrapped in a silken sheen of echo. A concise, compelling listen, *Crimes* is eminently engaging.

The follow up to his debut solo LP *The Marvelous* - described by *V13* as “a record of soft, psychedelic ballads and traditional heartland rock n’ roll – *Crimes* feels like the work of an artist who had clear intent from the projects’ inception. “I don’t think anyone would consider *The Marvelous* an experimental record”, says McNally, “but it was an experiment to me. For *Crimes*, I found some freedom knowing ahead of time how something I put in might sound coming out.”

Writing away at home in Wauwatosa, WI, McNally soon had a dozen tunes completed. From those, he chose the five that together presented the most dynamic and compelling listen. He did well, as *Crimes* unfolds with a natural, comfortable rhythm. McNally produced the record, with the help of recording and mix engineer Ian Olvera (Lucinda Williams, Trapper Schoepp). Olvera also co-produced the title track. Devin Drobka (Field Report) performed all drums and percussion, and Justin Perkins handled the mastering.

While *Crimes* feels like a natural progression from *The Marvelous*, the record simultaneously feels like it is an evolution in McNally’s skill as a songwriter. “I don’t recall having any kind of a breakthrough” McNally laughs, “but I definitely felt more confident when I performed during the recording sessions.” Additionally, *Crimes* brings the acoustic guitar to the forefront, which happens to be the instrument that McNally has focused on through his career.

A sweet set of songs given to us by an artist settling comfortably into a creative groove, *Crimes* manages to feel at once thrillingly fresh and intimately familiar. A hard feat to manage, certainly, and a sign that McNally has found his voice as a songwriter. Pretty darn good for an EP, if you ask me...