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## Texas Platters

BY JIM CALIGIURI

### Todd Snider

*East Nashville Skyline* (Oh Boy) East Nashville is closer to Austin than it is to Nashville. It's the place where the artists, musicians, and all the other creative types that don't really care about what's happening on Music Row live. Todd Snider is one of those types. *East Nashville Skyline*, the onetime San Marcos/Austin troubadour's sixth studio album, is a valentine to that part of Music City. It's also as straightforward and cutting an album as he's ever made. Anyone familiar with his past work will understand that's quite a feat. He opens with "Age Like Wine," a brief summing up of his life, where, in a nod to his recent stint in rehab, Snider recognizes that it's "too late to die young now." Some heaviness follows, but like his heroes John Prine and Jerry Jeff Walker, Snider leavens it with a glimmer of humor that relieves it all. He sings about his time in "Tillamook County Jail" and pokes at "Conservative, Christian, Right-Wing Republican, Straight, White, American Males," but also tells the joys of "Nashville" and covers Billy Joe Shaver's "Good News Blues" with the right amount of jubilation. *East Nashville Blues* has some weak spots, however. His lukewarm take on Fred Eaglesmith's "Alcohol and Pills" seems a little too obvious, and the revved-up talking blues "Incarcerated" just doesn't fit into the album's overall languid pace. Nevertheless, Snider remains an interesting and entertaining voice among today's singer-songwriter types, and that isn't just faint praise.



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