



For all the ink spent arguing over who's more "country" these days, folks tend to forget that you can hear country music first in the voice. It needs to be a little bit sad, a little bit weary, a little bit wise, and there should be just the hint of a smile at the edges. This is the kind of voice you hear from bandleader, songwriter, and real-deal country singer **TODD GREBE** on his new album, **CITIZEN**, with his band **COLD COUNTRY**. As a songwriter, Grebe crafts songs that stick with you, and though his clever wordplay as a songwriter is a key element, it's the rough sheen to his voice that makes this music so country and so beautiful. Grebe's got a voice tinged with the dust of the American West and the grit of Southern living, the kind of voice that first made country music great.

**Todd Grebe & Cold Country** are based out of the wilds of Alaska, where for years they ruled the bluegrass scene in this state. Todd's wife and musical partner, **Angela Oudean**, was a key member of famed Alaska bluegrass band **Bearfoot** for years (Todd joined Bearfoot as well), and though it may be a surprise to some that the music they make now is hard-driving, electrified honky-tonk at its core, the truth is that there's a strong current that unites bluegrass and country. Like songs written about real people with real problems, or songs celebrating the simple victories of life with a sardonic sense of humor. You'll hear this on **Citizen**, and you'll hear that Grebe has a powerfully directed voice as a songwriter. He's able to capture a moment effortlessly, turning it into a larger commentary on people we all recognize. In "Box of Wine," Grebe winkingly sings about a lover who's "all fired up on a box of wine," and on "Criminal Style," he sings about loving a person so much that if they killed someone, they could call him up to find a place to hide the body (Michigan's

Lindsay Lou & The Flatbellys just covered this song on their new album). Though many of the songs on **Citizen** have a humorous element, others dip easily into poignancy, like "More Than A Love Song," or "Living a Lie."

To record the new album, **Todd Grebe & Cold Country** rolled into **The Butcher Shoppe** studio in Nashville to work with Grammy-award winning recording engineer **David Ferguson**, famous for his work with Johnny Cash, and dove deep into a more electrified country sound. Cold Country alum **NATE MAY** traded in his mandolin for a telecaster, and **LARRY ATAMANUIK** (Alison Krauss) jumped on the drums. Bassist **MIKE BUB** (Del McCoury, Ashley Monroe) came on to co-produce the album and play bass, and special guests were invited, like pedal steel wizard **Steve Hinson** (George Jones), renowned Nashville session pianist **Jimmy Wallace**, and guitarist **Megan McCormick** (Jenny Lewis). Todd and Angela led the parade, trading off harmonies on the songs, and bringing Angela's hard-driving fiddle to the fore.

With **Citizen**, **Todd Grebe & Cold Country** make the case that they've always belonged as a heavy-rolling honky-tonk band. Country was the key to their bluegrass from the start, and that's why they were able to switch over so effortlessly. Now it's clear that **Todd Grebe & Cold Country** are ready to take the dancehalls by storm.

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