

Owen Lake and the Tragic Loves : **The Best of Your Lies**

RIYL: George Jones, Depeche Mode, Dolly Parton, The Postal Service, Merle Haggard, Pan Sonic, Flying Lotus, Conway Twitty, The Cure, Neko Case, Arca, Grimes, Eurythmics

Owen Lake and the Tragic Loves' "electro-country" sound is both freshly nostalgic and startlingly unique. Hard-driving synthesizer licks meet tight three-part vocal harmonies, buttery bleeps and bleeps, crying pedal steel, and pounding electronic beats in the band's first full-length record, "The Best of Your Lies."

Owen Lake's debut EP, "A Love on My Mind" (2009), introduced the band's genre-bending style, which draws from the traditions of 1960s country, 1980s dream pop, and modern electronic dance music, mixed with an experimental aesthetic all Lake's own. With "The Best of Your Lies," Lake expands and deepens the electro-country sound, blending a honky-tonk barroom atmosphere with late-night dance-club delirium and the faded glamour of a sweeping countrypolitan string orchestra. It packs an emotional punch to the heart, and beckons the bruised listener onto the dance floor.

The album's title track, an Owen Lake original (one of two composed by children's book author and fiddle player Anica Mrose Rissi with composer and electronic musician Jeff Snyder, who is also Lake's producer, manager, and doppelganger), narrates a desperate plea to a straying lover, from a betrayed spouse who prefers to remain in the dark. Pedal steel floats over Lake's bittersweet country croon and vocoded harmony, while smooth strings and a honkytonk fiddle converse with a sharp-edged, syncopated drumbeat and subtly funky bassline.

The album offers electro-country twists on both well-loved and forgotten classics. "I'll Be There to Welcome You Home" (originally performed by George Jones and Melba Montgomery) pairs twin fiddles with the most intense, pummeling waltz beat ever committed to vinyl. The song explodes into a synth-bass arpeggio and rock-guitar maelstrom, and ends in a soul-stirring a cappella hymn. "Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone" (a Carter Family cover) features dark vocoder chords brooding over an acid bassline and punchy odd-meter drum machine. A flanger-drenched string section enters to expand space and time in the final verse. "Always, Always" (made famous by Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton) contrasts an open, soaring male-female duet against the stark and menacing undertones of a buzzy bass synth and a rough snare. The chorus crescendos with the digital shine of FM synthesizer low brass, echoing fiddle, and twangy baritone guitars. One imagines a sudden camera cut to burning trashcans in an alley as an atonal guitar solo slices through the middle of the track, before the final rousing chorus gives way to an extended instrumental dance outro.

Lake's stellar stage band, The Tragic Loves, is joined on the album by Grammy-nominated jazz pianist Pascal Le Boeuf (Le Boeuf Brothers), Pulitzer Prize and Grammy winner Caroline Shaw (Roomful of Teeth, Kanye West), pedal steel virtuoso Rich Hinman (Roseanne Cash, Neko Case), and experimental pedal steel pioneer Susan Alcorn (Mary Halvorsen Octet). Music videos for two of the songs, "The Best of Your Lies" and "Wicked Heart," created by visual artist Jessica Segall and robotics artist Ryan Luke Johns, will precede the release. Owen Lake and the Tragic Loves will perform record release shows at Shapeshifter Lab in Brooklyn, NY (November 29), and Princeton Public Library in Princeton, NJ (November 10). Come listen and cry along to "the new sound of country."

<http://www.owenlake.com>