



Critics' Picks

February 11, 2010

In the late-'60s Western *True Grit*, [John Wayne](#) plays a salty old gun-slinging boozier who wears a patch over one eye and just can't be taken down. On *True Grit* — the new [Ken Will Morton](#) album — the landscape may be that of an entirely different genre (threadbare roots rock), but the antihero is not really so different from Wayne's [Rooster Cogburn](#) character. During the title track, the [Athens, Georgia](#)-based singer and songwriter praises hardy perseverance. "Hard Weathered Life" and "On My Feet Again" find him vowing to do whatever will keep him from getting taken down — if not by outlaws, then by hard road life. It's not difficult to hear Morton's own experience in those songs; the touring life of an independent troubadour can wear on even the most resilient. Morton has the truly gritty voice to prove it. Fri., Feb. 12, 9 p.m., 2010



I have many memories from my college days, but a moment that really stands out is when one of my professors walked into class and asked, "Have you ever imagined your life without music?" Quite the profound question. I'd never thought about that before, and after mulling it over in my mind, I came to the realization that because of music, my life was all the richer. Truth is...I can't imagine my life without music. Nor do I want to.

Without the gift of music, I would miss out on experiencing the raw talent and musical genius that comes from the likes of Ken Will Morton. Once in a great while comes an artist of his caliber. His music is so alluring that it haunts me.

I recently had an opportunity to hear him play at 'The Basement' in Nashville, TN. He stepped on stage sans any extra accompaniment. No band. No backup singers. No hoopla. Morton simply graced the stage with his harmonica and guitar. I didn't know what to expect, but once he started singing, he immediately captivated the intimate audience. In a word, he's... ENGAGING.

Morton's 5th solo project, **True Grit**, will be released by Sojourn Records on February 16, 2010. It blends rock, Americana, roots, blues and folk. When asked about how he came up with the title track, Ken Will responded "I was going through kind of a hard time, which everybody goes through hard times, and it builds endurance. But you've got to grit your teeth, buck up and plow forward." Ken Will Morton is definitely plowing forward with his music. "I can't stop Rockin' & Rollin' and love music so much," expressed Morton. "Music is too important to me...I can't give it up," he went on to tell SC.

A skilled songwriter with a great set vocals to match, Ken Will reminds me of Dylan while remaining fresh and soulfully unique. To learn more about my new favorite musician, visit his website – www.kenwillmorton.com.