

Mark Lind & the Unloved

homeward bound

(STATELINE RECORDS November 25, 2009)

Review and Interview by Tony Capachietti

BOSTON, MA – Nov. 4, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mark Lind returns for his third full-length solo album, this time with some new faces in the Unloved. Accompanied by longtime friend Jay Messina on drums and Mike Savitkas on bass the band is now rounded out with Steve Young (Confront) on guitar and Brittany Gray accompanying on vocals.

The new album, Homeward Bound, is eight tracks that vary in their influences, but are a departure from the sounds of Death or Jail, Compulsive F—k Up and the Truth Can be Brutal. The songs are faster and more similar to the Sinner & Saints “Sky is Falling” album and showcases a new depth to the vocals with layered harmonies. Homeward Bound will not disappoint anyone who loved the rougher edge of Sinner & Saints but also enjoyed the more refined sounds on Three Chords and the Truth. The album is already available through buyourmerch.blogspot.com and will be released by Stateline Records to more mainstream distribution channels on November 25, 2009.

Previous to the release of the CD Mark Lind was gracious enough to answer some questions about the new album, the new band members, music and his new label.

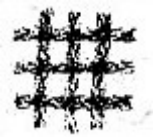
Q: How long ago were the songs written? Were these old tracks you had kicking around or were they written with the idea that you could work in Brit's vocals?

Mark: I banked a ton of songs back in 2006 - 2007 so I'm continuing to draw from them but that doesn't mean that these are technically "old". I'm not sure how other people do it but when I get into a creative phase I just record ideas and ideas and ideas. It's sort of like being a writer and just jotting down ideas for future novels or something. The demos I have from

2006 and 2007 are not really release worthy though, I did post some of them to the internet back then for fun. But they're ideas that are put down that I can go back and revisit. Some of these songs..... "No One To Cry To", "I'll Be There" and "Sell Your Souls" are from 2008 - 2009 completely. But I went through my older stuff and found some songs that I liked the idea of tooling with, and then these three new ones, and I started messing with them. When I thought they were pretty good then I recorded new acoustic demos of them and then shared them with the band. Jay and Mike use those as a basis to work with. Steve doesn't use them at all and prefers to just learn it from the ground up at practice where he can throw immediate feedback out there on the table.

As for Brit's vocal, the short answer is no. I only make stuff up for me to sing initially. It's hard to put words down knowing they are for someone else unless I just identify it as Backing Part 1, for example. Sometimes those are defined ideas. Sometimes they aren't and I rely on Marc Cannata, Doug (Sullivan from Ducky Boys), Jim Siegel or now Brit to help me bring it to it's final stages.

Again, I don't know how other bands do it but I often react to what I'm hearing out there. I make up my ideas and they are completely genuine and inspired but when it comes to phase two of making them presentable I often check out what other bands are doing. I assume that some bands react to what they like in other bands by copying what they hear. Often times I react to what I don't like and just try avoid the same pit falls to the best of my limited ability. One thing I'm noticing lately and I was a victim of this when I was younger.... is that some bands make a really boring song and then just assume that adding "woah's" to a really boring section will identify that as the chorus. So I try ... again, to the best of my limited ability.... to make every song strong enough to stand on its own when it's presented as just an acoustic guitar and a lead singer. If you can not be bored by



that then it should be good enough to move on. And then I try to never just accept the boring “woahs” as the backing vocal. If the song calls for that sort of part then we use it by we try to do multi-part harmonies on the same section so it doesn't just sound like a bunch of homo-erotic dudes woah'ing for no reason. Backing vocals can make a song really exciting. I like what my brother Rob did in Blood for Blood. If you listen to one of their songs then you're getting a constant barrage of back and forth vocals whether it's him and Buddha or the two of them couple in with gang vocals. It's just an assault on your ears and that's what we try to do too but geared toward rock music and not hardcore. On the demos I sing all the parts. Obviously Brit does it better than I do because when I try to sing, sing then I sound like a cat in heat.

Q: Brit is a great singer. On first listen I thought I detected the warble of auto-tune but after a few more times through I think it was the natural harmonic dynamic of Cannata and Brit together, their voices compliment each other in a very unique way. I know you always use the Outpost and Jim Siegel's work is legendary in town. Was there anything done differently production wise this time around?

Mark: We went in there hoping to do as much as we could live in the studio. The band was prepared for that and we spent minimal time actually tracking the band as we could. It became more of a production project when we went to the vocals and I didn't know that it would take on that life in advance but it makes a lot of sense when you listen back to it and hear how complex some of those parts are. Auto-tune is a fact of life now in modern recording and we definitely use it. But there are a lot of myths surrounding its use that I'm constantly trying to dispel when I hear people using them.

To begin with, Jim at the Outpost uses his auto-tune at a very low setting, so you have to be almost on the note for it to work. People have this misconception that anyone can go into a recording studio and crap out a CD because of technology and it's really not true. We're a long way from the days of the Beatles where they would set up a mic and have the band play perfectly in the room but a rock project still has very organic elements to it. I find it funny when you're citing the auto-tune to dismiss someone like Britney Spears or Kanye West but it really isn't true at all.


The second thing is that everyone and their brother thinks they can detect auto tune on a release, and unless they have dog ears, then they are probably hearing something else that they are attributing to the auto-tuner. Someone like Cher or Kid Rock uses the auto-tune as an instrument.... or who is that guy? T-Pain? He uses it like an instrument. That's deliberately done. If you're hearing it on a rock album then the engineer is crap or they have it gated to pull the note too far in one direction or the other in a very unnatural way.

But yeah.... modern bands use it because it saves money. Bands at our level are on budgets and we run that in places you wouldn't expect or ever hear because it enables you to move along. But what you're hearing is probably the natural chorus effect that takes place when you multi-track the same vocal part. On the song "Wasted Years" Brit actually has 8 vocals going on at once to create a choir effect. It sounds digitized like a keyboard because it's an organ part transcribed for a vocal. Jim Siegel, who runs the Outpost, is an accomplished pianist and he transcribed it and coached Brit through the part. We spent a few thousand dollars to make this record that would have cost most bands \$20,000 to make. And technology did help make that possible for sure.

Q: You've said previously that the title of the CD hinted at a sort of musical journey back to your musical roots; did you find it odd that this CD contains some of your heaviest material since your Sinner and Saints days?

Mark: Any time someone says "musical journey" I think of Spinal Tap.

I became interested in hobo code in the past few years. Look it up online if you're interested. There is a difference between a hobo, a bum and a tramp and most people don't realize that anymore. They think it all refers to a homeless person. Any way.... in the course of prepping for the record I read somewhere that some people suspect that HoBo isn't a contraction of 'homeward bound'. I tend to doubt that but it was interesting enough to make that leap and use it as the title to go along with the hobo code artwork we were looking at.



There's a line on the song "No One to Cry To" that says "I know I've done a lot of cloudy time where I took my eye off the road. I'm feeling like I'm back in focus now but I don't like where I've gone." And that's really all the title is referring to. An era of my life ended and it's for the best.

The music is a bit beefier now. When Steve joined the band in February we started playing some songs by Sinners & Saints, Dirty Water and Ducky Boys in our live sets and the songs from "The Truth Can Be Brutal" also got a little tougher. And that carried over to the new CD. Steve pushes for a lot of energy and balls all the time and I'm glad he did. I guess that could be seen as a return to old of sorts.

Q: Since I mentioned Sinners and Saints...Rob had a guest spot, Steve is on guitar, you're around, that is 75% of the band right there. Any chance a reunion could be in the works?

Mark: Well Steve didn't play on the S&S CD. That was all Rob, Dustin and me. But S&S is a Rob thing and he's writing again but I'm not sure what he plans to do with it. No plans of a reunion but we might release a live CD from the line-up that included Steve and Neil. And that live set may sound more like the studio CD than the studio CD does.

Q: I know you don't like taking questions about or for your brother, but can you tell us about how he ended up adding to No One to Cry To? Did he write his own rant or was that already part of the song?

Mark: I asked him to come down and add a part to the chorus of "No One To Cry To" because, like I said earlier, some of our backing vocals are inspired by the Blood for Blood approach. So who better to have sing the part than the actual Blood for Blood guy? As for the rant section, I wanted to have a spoken word section somewhere on the CD - and there is another one but it's mixed to an almost inaudible level - and I would have done it myself. But this record for me was all about letting go and not trying to do things myself that someone else can do better. So I asked Rob to do something similar to "Junkie Man" by Rancid and that's what he came up with. Obviously I was standing there and approving the part but he cooked it up himself. What he has to say is very relevant if you've

followed the internet melodrama that followed his departure from music.

Q: Every time you release an album Messina sounds better and better, he really is one of the most underrated drummers in town, and Mike Savitkas is one of the most tasteful bassists ever. You really have a great rhythm section, are you going to finally hang your bass up?

Mark: There are some points on the record where the rhythm section speeds up and slows down. A perfectionist would pull their hair out over this but it does sound human when a band records without a click track. We did the Dirty Water CD and "Three Chords and the Truth" with a click track. Then I played bass on the Far From Finished records where they didn't use a click and I liked that feel a lot more at the time so we adopted it again. If it was good enough for Ringo then it's good enough for Jay. I'll never replace Jay until he quits or drops dead of a massive heart attack.


Mike is probably the best bass player in Boston. His parts are perfect. Always. He's way underrated but I hope people start giving him the respect he deserves.

I'm not hanging up the bass yet. I'm currently playing bass with my brother Rob on the project he's working on. I just sit back and play the parts. No need for thought on my end at all except to make the bass the best it can be. It's a lot different than what we do in The Unloved but Mike's playing has definitely opened my mind to lots of new ideas and options to choose from.

Q: So the new guys...well guy and gal in the band, Steve and Brit, did they have a big influence on the album? Actually can we back up, a lot of people may not know your writing process and how much you put in and how they develop, so if you don't mind starting with that.

Mark: Like I said earlier, it starts with demos and songs that I hope to be of performance quality as a solo performer and then it builds from there. This current CD is the perfect mix of all 7 people involved. That's the 5 of us in the band, Marc Cannata who did the male backing vocals and then Jim that ran the show. The band carries my name in the moniker but it





was definitely a band effort. The pieces of the puzzle fit better this time out than they have on any record I've ever been a part of. Jay brings a lot of excited enthusiasm, Mike has a lot of musical knowledge, Steve brings the balls and the chops, Brit brings the ear and I have the initial ideas. And we have Marc Cannata around because I thoroughly enjoy collaborating with him and we work well together. He's incredibly gifted in both his voice and ear - on top of his drumming and songwriting that he does in Far From Finished - and he's a sport and likes to collaborate too. So we keep having him around as long as he's willing to be a part.

Q: I am not going to lie, and I mean no disrespect to Steve, but I was a little concerned when Jeff (Morris) left the band, he is a great guitarist with a kind of country/blues tint to his playing. All I had known from Steve was Sinners and Saints, to which I attributed a lot of the guitar to your brother, and Confront. I know Steve sings and plays guitar for Confront and always liked the music, but it is fast and hard which makes it difficult to pick up on the technical aspect of his playing. Listening to Homeward Bound you find out he really is an incredible guitarist. How was it working with him verses Jeff?

Mark: Both Jeff and Steve are two of the best guitarists in Boston but for different styles. Steve plays a more aggressive style while Jeff is like the guy from the Rolling Stones or something. They're both versatile enough that they can play each others parts if needed but they're definitely different. I was bummed when Jeff left the band because he's a good friend and one of my original musical inspirations from when I was a kid. The music he did in the mid-90's with the Bruisers is way underrated. But life happens and he has important stuff to do right now so it's been on great terms. Plus I'm a huge fan of his band, Death & Taxes, and I'd rather see him concentrate on that than play my second rate songs. But knowing Steve was waiting in the wings made it less of a frightening transition than it could have been.

Confront does not lend itself too well to people realizing how great Steve on guitar. It's really aggressive and stripped down so people assume it doesn't take skill. I sat in with them on second guitar for a few shows some years back and that stuff is next

to impossible to play. And they've only become more complicated since then.

It reminds me a bit of how shocked people were when we released the Sinners & Saints CD and people heard how well Rob could play. They all assumed that because he was coming from Blood for Blood that he sucked on guitar or something and they were all very wrong. Steve can play in the top 1%. He could really join any band and do what they want him to do. He could be one of those touring musicians that plays with pop stars if he wanted to pursue it.

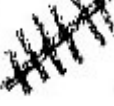
Q: I know Brit came into the band a while back and has been playing live with you for a while, for those who haven't seen you live there is an amazing cover of the Stones' Gimme Shelter on youtube with her singing with you (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ug2glOShyYE>). How did she finally come to be a permanent member of the band? She is a relative new comer as well, how was her first studio experience?

Mark: She sang in the studio for some demos for other people but this was the first full record she was on so she was definitely nervous and recording is different than playing live. It will take her some time to really find her voice in the studio but she hit pretty much all of her parts in one take on this record so the raw talent is there for her to do whatever she wants with it. Her ear is incredible and she can grasp difficult harmonies with natural ease. It's a skill I'll never fully understand but whatever it is, she has it. We added her to the band permanently because she can add so much to the live show both visually, by helping fill the stage, and by hitting all the parts that are layered on the records. Years ago we would do songs and then wonder if we could pull it off live. That's not an issue with her around.

Q: The CD is out on your own label now called Stateline Records. What made you decide to start a label and did that affect the recording of the album at all? It has to be a huge financial burden to record, distribute and promote on your own and these times are not exactly the best financially.

Mark: When you work with a record label you are basically giving your stuff away. You might get an advance and that will cover your costs. It might even





put a few dollars in your pocket. But you never see royalties. And often these days you're being asked to cover the costs of the recording too so there's not even an advance. It made sense to some degree when someone else was fronting all the risk and paying for all of the steps along the way but where that's not really an option anymore for the small to mid-sized labels then why bother giving someone else the pay day? Plus with the internet and all there isn't much more a small label can do for me than what I can do for myself. I think there's some truth to the idea that kids perceive you to be a bigger band when you are on someone else's dime but I'd rather start releasing my own stuff and hopefully be that dime for other bands in the future at this point. It cost me about \$7500 to get this record together including the copious amounts of promotional merchandise I made to go along with it and get people coming back to my site over and over. Within 3 days of releasing this CD for pre-order only I was able to withdraw over \$2000 from my PayPal account to start recouping my losses. If someone else released this then I'd never see that \$2,000. I would just be out the \$7,500. So I'm already seeing the financial benefit of the release even though it is still far, far into the red. And there's no price you can put on being the master of your own destiny either. I own this CD completely.

I'm still friends with the owners of all the labels we've worked with over the years. Knowing those people has given me the balls to try it on my own. I don't know if I will fail or succeed to some modest degree but if it wasn't for Andy and Duane and Thorp/Sailor's Grave and Mark Noah from GMM Records then I'd never had felt comfortable even trying this crazy idea.

Q: Stateline Music, it absorbed the Ducky Boys catalog? How does that work if you said you don't own the recording? Did you have to buy them back?

Mark: I've had some of the rights revert back to me. Not the releases on Thorp/Sailor's Grave. Those are with him to stay. But the Sinners & Saints CD is out of circulation on Bridge 9. They've moved on to bigger and better things. The Dirty Water Cd was on Street Anthem Records and they've folded. My contract with GMM Records for the first two Ducky Boys' CD's was for 5 years and that time has long since passed. So some of these things will be getting re-issued over time. I'm not in a huge rush to do it because I really

don't know where things will stand with selling music next year or the year after and I don't really want to get stuck with a bunch of beer coasters. So I'll probably watch things and figure out a plan from there.

Q: I do want to say that the title of this CD, Homeward Bound may have been a reflection on your musical journey but looking around your apartment it looks like a return to the old DIY days of punk rock. Is this bringing you back in time or is it always like this when you release a CD?

Mark: I assume you're referring to the warehouse that is my kitchen? That's all the band merchandise that I sell on the web. It's a lot different than the old days because people can readily order it on the internet and I can have it out to them and in their hands within days. I'm not making money off of it but I'm trying to keep my head above water and just not lose money. It gives me something to do with my spare time and it keeps merchandise in circulation. I'm really lucky to have a demand for my stuff... especially the Ducky Boys and Sinners & Saints bands after all these years..... so I want to keep that stuff available as long as I can. Of course, the only reason it's even possible to do that is because I'm a bachelor making a reasonably decent income. If any of that changed then I probably wouldn't have the financial freedom to drop several thousand dollars on cases of merchandise.

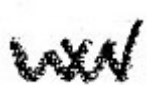
Q: You say you have a steady job, so you're not a full time rock star?

Mark: I'm just a full time douche bag.

Q: The release show is on your now annual Night Before Thanksgiving Fiasco. Want to fill us in on how this tradition started?

Mark: It just started because TT The Bears in Cambridge, MA had an open night on the night before Thanksgiving and their booking agent asked me to fill it. We were horrendous. For those that may not realize it, Thanksgiving Eve is considered to be one of the drunkest nights on the calendar. People are back home visiting and reconnecting with old friends and they hit the bars hard. So we decided to offer a show that people can come to and get trashed at. Every





year something awful has happened. No one has been hurt but someone always fills the role of the public spectacle. The first year it was unquestionably me. The second year there were several near fights between two guys that are friends but lost their better judgment after a few drinks. Not to mention I had the terrible shits that night and ended up between them trying to break up the fight. I swear that if I had caught a random fist in the face then I would have shit my pants. Last year it may have been me again. I blacked out on a combination of xanax and beer and it was ugly - don't try that at home, kids. This year it WILL NOT BE ME. I'm nearly one year sober and I have no plans for that to change between now and then. But someone will fill the role I'm sure.

Q: The show is on the 25th, who else is playing with you? What are your plans for touring with this album? Think you'll make it out of New England to support this one?

Mark: We're taking it easy on the shows. I've lost a fortune this year on playing shows. We'll do the shows we can but we're being more selective these days. The 25th will have Death & Taxes, The Rebel Dead, The Scars and Marc Cannata of Far From Finished playing solo/acoustic. In the days leading up to that show we're doing some shows with Dropkick Murphys and Bryan McPherson and those should be a blast.

Q: Last question, favorite track on the album?

Mark: I think they each serve a purpose on the CD so I like them all. I suppose "I'll Be There" is a favorite because I'm a big fan of the pop format of songwriting and that one fits the suit like Johnny Bravo. All the words are personal to me but I think "Wasted Years" probably still rings as true to me now as it did in 2006 when I put them together. So I guess I'll go with that one. I also love what Marc did with "Cold Hearted". gave him the line and part to sing in the chorus and he sang it about 300 times better than I expected. What I like most about this record is that it's 8 songs. Too short to get boring. Each song also got plenty of attention in the practice space and in the studio so there isn't room for filler at all. I'm very happy with all of it and my thanks goes out to the people that made it with me and to all of those people that have taken the time to check it out.

Q: So I lied, now I have a few more. After listening to the CD repeatedly, it really has a feel to it like Three Chords & the Truth, in that everything really comes together, the band sounds tight and the album as a whole kills from top to bottom. I guess that is more of a statement than a question, but any similarities to Three Chords in the recording process or writing, etc?

Mark: I guess the only similarity is that we just went for the best material.... all killer, no filler as some crappy pop punk band once said. When we did "Three Chords" it was after years of inactivity. And the stuff I had done in the interim was with other people that were writing. When it came to "Three Chords" we just had a ton of material to choose from. And that's sort of where we are now. By releasing a CD with only 8 songs then it trims the fat and keeps it focused both in the studio and in the practice space so I'd like to think we were able to deliver something on par with that release.... even though that one has twice as many songs. Hopefully we'll be able to record another 8 song CD in the Spring and maintain a constant presence out there.

Q: I really want to thank you for your time and candidness Mark, the CD really is killer and I hope the readers check it out. The first two tracks are up on your myspace which can be linked to from www.myspace.com/marklind and the CD can currently be purchased at buyourmerch.blogspot.com and interpunk.com. When and where will it be available from iTunes, Newbury Comics, etc.?

Mark: I'm not over reaching with it. If I were to go through a proper distributor then they would order a few thousand of them and then return them all in a few months when no one buys them. We're maintaining complete control over who we sell with so as to properly manage the stock and not get fucked with that aforementioned surplus of coaster. So Newbury Comics, Interpunk, our site, iTunes, Amazon and some other digital distributors. When I was a kid you had to buy Maximum Rock n Roll and send away for decent music. Things have sort of come full circle again where people have to seek it out but the means of getting your hands on it are certainly less painful than they used to be.

