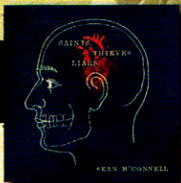


LSM

reviews



photo by Bill Eddison



SEAN MCCONNELL
Saints, Thieves, Liars
www.seanmcconnell.com

LSM

Sean McConnell hails from Boston, where he spent much of his youth absorbing such coffeehouse-friendly influences as Joni Mitchell, James Taylor and Shawn Colvin (along with Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan). He now lives in Nashville, where he's already had songs recorded by mainstream heavyweights Tim McGraw and Brad Paisley. But as his buzz around Texas and new full-length, *Saints, Thieves, Liars*, proves, he fits right into the Americana scene. Not that he sounds like the same-old, same-old; McConnell's boyish voice is an intriguing breath of fresh air, markedly different from the usual rusty sounding vocals that tend to dominate the genre. But don't underestimate it: it's a strong, powerful instrument, and he stretches it all over the musical map on this album with tempos that bounce back and forth from slow-paced and melancholy to flat-out rock 'n' roll. While the overall production is somewhat predictable, it's as impeccable as McConnell's hooks, making all of the songs more than ready for airplay. "Maybe You Can Love Me Anyway" and "A Prayer You Can Borrow" are both gorgeous tunes that showcase the reach of McConnell's vocals, and on the other end of the spectrum are "Caroline" and "Lie Baby Lie" — classic rock for the new generation. He even throws in a waltz called "Closing Time," written from the point of view of someone that's been there many times. McConnell's lyrics are every bit as expressive as his voice, and meaningful way beyond his years (he's still in his 20s); although there's no title track on *Saints, Thieves, Liars*, all three archetypes are incorporated throughout the album in a thematic sort of way. Next time around, it would be nice to hear McConnell push the boundaries of the instrumentation like he does his singing and writing. But for now, this is a great album that should only add to the young artist's considerable — and well-deserved — buzz. — **TRACIE FERGUSON**