

The Axe For Hire Has His Own Album To Do.

Having had his resourceful six string grace the work of everyone from Sinead O'Connor and Matthew Sweet to Steve Earle and Shirley Bassey, Backer steps centre-stage with a janglesome rock record full of wise, chunky guitar and the sort of songs that can only come with experience and a massive record collection. The lyrics reflect a certain mid-life ennui, if not panic (Golden Boy, **Is That All?**, Landlocked all drip with disappointment and will ring bells with forty-somethings everywhere), but the vitality and sheer depth of Backer's facility provide the necessary uplift.

Shame he didn't believe in his singing enough to really let rip, but there are a couple of songs here (the defiant, tremendous Fountain Of Youth and classic Americano-pop of Everything Is Not Enough) that in the throat of a grizzled, pissed-off old legend would be magnificent.

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