

In the Wasp Nest

by Franklin P. Whitmore

Wasp Nest Blues is the debut album from Robin Woywitka, an Alberta-based singer/songwriter. The record is a tight selection of mostly upbeat songs about recovering ladies' men, the sweet pain of being an Edmonton Oilers fan and astonishment at one's own capability to fall in love. Musically it brings shuffling country with a healthy dose of R&B and more than a pinch of pop. The CMF Records publicity team caught up with Robin at an A&W in Camrose, Alberta.

What sound were you looking for in this record?

Any sound that I have ever thought up in my head has never been fully realized in the real world. By the time performing and recording is done, nothing sounds the way it did in my brain. But I purposefully used only voice, percussion and stringed instruments on this one. No keyboards or anything.

Why is that?

I wanted something that sounded relatively simple. Plus I'm only really any good on the guitar.

What would you want a listener to experience when they hear the album?

Mostly I wanted to make an album that didn't dwell on the dark side too much. That was hard, because it is really easy to write mopey or angry songs. That's probably why there are so many out there.

What about musical influences?

I know what elements of music I like. I love bass lines that are integral to the rhythmic feel of the song. Then I like to have a guitar part double or closely accent that line. I'm also a sucker for the reverb on old Fender amps.

There are a couple of Alberta specific references in these songs, is that an important thing to you?

Not really, it's just where I live and work. I wrote one song about the Oilers. I guess there is a suite of place related feelings and ideas that set into your brain. That stuff seeps out. But songs about love and such don't have any geography.

I understand that Oilers song [The Ballad of the Orange and Blue] won an award?

Yeah, I won the "Dan Bern Biggest Balls Award" at the Calgary Folk Music Festival Songwriting Competition for singing a song about the Oil on the red mile. That means nothing to people who don't know who the Oilers and Flames are. But it meant everything to the Oiler fan in me. Good for a fifty buck tab at the pub.

Any ideas for the follow up record?

There is a lot of shuffle on this one, so I think the next one will have more straight time on it. I think I'll use my electric 12 string more.

Sounds great, can't wait.

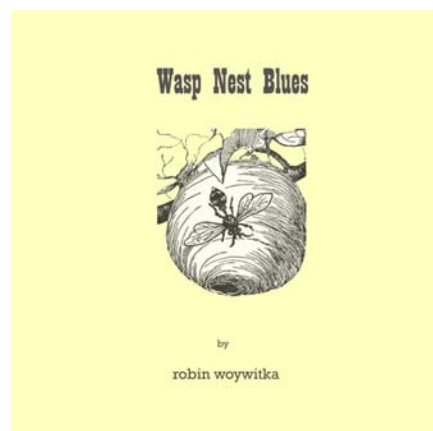
I was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. I grew up on the north end of that city, near Northgate Mall, where I learned my first guitar chords in the back room of a Mr. Entertainment.



After a while I switched musical institutions.

Keynote Music was the name of the place, and Reg Taylor was the teacher. It was located in a strip mall by the row homes. Reg taught me to appreciate Leslie West just as much as the classical pieces in the Hal Leonard lesson books. He also noted that I had a knack for playing country music. So I joined grunge bands. We played dodgy but educational gigs at establishments that usually closed a week or two after our show.

While gaining a formal education in archaeology, I played in several bands including Kilgore Trout, the Four Door and Crazy One Eye. These had heavy rock and roll, country and blues sounds. More like what Reg would have liked. Since then I've become a professional archaeologist and spend most of the year in northern Alberta recording archaeological sites before they are destroyed by bulldozers and other large machinery. I now live in Calgary and make music in all of my spare time. My first record, *Wasp Nest Blues*, is available now through CMF Records.



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