

# DEAD SOLDIERS



As your needle drops on *The Great Emptiness*, the forthcoming full-length album from Dead Soldiers, there's a storm rolling in. A quick, driving guitar line is slowly building, the tension giving way to a sense of foreboding. In this case, there's nothing to fear – but these opening notes are trying to prepare you for something.

It'll be something you'll struggle to explain with the vocabulary you've been given. What is genre, anyway, but a commercial construct? However else it can be classified – is it folk, Americana, bluegrass, rock'n'roll? – this is barroom music at its finest, meant to be played loudly, meant to feel raucous in one moment and melancholy in the next. Best paired with a whiskey, drunk in celebration or in solitude.

Recorded at Memphis' High/Low Recording throughout 2016 with producer Toby Vest, Dead Soldiers consider *The Great Emptiness* their best release to date. It feels like they've arrived somewhere – maybe not the final destination, but certainly a destination. And really, the journey in between is what these songs represent: five years and countless live shows in more cities than they care to remember, becoming the band you hear on *The Great Emptiness*.

"Finding your identity is a process of trial and error," says Michael Jasud (vocals/guitar). "You're always who you are, but also hopefully becoming more yourself, if you're doing it right. Getting better is also important but should happen regardless. That's the easy part. Who you are is always exactly the same, but always changing. Figuring that out is the tricky part. This record is definitely the most ourselves we've managed to be yet."

Certainly Vest deserves some credit for this accomplishment.

"From the moment we stepped into High/Low we knew this was the ideal environment for us," Jasud says. "Toby essentially became the seventh member of Dead Soldiers during pre-production for this record and was really instrumental in helping us realize the possibil-

ities of these songs. We knew we could trust him. And the great part is that it's right here in Memphis. Sometimes you can even walk outside and there will be a vagrant peeing on the sidewalk or your car, right in front of you. You might even have to jump out of the way. And ultimately that was the kind of ambience we wanted for this album."

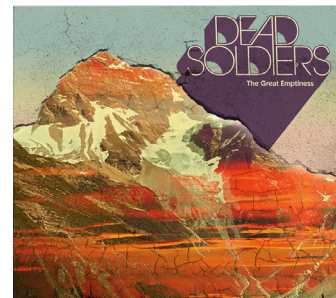
Not surprisingly, *The Great Emptiness*' best moments land when dark, sardonic lyrics meet masterful technique and a simultaneous willingness to throw the rules out the window.

Take "Old Time Religion," for example. At first it's everything you expect – this is a band that understands the old adage about knowing the rules in order to break them – but then, the song breaks open lyrically, becoming a microcosm of the aesthetic of both *The Great Emptiness* and the band itself. Skilled and versed in traditional music, roots music, sacred music, presenting it in a way that is at once reverent and profane. It simultaneously honors the tradition while turning it on its head.

That aesthetic is brought to life on *The Great Emptiness* with dense, layered arrangements and smart storytelling, from the unlikely eulogy of "Georgia Tann" – "This story is about the people who stole the south's true potential, it's about distracting the masses during a hostile political climate while atrocities are committed" – to the casual mortality of "When I Die" – "If it were possible I would say just put me out on the curb like an old couch when I go. It's kind of like the morbid version of a wedding in that everybody ends up feeling obligated to celebrate you. At least you're not expected to buy gifts, although if dinner were included in a funeral I might be more likely to go to one."

Like any great band – especially those driven by fiddles and strings – Dead Soldiers have a way of tricking you into dancing to some pretty dark stuff. But the surprise of *The Great Emptiness* may be that it is as earnest as it is witty, an overflowing text of characters, people, points of view, in which irony and satire are just an entry point to something a bit deeper.

Look for *The Great Emptiness* March 31, 2017.



## The Great Emptiness

The Dead Soldiers  
03.31.2017

American Grapefruit

1. When I Die
2. White Collar Blues
3. Teddy Bears
4. Old Time Religion
5. Still Climbing The Mountain
6. A Love Song
7. Georgia Tann
8. The Smartest Man In The World
9. Prophets of Doom
10. Cheap Magic

## BOOKING

Bucket City Agency  
info@bucketcity.com  
615.592.6702

## PUBLICITY

Elizabeth Cawein  
elizabeth@signalflowpr.com  
901.268.9038 // 901.440.8085