

USA TODAY, Twice in Six Days; Highest-Ever BILLBOARD Chart Debut for The Clarks

Rave Reviews for 'Restless Days'



The Clarks celebrate their highest-ever **BILLBOARD** chart debut, as 'Restless Days' (High Wire/Fontana) hits #3 on Heatseekers and #134 in the TOP 200 this week.



Songs from the album were featured in **USA TODAY** twice in the last six days:

Wednesday Weather Song Pick for 'Sunshine'

6/10/09, by Bob Swanson:

"Pittsburgh-based rockers, The Clarks, have written and recorded both sunny and not-so-sunny tunes. The song, Sunshine, appears on their latest release, Restless Days, while the tune, Sun Don't Shine, comes from their 1994 release, Love Gone Sour: Suspicion and Bad Debt. The album Restless Days, was just released yesterday is the first in five years for the band."

http://www.usatoday.com/weather/resources/2009-06-01-bill-withers-aint-no-sunshine_N.htm



USA TODAY - LISTEN UP MUSIC PICK for 'Trampoline' 6/16/09, by Brian Mansfield:

"The guitars may have lots of spring in them, but Pittsburgh's finest rock band isn't up for being anybody's rebound relationship."

http://www.usatoday.com/life/music/reviews/2009-06-15-pick-of-the-week_N.htm



Modern Drummer Magazine will soon feature The Clarks' drummer Dave Minarik in an online essay on the Making of 'Restless Days'.

MEDLEYVILLE INTERVIEW

Striking a Balance By Chris Junior, 6/09, with The Clarks' Robert James

It's been five years since The Clarks released a new studio album, but the Pittsburgh-based quartet hasn't exactly been loafing since 2004's *Fast Moving Cars*. There have been children born, outside projects released and continuous band touring leading up to *Restless Days*, due June 9 on High Wire/Fontana. It's the latest hummable, rockin', toe-tapping album by the longtime no-nonsense band – still featuring the original lineup of singer/guitarist **Scott Blasey**, guitarist/singer **Robert James**, bassist/singer **Greg Joseph** and drummer/singer **David Minarik Jr.** -- that typifies the hard-working and humble character of its home city. James recently discussed the band's new album, the band's longevity and other subjects.

Medleyville.us: *Restless Days* ends the longest gap between new Clarks studio albums. Were there any specific personal or professional circumstances behind that?

Robert James: "Both Scott and Greg released solo discs in that time period, so they wanted to get that out of the way. We also did a live recording called *Still Live*, so we got that done and filmed a [companion] DVD [that covered] the latter part of our career thus far. "So those were projects that were keeping us busy. But also, Scott had for a time moved to Texas, but he's now back in the area. ... That's really gotten things rolling back in a positive direction. [Side projects and band touring] are exactly the kind of things that have been filling our time. And fortunately, with the careers that we've chosen and with the level of whatever success you can say we've had with things, it affords us time to be able to really contribute and raise our families. ... That's what we've been doing with our time."

Talk about the origins and inspiration behind some of the songs on *Restless Days*.

James: "Well, 'Midnight Rose' – I know Scott was just talking about this the other day. He was actually writing a song about his second daughter, Ava Rose, and he just chose to turn it somehow or another [into a story] about catching a train, and the train was called the Midnight Rose. ... On 'Inside,' that line catches me: 'Even if your broken heart's a hundred miles wide/I just want to see what's on the inside.' I think that's really some of Scott's best lyrics.

"Over the course of the year, we basically wrote [the songs included on *Restless Days*], and there's one song that will be available on iTunes that's not on the record. So we really wrote, like, [a dozen] songs. For having that much time off, Greg doing his solo disc and Scott doing his solo disc, we weren't really as a band very prolific, but there were other ideas thrown out there that were sort of like 'eh.' "Now with 'True Believer' – Greg brought in that idea, and lyrically it was one of those things that was half-baked, but we knew we really had something with that. The lyrics Greg had were really not working. That was one where Scott said, 'I think I can do something with this,' so he came up with that story. "We worked on the album piecemeal, the recording as well as doing all the writing and pre-production, whenever we could. We rehearsed in the factory that makes our T-shirts. It's really centrally located ... because everybody's sort of at four corners (laughs). It turned out to be a cool thing. "[Producer **Sean McDonald**] would come out to the pre-production rehearsals and record what we had going on. He had a lot of really solid ideas about what he wanted to do in the recording process when we got there. ... He has a real good approach to making the guitars sound big and having a big, rocking mix. Even when things are at mid-tempo, he always finds a way to give it some kind of a wallop. I really enjoyed working on a full record with him; we've only been doing little pieces here and there [with him]. "There were times I struggled with it, though. He had me doing stuff, and I'd be like, 'I don't know, man. This guitar sounds really thick; it sounds really heavy – it's not really a Clarks sound.' And he would say, 'Trust me, man. It's going to be way in the back.' I ended up being really pleased with how the overall record came out."

Not many bands last 20-plus years, and even fewer do so with the original lineup intact. What factors do you contribute to The Clarks' longevity?

James: "I think we've always had role models like **R.E.M.** and **U2**. I wouldn't say that they're role models now, necessarily, but when the band first started, those were bands that we looked at and said, 'Look how tight those guys seem to be.' You didn't think of one [member] without the other three. "On top of that, I think we all have the personalities that lend to committing ourselves to each other and compromising on a lot of different levels and realizing the successes and short-term goals that we've set for ourselves and achieved. We realize the importance that all of us play; there's a respect there – a brotherly love, a family kind of feel."

During the band's career, The Clarks' style of rock 'n' roll has seen commercial peaks and valleys, and the mechanics of the music industry itself have changed dramatically. Do these frequent changes frustrate or motivate the band, and how do you guys deal with these challenges?

James: "To put it in perspective – I think I just told somebody this the other day – when we put out our first project, it was on vinyl and cassette. Very shortly after we released that, bands like **New Order** and **The Cure** -- those were huge bands, probably stylistically about the farthest you could get away from what The Clarks were. "And over the course of years, you had everything from hair-metal, hip-hop and grunge -- things that the band's never really fit into. Like you said, there have been peaks and valleys. "I just think that we've been always to – with the help of producers and other people who cared about the band – [continue] with forward motion in our career. We've really just tried to stay true to ourselves. I can tell you that there's nothing that we've done that I feel like I've compromised at all."

It wasn't that long ago that The Clarks performed in California for the first time. What are some other goals on the band's list?

James: (Laughs) "Staying together. Still having this career -- seriously. We're not young anymore, and as it keeps rolling along, it starts to have an importance to it. Like you said before, it's the same four guys who started 24 years ago or whatever it is. It's afforded us a nice life – to be creative and fulfilled that way with each other and as individuals. So that in itself seems to be a goal – just to keep it going and remain vital."

-- Introduction and interview by Chris M. Junior - http://www.medleyville.us/2009/06/striking_a_balance.html

The band's first studio album in five years has also seen a remarkable response at radio, with airplay on Alternative, Rock/Classic Rock, AAA and Country stations.

Hometown coverage in Pittsburgh has been extraordinary, with features and CD reviews praised the band's new album:

Here's a link to see The Clarks' lengthy segment on **CBS-TV KDKA**:-
<http://kdka.com/video/?cid=49>

Here's an in-depth preview from **PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW**:
Clarks turn 'Restless Days' into crackling new CD
http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/ae/s_628979.html

Here's video of The Clarks' interview and performance from **Pittsburgh Tribune Review**:
<http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/ae/>

Here's a feature preview from the **PITTSBURGH POST GAZETTE**:
Catching up with The Clarks: Natives are 'Restless'
<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09162/976415-388.stm>

Here's a 'Short List' preview in **PITTSBURGH CITY PAPER**:
<http://www.pittsburghcitypaper.ws/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A64489>

Here's a feature from **The Daily Courier**:
'Restless Days' ahead for The Clarks
http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/dailycourier/news/connellsville/s_628912.html

Here's a 4-star Clarks CD review, from **Erie Times Union**,
<http://www.goerie.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090606/ENTERTAINMENT0301/306069988/-1/NEIGHBORS>

More info:

The Clarks are an American rock band that have sold over 300,000 CDs, managed to stay together for 20+ years, and support themselves through their music. They've received extraordinary notoriety in their hometown of Pittsburgh, while remaining under the radar for the rest of America. But The Clarks have a sound that's bigger than one town.

They are - **Scott Blasey**: Lead Vocals, Electric & Acoustic Guitars; **Robert James**: Electric & Acoustic Guitars, Vocals; **Greg Joseph**: Bass Guitar, Vocals; **Dave Minarik**: Drums, Vocals.

From the scorching guitars of 'Trampoline' to the distinctive storytelling of 'Midnight Rose', their new songs deliver a real rock band playing real instruments. Add in overlapping vocals, driving percussion and great hooks, and you've got a cohesive collection of muscular music from a seasoned band that knows their trade. If Green Day played songs written by Paul McCartney, the result might sound a bit like 'Restless Days'. The new album features 12 tracks in all -- 11 original songs by The Clarks, plus a rollicking cover of 'Wonderful World', which was commissioned by the Pittsburgh Penguins and used as part of their 2008-2009 season marketing campaign.

'Restless Days' was recorded in Pittsburgh and produced by Sean McDonald, who has also worked with indie faves Grapevine, Carroway, and Mercury, but perhaps is best known for his work on the PBS 'American Soundtrack' and 'My Music' series.

The Clarks describe themselves with pride as a band that's *"always fashionably in style and fashionably out of style all at the same time. They've never struck arena-rock poses – never had any gimmicks or affectations at all. They just get onstage and get it done. And they've never found a reason to do it any other way. Because if your casual college band turned into a career dream come true, complete with airtime on 'Late Show with David Letterman' (http://clarksonline.com/video/ls_gt.html) and more than a quarter-million albums sold – and you managed to do it while remaining based in the hometown where your families, friends and biggest fans are – why tamper with success?"* That sentiment still stands, but as the title of their new album suggests, the band is getting a bit 'restless'...

Upcoming concerts include:

July 7 & 8

Kelly's Restaurant and Tavern

Nags Head, North Carolina

July 9

The Jewish Mother

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Look for more tour dates to be announced soon. Visit www.clarksonline.com or myspace.com/theclarks

Hear audio samples of 'Restless Days' here: <http://brickwallmgmt.com/theclarks/>