

# MAKING A SCENE

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REVIEW: Steve Yanek "Long Overdue"  
by Jim Hynes

The title suggests recognition that's been a while in coming. The credits reveal impressive names, beckoning us to listen. Singer-songwriter Steve Yanek has talented friends in producer Jeff Pevar of the Crosby Stills and Nash touring band on acoustic, electric, and resonator guitar, lap steel, bass, and backing vocals, along with noted drummer Kenny Aronoff, Little Feat pianist Billy Payne and Rod Morgenstein of the Dixie Dregs on drums, and the late T Lavitz, also of the Dregs, on keyboard. Yanek himself wrote the words and music, did the lead vocals, and played acoustic and electric guitars and piano.



That's a can't miss lineup that could only fail if Yanek's songs belied the talent. Fortunately, they don't. Yet, the opener, the title track, sets the impression that the album will be a flat-out rocker. Not that it's a bad song nor an attention-getter but the remaining selections alternate folk-rock with pop-rock. On the track, there's palpable joy in the protagonist reunited with his lover as Pevar makes his presence felt with searing guitar and lap steel solos. The themes of love, breakup and unrequited love are present throughout with "Like Now" full of stubborn desire, imbued by the harmonies of Inger Nova Jorgensen.

"Tired of This Attitude" has the desperation of a Springsteen rocker, especially the opening verse – "She comes alive when the sun goes down/And the lights come on in this dirty town/She tries to escape out into the night/She tries to forget about the rest of her life." The music stays melodic and infectious throughout confessional lyrics that mix disappointment with the need to be a better man as we hear in "All the Sorrow," "Everyone's Crazy These Days," "About This Time," and "Throw Me Down a Line." There's excellent acoustic guitar and glistening piano from Pevar and Payne respectively in "Everyone's Crazy These Days." "About This Time" is essentially ballad with Yanek playing piano and layering in harmonies while Pevar, the only other musician on the track, fills in nicely on four instruments, soloing on Italian steel guitar. "Throw Me a Line" has Aronoff on drums and is a downright plea as he sings – "Living ain't easy, life will take its toll, the latter song suggests. Hang off that ledge only makes you old...everybody needs help sometimes."

There are more positive moments too. He seems to be comforting a friend in the gently shuffling "On Your Side" and is clearly lovestruck in the lightly swaying "You Move Me," a tune fleshed out with contributions from the two Dregs and lush harmonies again from Jorgensen. Yanek closes this deeply personal set of expressions alone acoustically as he sings the touching, yearning "Goodbye."

Yanek is a first-rate songwriter who seems to have just appeared on the scene. Yet, he delivered *Across the Landscape* in 2005. So, seventeen years later we have this one. Let's hope the gap is much shorter next time.

PRIMITIVE RECORDS