**Bart Budwig** is a son of Idaho, a cosmic country crooner, a rousing trumpet player, and cryin'-style soul singer. His music is made up of seemingly incongruous parts; thrum & strum country rhythms, jazz guitar melodies, R&B vocals. When Bart sings he draws out words into meditative mantras, whole note neologisms that keep you hanging on until his raspy voice trails off in a ragged edge. His forthcoming album, ***Another Burn On The AstroTurf*** (January 24, 2020, **Fluff and Gravy Records**) was recorded over five days by a seven-piece band inside the **OK Theater**. It’s a melancholy rhapsody that recalls the uncorked rock n’ roll spirituality of king mystic **Van** **Morrison**, the gloomy nostalgia of dark prince **Nick Drake** and the songcraft sans self-seriousness of 70s Muscle Shoals.

Like those psycho-spiritual song crafters, his power comes from vocal idiosyncrasies - intonations of love, impermanence, hope, humor. The album opens with Budwig originals “Time For Two”, “First To Go”, and “Strong Coffee”-- originally presented with just solo guitar (and

crackling wood stove) on the album ***Sabai***. The songs are recorded here live, full band, in medley, with hot electric guitar, woody double bass, and drums. The band electrifies and scourges the flesh of the songs into fully formed folk rock stunners.  “Strong Coffee” is a full band version of a Budwig soul standard; on it piano beats in time with a trap kit, trudging somberly through love. It’s three minutes you wish would last forever.

There is what the Romans called a “divine lustre” about Bart Budwig. His blonde hair and beard wrap around his collar,and frame his smile in a nimbus of gold. His radiance belies the loyalty he commands of an army of talent. He’d sooner tell you a joke than reveal to you he’s recorded dozens of albums and hundreds of songs in the last few years.

Budwig’s close attention to the work of other artists has resulted in impressive covers over the years, many of which became the album ***Paint By Numbers Jesus***. Continuing this folk process Budwig has covered two songs on *Another Burn On The Astroturf;* “Oh Mother”, a despondent recollection of an alcoholic father, by independent artist **Allison Olender**, and Nick Drake’s classic “Northern Sky”. Budwig is a natural trumpet player and adds a solo to open the song that the dark prince himself would enjoy. “Northern Sky” comes from Drake and John Cale’s late 60s masterpiece *Bryter Layter*, but Budwig makes it his own here, demonstrating the album as part of a continuing creation of a new American sound, for which Budwig is at the helm.

For all the intensity in Bart’s music he never loses his sense of humor. The brightest moments on the album come from a transcendent Rolling Stones “Beast Of Burden” homage, “Rolling Stoned”, in which he ponders if he is, in fact, bad enough, rich enough, good enough. The answer is, of course, not, but he also humorously notes that if any of us were that good, then aren’t we better off with...something better? On “Sock Song” the dynamics of intimate relationships boil down to one sock’s tendency to wander from its destined partner as soon as it hits the dryer. His musical similarities to spiritual seekers Van Morrison and Nick Drake are

undeniable now, but he’s not lost on the path as them, he’s grounded, infectiously grateful. Bart’s mastery of dramatic irony turns his work with complex emotional states of being into comforting, uplifting, relatable music.

It’s this ability to combine tragedy and comedy in his humanist hallelujahs that makes Budwig a gravitational force and industry chimera. The studio general, the clown prince, the sensitive

songwriter with a rugged voice. The soul singer with a cosmic country band. The creator of a folk universe drawing musicians from everywhere to the middle of nowhere. It’s this juxtaposition that makes *Another Burn On The Astroturf* another success for Bart Budwig, and a must

listen for you. - **American Standard Time**, ***Sean Jewell***