

The Gravel Shakers – *Forward In All Directions*

Review by Chip Saam, Indie Pop Takeout

The Gravel Shakers are what you'd call a multi-threat outfit - they feature three singer-songwriters along with a drummer who ties it all together. Rick Brown, Jack Falk, Todd Perkins, and Greg Groth have released their debut record as The Gravel Shakers, but these music scene veterans have been at it for a long time. The record features four songs from each songwriter and the material here covers a lot of ground - from Americana to Blues to Country to Folk.

Guitarist Rick Brown offers up some advice on self-reflection with tongue firmly planted in cheek on the bouncy opening track "Look Up". His song "Time" raises a lot of philosophical questions that we all could be asking while looking in the mirror. There's a slight bossa nova undercurrent to the track and it features some fine loping six-string fretless bass work from Perkins.

Bassist Todd Perkins brings social commentary to the party with the swampy groove of "Free Money" and offers some hangover advice to self on the slow blues burner "Better Lay Low".

Multi-instrumentalist Jack Falk's rootsy ballad "There's Something" is a highlight here. It's got a melody you'll swear you've heard before but can't quite place it. His album closer "Mindy" puts elements of rhythm and blues, zydeco, country and western, blues into a blender and seasons it with a great call and response vocal on the verse.

Keeping it all from going off the rails is drummer/percussionist Greg Groth whose steady timekeeping guides each song with a great touch.

If free spirited songs with a dash of storytelling are your thing, you'll find a treasure trove of things to love on this record. The Gravel Shakers play out live regularly and it's always a rollicking good time - check them out if you have the chance! <https://thegravelshakers.com/music>

Chip Saam

<https://neighborhoodweeklyradio.com/shows/indie-pop-takeout/>

<https://www.mixcloud.com/ChipSaam/>