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"There is a recognizable STFU sound - a sound that keeps expanding and building on their folk roots blending in other elements almost effortlessly. They've developed into one of our premier bands and deserve acclaim for the way that they conduct themselves and the excellence of their output"  
**David Cowling, 8/10, Americana-UK**

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### Southern Tenant Folk Union "Hello Cold Goodbye Sun"

*Johnny Rock Records, 2013* **8/10**



*Ensemble on song once again*

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Where some bands constantly remake the same record (or even song) over again, others constantly try to reinvent themselves. STFU are of the latter category. It helps that they have four main songwriters; it only takes each to develop a little for the whole focus of the band to shift, not dramatically, this is organic change; maturing, flowering. This is their fifth and it is their richest, a satisfying mix of experimentation and honing.

'Crash' is at the experimental end of the spectrum; lyrically it alludes to the financial crisis, but musically it recreates the sound of a sequencer with a five string banjo with the sound deadened by a tea-towel and with cinematic strings looming like the automobiles in the J.G Ballard novel - it provokes admiration. 'Conscience Falls' somehow mixes modern classical composition (think of the way Rachels inculcated post-rock with the orchestral) with more traditional forms to create that has interest within every bar.

The songs have an easy flexible way with idioms; they seamlessly flow and bend. 'Chest Freezer' moves in a strange place between folk and prog; a place where mandolin and clarinet caper around to a filmic fulcrum of banjo plucks and the frenzied reel of the fiddle. STFU aren't beholden to any fixed point; 'Spey River' is a fine example of what they can be/do; an entre of drones, female vocals, acoustic guitars build a gradually gathering atmosphere, as elements accrete (backing vocals, drones, violin). The song develops like a benevolent cumulonimbus turning with a gradual shift, to an angry black storm. The songs are like this throughout; they create moods and subtly shift them, 'Goodbye Sun' does this for the whole record. It takes well over a minute to enter the song proper, flamenco like arpeggios and romantic strings are joined by rolling percussion and rippling guitar before the vocals enter like the first reveal in a film after the opening credits. It's a probing restless record, brooding almost, a record for our straitened times, though there are moments of levity like 'Men in Robes' which is an urbane hoe-down full of bluegrass elements, a whirling lawnmower of strings full of hooks and good times.

Despite the four main songwriters and the admirable breadth that they cover, there is a recognizable STFU sound - a sound that keeps expanding and building on their folk roots blending in other elements almost effortlessly. They've developed into one of our premier bands and deserve acclaim for the way that they conduct themselves and the excellence of their output.

<http://www.southerntenantfolkunion.com/>

David Cowling

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<http://www.americana-uk.com/reviews-cd-live/latest-cd-reviews/item/southern-tenant-folk-union-hello-cold-goodbye-sun-johnny-rock-records-2013>