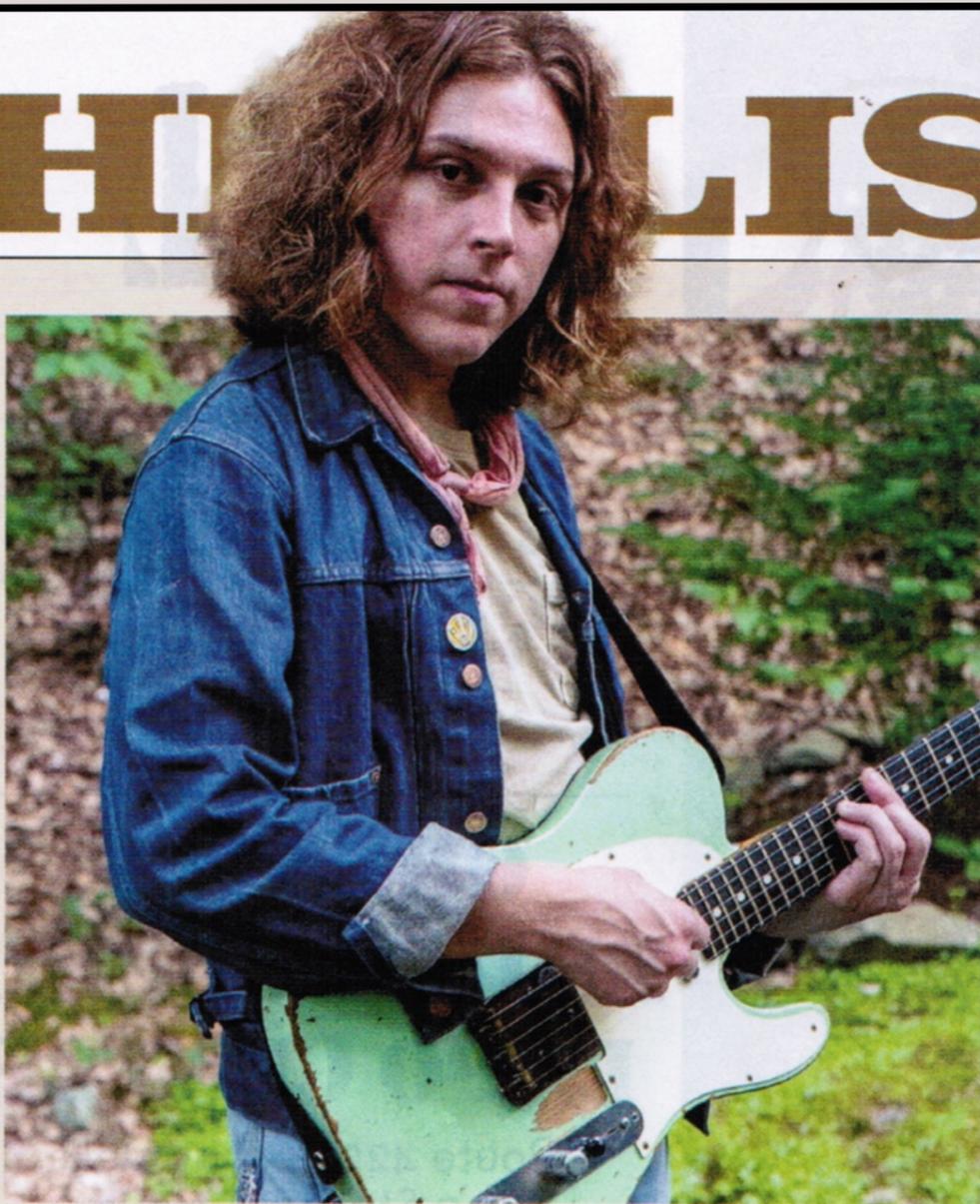


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REVIEWS



OLD AND NEW: A FUSION

On his 2019 debut, Daniel Donato revealed real Tele-twanging potential

that is fully realized on this sophomore effort. He calls his sound “cosmic country,”

yet its components are easily identified; heavy shots of Bakersfield and classic country blended with elements of vintage folk-rock, rootsy

bluegrass, jam-band, and Southern rock. His high, delicate tenor vocals contrast with his whip-cracking, muscular picking (amplified or acoustic) solidly backed by keyboardist Nathan Aronowitz, bassist Will McGee, and drummer Noah Miller.

The funk-flavored “Double Exposure” contrasts with “Hi-Country’s” ’70s vibe, marked by a catchy, riff-driven arrangement and remarkable double-tracked electric solo. On “Rose in a Garden,” Donato’s Everly Brothers vocal approach seamlessly melds with his high-velocity acoustic and amplified passages. Donato and Aronowitz’s “Sugar Leg Rag” invokes Hank Garland’s “Sugarfoot Rag” as a launching pad for some fierce guitar/keyboard workouts.



Daniel Donato Reflector

Paul Franklin’s pedal steel enhances the rocking “Hard to Tell” and three other tracks. The hell-for-leather Tele workout “Locomotive No. 9” screams and roars with raw abandon. Occasional glimmers of Burton, Lee, Kirchen, Gatton, Pete Anderson and other twangy icons surface in Donato’s solos. Daniel’s Telecaster approach and austere sound, however, are his alone, something he proves throughout this exhilarating fusion of old and new. — **Rich Kienzle**