



DISCOGRAPHY:

“Tearin’ At The Heart Of Me”



Digital-only single & video
RELEASE DATE: March 28, 2017

“Gold”



Digital-only single
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 10, 2009

Come Around



CD
RELEASE DATE: April 27, 2004
MRP RECORDS 001 **ROCK/POP**
UPC: 730876905429



I blame it all on that damn little blue turntable.”

“The kiddie one with the lid that closes and the pneumatic drill bit masquerading as a needle. Powder blue. Built in flip-up 45 adapter. The one that played The Cars’ debut on Elektra and Live At Budokan and countless other slabs of vinyl whenever the WLS-AM Top 40 countdown wasn’t pouring out of the clock radio.”

Mark Balletto has been performing and recording as My Record Player since 2003. Based in Grand Rapids, MI via Chicago, My Record Player released the CD, *Come Around*, in 2004 and the digital-only single, “Gold”, in 2009.

A succession of digitally-distributed singles and videos continue to be released in 2017 including the digital-only single, “Tearin’ At The Heart Of Me”.

Mark also performs and records with Chicago quintet Dolly Varden, providing guitar, lap steel, and vocals since 1993.

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Spin ‘em if ya got ‘em ...

Tony Barnett – Newcity Chicago

On his debut, *Come Around*, Balletto taps into the vein of the seventies and the spirit of a decade that offered blues- and soul-based rock alongside unapologetic sappy pop. The refreshing part is Balletto’s heart might long for the time of his musical innocence, but his talents as a guitarist and songwriter keep him current enough to avoid a retro label. Balletto balances straight-on rockers with earnest ballads, conjuring back-of-the-mind thoughts of Dwight Twilley, Tom Petty, Van Morrison, and Robbie Robertson.

Mark Guarino - The Daily Herald ★★½ (out of 4)

My Record Player is the auspicious solo debut of Mark Balletto, lead guitarist of the Chicago roots pop band Dolly Varden. Besides being one of the most expressive guitar stylists in town, he’s also a certifiable music freak, able to summon a myriad of influences in one swift stroke. Naming his band after his turntable suggests a serving platter of references from his vinyl collection. That’s not necessarily the case on these originals. Instead of simply summoning heroes, Balletto steps forward as a tuneful pop craftsman with a tasteful imagination and an ear for how to make all the ingredients cook.

Balletto’s best when coloring in these songs with eloquent introspection, playing slide guitar (“Seeds”) or launching into a solo that is simple yet flares with grandeur (“Nerve of a Green Idea”). He defies the expectation that a guitar purebred is only interested in directing the spotlight on the frets. Instead, on these meditative roots rockers, Balletto paints a rich picture held together with intimate warmth without a single slip of momentum.

Michael Mee - NetRhythms.co.uk

Make no mistake *Come Around* is Balletto’s baby and although fellow Dolly Vardens Steve Dawson and Diane Christiansen are among the collaborators, they contribute no more no less than Jay Bennett or the Memphis Horns. This is quite emphatically not a Dolly Varden album under another name. Neither is it a work of Holmesian deduction to spot the Tom Petty influence, the opening track “Come Around” in particular is reminiscent of the hungry and vital pre-stadium Petty. The time when the music meant something and the air of weariness hadn’t set in.

Come Around is the music of the college radio kid who graduated. It still has the freshness and optimism of youth but it’s tempered and augmented by a realization that you don’t need to rush everywhere. “My Friends” for instance is awash with luscious harmonies whilst “Terry” is all angst and ache and “Over My Shoulder” is full of wonderfully fuzzy guitars.

Within the boundaries of what is a guitar rock album Mark Balletto has created an oasis of intelligence. As a listener I don’t need to be shouted at, or have everything explained to me in words of one syllable, Mark Balletto has done neither on what is an accomplished and highly enjoyable album.