

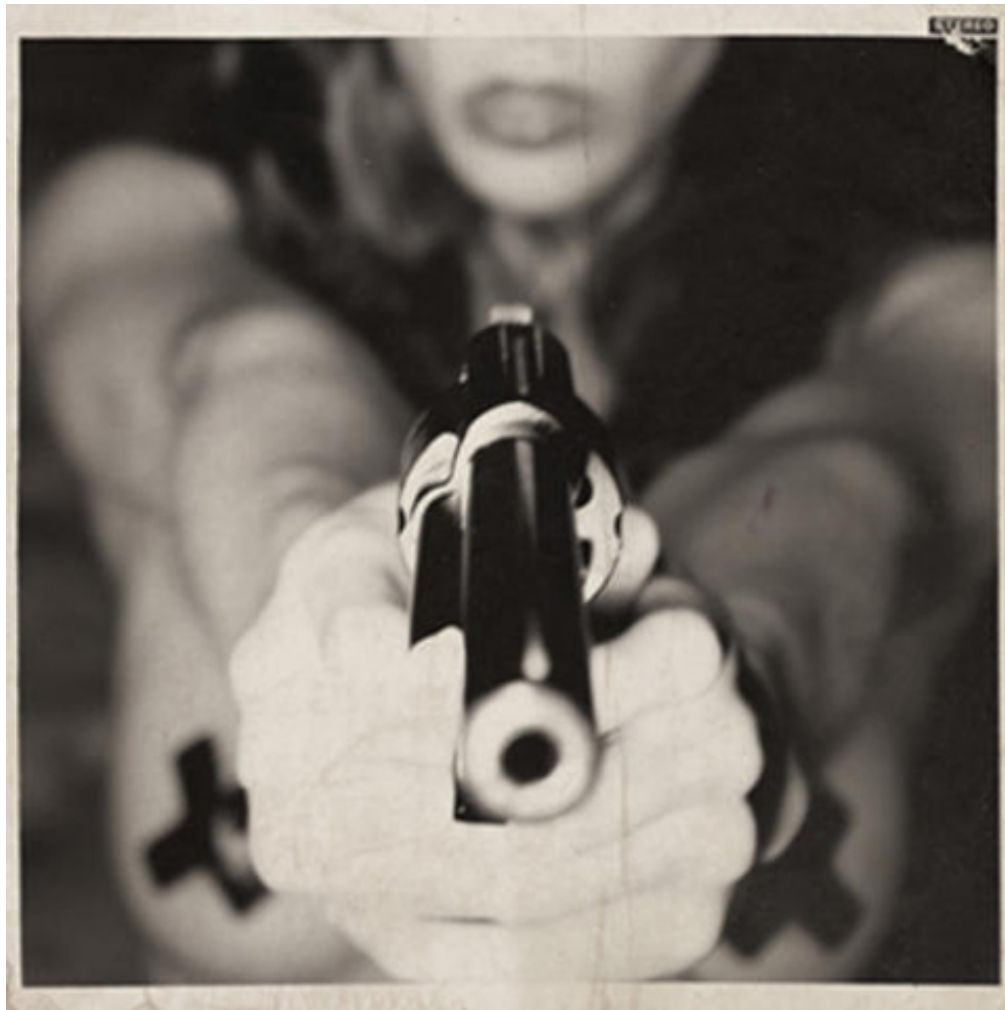
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Micah P. Hinson

8,2

*Micah P. Hinson
& The Pioneer
Saboteur*



FULL TIME HOBBY

At 19-years-old he got out of jail and at 23 his first record hit the streets, a dark, sincere handful of murder ballads called **"Micah P. Hinson & The Gospel of Progress."** Six years later, at almost 29, Micah continues to sing to the abyss, but the abyss has stopped spitting smoke and ash back into his face. His terrible back pain is better (can a fight between friends really end up in a lumbar injury that's so serious the patient has to undergo surgery? When it comes to Micah, anything seems possible, even that the rightfully-forgotten **The Earlies** save your ass), his bad luck with girls has changed (the singer-songwriter has been happily married since 2007, and not to the black widow who nearly drove him to the grave), and his penchant for tranquilisers is also better. Not only that, but Micah also wrote a novel (called **"You Can Dress Me Up but You Can't Me Take Me**

Out", which will be published in November by the small publishing house Alpha
Debay (with a worldwide exclusive), and he even put out an album of covers of
some of his favourite songs, "All Dressed Up And Smelling of
Strangers" (his country noir version of Sinatra's " My Way " was a
real stand out track), which until now was the last release in his catalogue. But,
as ever on time for his appointments (he's released a new album every two years
since his debut in 2004), Micah has just launched his fourth LP: "Micah P.

Hinson & The Pioneer Saboteurs", repeating the formula of surrounding
most voted albums, getting together in any studio, even at his own house, and later
baptising the mutant band with whatever name they see fit—the second was The
Opera Circuit, the third was The Red Empire Orchestra, and now, The Pioneer
Saboteurs—and once again stepping over his own heart so that he can serve it up

to us in a wooden bowl. Is it me, or is " A Call to
Arms " one of the most beautiful, moving songs that this Texan has
written? The ending of the album simply spectacular - an almost 12 minute
instrumental that summarises his life as being born in the dirtiest noise and
traveling towards the enchanted valley.



"This is my life. This
is my life. To make
something starting
from nothing, to get
the ghosts out of the
sky and make them tell
me their stories is at
times desperate and
most visited

Innerspeaker 8,4

Returnal 8,6

that makes life worth
living " This is Micah himself speaking. He says that he is happy
because his wife lets him be exactly "what I am and how I am," at the same time
that she keeps him on the straight and narrow. She's named Ashley, and she
works in a psychiatric hospital. They live in a little house near the zoo (in Abilene,
Texas) and they have a couple of Chihuahuas. And let's just say that if his last
work sounds hopeful (on the mystical " 2s and 3s " , for
example) it's because he is, although when it comes to serving up pieces of his
mistreated soul, he takes a look in the rear-view mirror and builds complex,
painful devices like " The Striking
Before the Storm " or " The
Cross that Stole this
Heart Away " (a crybaby cut that lasts nearly eight
minutes, four of which are dedicated to putting us in a room with a single
window, through which the melody breathes, based on a gloomy violin, cello and
a steamrolling sampler).

That is to say, Micah continues to torment himself, but not because his girlfriend
(older, a widow, and addicted to Valium) is screwing him over (and that includes
asking him to go out and get money for more of whatever it is, however he has to
get it), nor because his father, the preacher, has kicked him out (which is what he
did when he found out what his son was doing with the junky widow), nor
because the nights in jail are too sad and the customers on the telephone sound
too stupid (while he was bumming around getting his friends to put him up, just
after his father put him out on the street, Micah worked selling things by phone).
He torments himself because all of this happened, but the peace of mind, the
security that it gives him to feel that he is safe from all of that becomes his
torment is in art, that's all, A-R-T in capital letters; torment that is ground up and
transformed into something more than a sad song. Back to the splendid start: "A

Call to Arms" is simply superior, a song that doesn't look to see whose fault it is, but only remembers; and then there's the nostalgic song (" My God, My God "), the poem song " Dear Ashley " (or "the best way you can thank the woman of your life for having come along"), the prayer song (" Stuck on the Job " sounds like leaving and begging at the same time), and so on, until you complete the twelve songs of a peaceful, decidedly beautiful album, sane and profoundly thankful.

Micah went to hell and came back alive (and in this sense, " The Returning " , the cut that closes the album, couldn't be more devastating: alt-country noise, seven thunderous minutes that flow into a sea of orchestrated calm, in tune with the rest of the album, by any reckoning the most symphonic piece of his career), but all of these memories are there, and even if he points a gun at them (the cover of the album is, as always, a real mystery) they aren't going anywhere. At least, not unless we take them with us. Yes, Micah P. Hinson has some tough competition. There are other sad guys in the world. Sad guys who write three songs a day (like **Will Oldham**) and others, like his friend **Eric Bachmann** (ex-**Archers Of Loaf**) who are abandoning a promising solo career because of a lack of hard times, and then there are people like **Damien Jurado**, who will never marry anybody (and if they do, they will end up throwing their ring in the river and dedicating a painfully sad song to the spouse), but few of his competitors have a really sordid past behind them. Because... what wouldn't **Nick Cave** give to have gotten out of jail at the age of 19? That is Micah's main asset. And he knows it. That's why he takes two years between albums. Every two years, Micah starts all over again. He reconstructs his staggering world over and over again, and serves us up a piece of it. Let's enjoy him, kids.

Laura Fernández

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