

★ Starline Rhythm Boys

Country Standard Time
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The Starline Rhythm Boys
Better Luck Is a Barroom Away
Tin Town

Man, talk a band that's out of their element. If the Starline Rhythm Boys belong anywhere, it's in Austin, Texas, a place where they'd almost certainly be the toast of the town.

Instead, the band calls Burlington, Vt. home, a city that hugs the Canadian border as closely as any Rio Grande border town embraces Mexico.

As a matter of fact, Austin connections abound here, despite a fair amount of geography. Ex-High Noon guitarist Sean Mencher is on hand as producer (also turning in a fine guest appearance on "I Need a Good Girl Bad"), former Asleep at the Wheel pianist Leroy Preston (now also living in Vermont) contributes liner notes and the swell "Buckets of Love," and upright bassist Bill Bratcher did time with Wayne Hancock's band a few years back.

And, in fact, the Hancock influence shows up at times in Bratcher's own songwriting contributions, with numbers like "3:00 am on the Kansas Plains" and "Do a Little Wrong Tonight" particularly reminiscent of Hancock's work.

Terrific stuff, and probably a lot of fun when heard live. It just goes to show you that Molson will sometimes do the trick just as effectively as tequila. (802-862-0699 or 802-223-5327)

- Jon Johnson