

BOY BARES ALL

DRUMMER FOR BOY & BEAR, TIM HART, RELEASES HIS DEBUT FOLK RECORD

BY NICK ARGYRIOU

Touring though Europe with Boy & Bear when we chat, Tim Hart is on the obligatory back-to-back media call routine, promoting his debut cut, *Milling The Wind*. It's the perfect example of balancing two, and sometimes three, creative worlds like many a modern musician does these days, and Hart is keen to keep both identifies separate, as well as making sure that he doesn't overanalyse his art.

"You can end up really over-intellectualising stuff and actually bringing up stuff [in interviews] that wasn't actually there when you wrote it," he says. "The key is to be natural with it, like my record is, because it's about a personal time in my life and you've got to go with that [candid feeling]."

Such a humble approach when discussing one's music is the right approach for a man attempting to make a mark as a solo artist. Everything doesn't always have to be filled with grandiose statements, fanfare and bollocks just to get our attention, and honesty is a concept that Hart embraces through all facets of his existence – bullshit-free and enveloped in righteousness.

"I really am one of those honest people and I wanted the record to have integrity, and as a folk artist you have your songs and you really don't have anything else," he declares. "I don't dress in a really pretty dress, or have make-up, so if I don't have [the] songs, I'm fucked!"

Although Hart is the sticksman for the five-time ARIA-winning Boy & Bear, he's been a songwriter at heart for years now. Biding his time, *Milling The Wind* was finally recorded along with the now defunct Middle East's producer and multi-instrumentalist Mark Myers last September at the man's two-storey home/studio in Cairns. Aside from Myers, the Middle East connection runs deep with Simon McMenamin providing strings throughout, and Jordan Ireland lending a little banjo to the mix. Hell, Hart was just a handful of members shy of almost reassembling the sadly departed Townsville collective!

Not to be outdone, fellow Boy & Bear members Dave Hosking injects vocals and the band's Jake Tarasenko, bass, flute and fife action. But it's the input of Myers that gives Hart's record the most character – plus the musical influence of Irish performer Fionn Regan, as Hart explains.

"One of the reasons I brought Mark Myers in was because he's really good with soundscapes and creating atmosphere around music," Hart says. "And I think that was one of the great things about that album (2006's *The End Of History*), like, Fionn writes great songs and is a great guitarist and in a different way, is a really honest songwriter."

Milling The Wind takes in narrative threads pertaining to the Australian landscape, capitalism and colonialism, the plight of farmers, gun laws, and fighting inner-demons. Like Regan's *The End Of History*, the songs breeze on through the subconscious with strings mingling with fingerpick-style guitars and Hart's sensitive, yet potent vocal, with the aforementioned Myers' ambiance being fundamental to what makes the album work.

"When we recorded, [it was clear] that Mark's a straightshooter and for someone who at times is very quite vague and ethereal, it's still good to have a guy who distils the airy-fairyness into just cold, hard facts," says Hart. While Hart is the first to admit that he and Myers are quite different personalities, the artist always thought that this dynamic would be conducive to fashioning the most even sound.



ALL HART

"Yeah, Mark has that engineer's brain as well as being really creative and it's something I really admire and something that I don't have," he tells.

Talking in terms of the ambitious levels that Myers took the Middle East's *I Want That You Are Always Happy* release of 2011 to, Hart is contented that he saw another side of Myers in the studio. While glowing in his praise of what the Middle East accomplished, *Milling The Wind* served another, more understated purpose in order to craft its unsullied folk texture.

"This album is purely about the songs and not that idea of instrumental vision, but at the same time Mark did bring some of that incredible atmosphere through and he's done it really tastefully because nothing gets in the way of the songs – I do think he's a borderline genius, but I'm completely biased," he laughs. **R**

For Tim Hart tour dates, see the Gig Guide on page 34.



Milling the Wind is available through Island Records/Universal Music.