

admit how crazy this idea sounds: "When you collaborate with a much younger version of yourself, you are technically working with somebody who no longer exists." Which may explain the sense of confusion a listener might have encountering the schizo material for the first time.

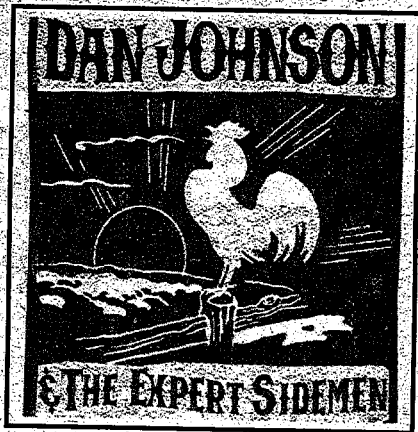
The record's cover art depicts Otto Lilienthal, who developed some of the 19th century's first gliders by testing them on himself. The title is Lilienthal's last words after crashing one such invention. It's unlikely that Davis will suffer a similar fate through his projects, but he might induce a bit of that nervous vertigo that bystanders of Lilienthal must have felt. It also makes the whole thing that much more worth it when a track like "Symbiosis" catches an updraft and totally takes off. See for yourself when Davis celebrates the album's release this Saturday at the Hudson River Coffee House.

DAN JOHNSON AND HIS EXPERT SIDEMEN

SLEEP ON THE WAY

DAN JOHNSON IS FOND OF THE TERM "Americana." His band, the Expert Sidemen, have hosted the weekly Americana Tuesdays showcase at Valentine's for the past year or so, and pretty much anywhere you see them listed—for instance, on the Caffe Lena calendar, advertising their record release show this Saturday—you're bound to encounter the word. Like "roots music," Americana can mean many things to many people, and nothing on its face, but proponents like Johnson generally use the term to summarize a sound that may include elements of folk, country, rock, bluegrass and old-time jazz according to their common attributes: essentially acoustic instruments and a rural ethos.

Sleep on the Way, the band's debut album, recorded by Sten Isachsen at Bender Studios in Delmar, has both of these



will stick in your head on just a couple listens. There's the glimmer of a Southern affectation in his vocals, but if his songs had to be traced to a particular tradition, it would readily be that of John Prine in the way he curls the lyric "Ain't got a dime or a dollar bill" on the loping "Old Pine Hill." The heartwrenching chorus of the title track, too, is something Prine could be proud of: Telling the story of a family evicted from their home, he sings, "When we were children carried into the night/Everything was wrong but we were alright/Driving all night and we're driving all day/Get in the car, you can sleep on the way."

The Expert Sidemen, including Brian Elsenbeck on accordian, Max Figarsky on drums, Pete Murphy on bass and Roger Noyes on electric guitar and pedal steel, move deftly between the crushing tear-in-bear honky-tonk of "Someone New" and the Gypsy-tinged "State Line Blues," complete with a Sam Bush-y reggae outro. The licks are tasteful and familiar, two other qualities that are fairly requisite for the genre. Americana is meant to work in a timeless fashion, a goal that often comes off as nostalgic or pandering, but when done right, as Dan Johnson and the Expert Sidemen have managed here, familiar sounding songs bring seasoned focus to contemporary themes and contemporary sounds bring new perspective to tradition.

—JOSH POTTER