



Scott Miller & The Commonwealth

***Citation* (Sugar Hill)**

Release date: March 14

It's hard not to be "with" whatever comes caterwauling out of **Scott Miller**'s mouth. His songwriting drives like a Cadillac, equally adept at navigating blue highways and Civil War battlefields, with a knack for winding up in the parking lot of the nearest saloon. There's always some chewed-up mixed tape playing on its stereo; there're coffee stains on its seats, and the seatbelts sure as hell don't work. His newest album, *Citation*, follows in grand tradition.

Produced in Memphis by the legendary **Jim Dickinson**, *Citation* rolls out in a somewhat more mature fashion than its predecessors. There's always been a strong sense of the past tense in Miller's songwriting, but with this go-round he's bypassed the rearview window perspective and taken time to actually turn around and gawk. During the writing process, he even rented an apartment in the history-rich Fort expressly for the purposed of marveling at the distance between then and now—which naturally unraveled into a string of past-present comparisons. The moral-fueled battles of yesteryear vs. today's high-tech cowboy warfare. Steamed-up car windows vs. mortgage payments. Whatever nostalgia Miller may have been looking for, it clearly found him first.

As ever, backing band **The Commonwealth** nails "polished-chaos" like a champ; it barrels through rowdier fare like "8 Miles a Gallon" like there's beer on the other side, then straightens up its act just in time for ballads like "Long Goodnight." Of course, the whole outfit sounds better live, and buying this album is no excuse not to attend its Blue Cats show on March 24. But the ugly reality is that that's the ugly reality of albums, so suck it up. You'll be glad you did.

