

# Rick Paul – Love Holds On

by Janet Goodman



According to singer/songwriter Rick Paul's MySpace profile, "A song is a terrible thing to waste"; he lives by his word, generously offering twelve of them on his debut full-length CD "Love Holds On". With styles ranging from retro rock to Celtic folk, this Southern Californian artist has a unique whispering charm about his vocals that makes one take notice from the first warm note.

Catchy melodies and well-crafted lyrics can be found on each track, although his best works feature more mature lyrics and production, outshining his lightweight any day; perhaps another sound engineer could have done more with his distinctive vocals. Paul has a hand in writing every song on this self-released album, opening with the 70's ballad-inspired title track, showing us a softer Dan Fogelberg side: "We sleep under the blanket of commitment/We dream above the clouds of sweet romance/Moving past the sting of old rejections/We give our jaded hearts another chance/Love holds on..."

With edgier vocals in country rocker "Take Advantage of Me", Paul tells a harmless story-with-a-twist of a married couple that still has got the single's mojo going on for each other. Lyric driven and sweetly personal "A Rainy Day" is a loving look back at his pack rat mother who couldn't bear to part with, "A hundred other pick me ups you'd hidden away". After her passing, he sings, "And Mom, I miss you always/But when the sky turns from blue to gray/Tears start falling that I just can't save/For a rainy day". Paul gives a bravo-worthy performance in "Elizabeth Lately", a gorgeous Beatles' inspired ballad about a couple falling out of love: "I look into your eyes and see the question/That you look into my eyes afraid to ask/And I wish that I could give an honest answer/But I don't know if the fire's coming back".

This leads me to Rick Paul's mini-masterpiece, the Irish folk offering, "Portadown Rain", a powerful look about the untimely death of a child due to the religion-driven "troubles" in Northern Ireland. The vivid imagery of the lyrics, the understated lonesome cello and bagpipes of the production and the emotional Rod Stewart-esque vocal performance are woven together to create a 4:50 raised-hairs-on-the-back-of-my-neck moment: "It took only two to carry her through/To the place where she'd stay from now on/And I wish you had seen/What they'd done with your green/Dug a hole in the Portadown lawn...Oh, you don't wear a beret/In the old IRA/Never marched in an Orange parade/But the money you send/Turns to blood in the end/And our tears in the Portadown rain". This could be any modern day random violence, from the streets of Chicago to the mountains of northern Pakistan; nothing points to the senselessness of it more than the innocent child victim, and the devastated, often revenge-filled hearts left behind.

Check out his website: [www.RickPaul.info](http://www.RickPaul.info)

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