

TED • LEO • AND • THE • PHARMACISTS

LIVING • WITH • THE • LIVING •

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Fourth World War - The Sons Of Cain - Army Bound - Who Do You Love? - Colleen - A Bottle Of Buckie Bomb.Repeat.Bomb. - La Costa Brava - Annunciation Day/Born On Christmas Day - The Unwanted Things The Lost Brigade - The World Stops Turning - Some Beginner's Mind - The Toro And The Toreador - C.I.A.

Maybe the dilapidated garages and all-ages clubs of the East Coast post-hardcore scene of the late 80s is a fitting place to begin our story. That's where the chronicle of our era's ever-humble valedictorian, Ted Leo, really gets interesting, anyway. It was here in bands Citizen's Arrest and Animal Crackers (and later as the main song writer in Chisel) that Ted developed a sharpened political prowess, an assiduous commitment to his Gibson ES-335, an ear for melody, and charisma contagious enough to be considered chemical weaponry. A mod-punk savant in an age where punk (like practically everything intangible we've ever expressed interest in) has been replaced by product. With his latest, *Living with the Living*, Ted Leo delivers that existentialist ethos to a new crop of rude boys.

For their fifth full-length release (and first with Touch and Go Records), Ted Leo and the Pharmacists met up with Brendan Canty (Fugazi) at Long View Farms to iron out a new set of anthems that arrive with a confident and outspoken immediacy. With *Living with the Living*, Ted & Co. wipe clean the slate that once held names like Weller, Strummer and Bragg and indulge some of their farthest-reaching musical ambitions.

"Army Bound" and "La Costa Brava" evoke the melodic spirit of Andy Partridge, Ray Davies and ArgyBargy-era Squeeze, while "Colleen" is Ted's most successful meditation on pop music yet. "A Bottle of Buckie" clinks pint glasses with The Pogues and captures Ted conjuring up the rhythms of his Irish ancestry. And stretching his boundaries further still, songs like "The Toro and the Toreador", "The Lost Brigade" and "The Unwanted Things" find Ted taking his falsetto in new directions, with vocals that caress each composition with the greatest delicacy and grace.

Along with the punk sound and energy found in Ted Leo and the Pharmacists' previous works, *Living with the Living* finds soul, funk and R&B injected into the trajectory of Chris Wilson's dexterous percussion, Dave Lerner's bedrock bass and an onslaught of combustibles from Ted's possessed fingertips.

In 2005, the refrain was "roll out and make your mark, pull on your boots and march." On *Living with the Living*, Ted doesn't shy away from his convictions and, rather, invites the testing of his mettle. "You can ask, take a look; / We're all pretty open books. / What I stand for, I mostly stand behind. / What I am, I mostly can't hide."

The most indelible stamp Ted leaves on his work is an incitement to his fans to take themselves seriously, never compromise their ideals and, essentially, make a difference in theirs and the lives of those around them. It's a message of compassion not unlike that of one of Ted's denim-clad, working-class-empowering forebears. As we've learned from those artists, vital, impassioned music is often the direct result of a dire political climate, and *Living with the Living* is a shining example of that truism. A voice of dissent with a firm grasp of the past and a hopeful eye to the future, Ted Leo and the Pharmacists are rebels without a pause.

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