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HAYDEN // THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVED
PRESS CATALOGUE // 2009



THE GLOBE AND MAIL // MAY 26, 2009

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

May 26, 2009

Disc of the Week

Sharing secrets and heartache ★★★★★



Nothing weird about Hayden - a lot of people have trouble getting over breakups

Brad Wheeler

From Tuesday's Globe and Mail, Wednesday, May. 27, 2009 02:34AM EDT

The Place Where We Lived

Hayden

Hardwood/Universal

True story: I'm in a record store recently when an American dude tells me he thinks that Hayden's music is weird. How so? "Well, um, he's, you know, free-flowing." Free-flowing. Weird. Marilyn Manson and Michael Jackson, look out, here comes the crazy, shy troubadour, going bonkers with his fluid, brokenhearted introversion.

Toronto's Hayden Desser does have his moments: On 2004's Elk-Lake Serenade , he vividly imagined an old lover's demise at the paws of a killer bear; on this new album, the hand-clapped, piano-pounding Disappear has Hayden calmly thinking wicked thoughts, involving secrets that should have never got out. (Hayden could tell you those secrets, but then he'd have to kill you too.)But his peculiarity has more to do with his murmuring vocals and runny presentation, which is what you'll hear on The Place Where We Lived .

Hayden's sixth long-player, a quick turnaround from last year's In Field & Town , is an unfussy record, even though the reclusive sad sack brings on an outside producer (his friend Howie Beck) for the first time since 1998's The Closer I Get . The press sheet describes The Place Where We Lived as a combination of new songs and songs re-found that is "never laboured" and "one of his best works to date." The former assessment is closer to the mark than the latter. Certainly, this poetic, nicely packaged CD doesn't have the memorable songs of Elk-Lake Serenade .

It does have a serenade: Message from London – "You lifted my blue, passing the phone around the room ... you need to come home soon" – starts as a dozily strummed Tom Petty-like tune that breaks open with upbeat brass and spirited humming.

Living Grows on You would be one of those re-found numbers – it comes from the 2003 Denys Arcand film about morality, The Barbarian Invasions , and it is suitably ephemeral.

Indeed, the record's overall theme is one of transience, from the homesickness of the lightly shuffled, piano-dappled title track to the waltzing Never Lonely , where Hayden put on a brave face –"I drink for free, and the girls come to me" – but we're not convinced he's over an ex.

The thing is, Hayden never does seem to get over his broken relationships. And, really, there's nothing so weird about that.

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THE NATIONAL POST // MAY 25, 2009

NATIONAL POST

May 25, 2009

Daily Disc: Hayden, *The Place Where We Lived*

Posted: May 25, 2009, 11:30 AM by Ben Kaplan

Shambolic tenderness runs through the ten songs on *The Place Where We Lived*, the sixth record from Canadian singer-songwriter Hayden, whose gone by only one name since he made his first album in 1994. Over a backdrop of Wurlitzer guitar, organs and the occasional flourish of trumpet and trombone, Hayden's cracked Jeff Teedy-esque vocals reveal sad stories of Northern Ontario while an uptempo rhythm guitar places him above and beyond his navel-gazing peers.

Some credit for tone must go to producer Howie Beck, whose most recent album sounded like Elvis Costello meets the Beach Boys. While Hayden has worked alone for the past eleven years, Beck's contributions lend many of the break-up songs a toe-tapping, jukebox appeal. It takes a special talent to sing about "filling a room with sadness," in a voice which suggests a smile on the musician's face. Hayden may be pissed-off and beaten, but he's too wry to simply be sad.

A third of the album has a pronounced country and western feel. Backed up on several tracks by members of Oshawa's Cuff the Duke, saloon ballads like Never "Lonely" are given a kick in the torn denim pants thanks to steel guitars, keyboard and trombone. Indeed, on much of the record, Hayden almost sounds like Tom Petty singing with his Travelling Wilburys, a radical departure for a musician known as a hermit recording artist.

While less of a break-out album than last year's *In Field and Town*, which many believed was Canada's album of the year, this 30-minute record instead has a breezy musicality and campfire vibe. "The Valley" is an instrumental that features Hayden playing his heart out on the banjo and "Dilapidated Heart" mixes a simple acoustic guitar strum with a nasty electronic wallop to create something which sounds like a lost Neil Young and Crazy Horse tape. "I left you with so much sorrow, you just faded and wore down," Hayden sings over Howie Beck's bass and drums.

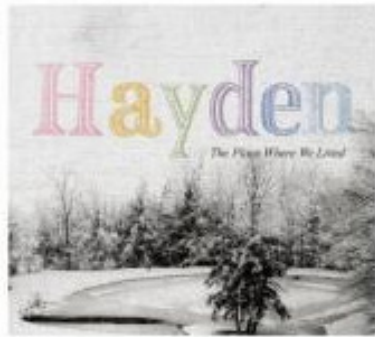
The best song on the record is called "Let's Break Up" and it's a kiss-off to an old lover whose title practically demands an exclamation mark. "If you're 'gonna leave me, don't be teasing, you need to take a stand," Hayden sings on the shuffling record which sounds like it was recorded in Nashville. "If you're going to mess up, give me a heads up, I need to make some plans." On *The Place Where We Lived*, recorded after tours with The National and Feist, Hayden indeed sounds like a man with a plan. After all, making sad songs you can dance to takes a steady, deliberate hand.

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CHARTattack

June 12, 2009

full review



MUSIC

Hayden — The Place Where We Lived

The Place Where We Lived

Hardwood

Ian Gormely (CHARTattack)

06/12/2009 1:12pm

CCCCC

Hayden's determination not to be pigeonholed continues on *The Place Where We Lived*.

This album comes hot on the heels of last year's mostly acoustic *In Field & Town*. Here, Hayden more often turns to the piano as he recounts a breakup in agonizing detail. Curiously, he uses this muse to craft some of the most pop-oriented material of his career.

"Message From London" and "When The Night Came And Took Us" are immediate standouts, and short, tight writing abounds. But make no mistake, this is still a Hayden record; though he may embrace the hooks, there's still a clear artistic vision to the album.

Over the years, Hayden's fans have proven ready and willing to follow him in whatever direction he chooses so he's in no danger of falling into obscurity. But considering the populist feel of this album, if this one doesn't finally break this guy big, there's truly no justice in this world.

TORONTO STAR // JUNE 14, 2009

TORONTO STAR

June 14, 2009

Hayden, *The Place Where We Lived* (Hardwood/Universal). Hayden Desser's talents are so understated that it's easy to overlook how far he's come as a songwriter since the basement-tape years. This is a conceptually perfect break-up record, all aching memory and empty, haunted hallways, and moments like the sadder-than-sad "Let It Last" and the wearily bitter "Never Lonely" ring so true to life that they can be a bit unmanaging in the wrong mood. Despite Hayden handing the production reins over to someone else – his good friend Howie Beck – for the first time and bringing more guests into the studio than usual (Cuff the Duke serves as backing band on a few cuts), the music maintains the same creaky folk-rock vibe established on last year's *In Field & Town*. You won't complain while it's playing, though.

Ben Rayner

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NOW // JUNE 3, 2009



June 3, 2009

DISC REVIEWS

NOW RATING

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DISC REVIEW

Hayden

The Place Where We Lived (Hardwood/Universal)

CARLA GILLIS

Hayden deserves credit for making a breakup album that refuses to sink in the face of its own sadness. Song after song offers stories about the aftershocks of a lovers' split: the nostalgic return to the couple's former home, the bittersweet long-distance messages and, my favourite, the sight of "some clown" leaving his ex's house.

Yet these country-folk tunes are melodically and rhythmically uplifting. Recorded with Howie Beck on the heels of last year's *In Field & Town*, Hayden's seventh album breaks no new ground but is compact, immediate and tenderly resigned. And though his voice may be thin and broken, the guitars, Wurlitzer, piano and horns push him forward through the bleakness like old friends calling out, "Chin up."

Top track: Let's Break Up

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EYEWEEKLY

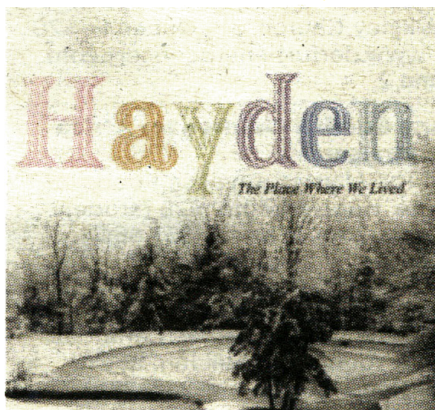
May 28, 2009

Hayden ★★★

The Place Where We Lived

HARDWOOD

That Hayden's follow-up to last year's well-received *In Field & Town* is still mellow and acoustic won't surprise anyone. He's not about to make a death metal record, nor would we want him to — he's clearly working on a more long-term project, filling in the gaps in his own folk-rock/country-pop canon where aging is met with measured unease (the melancholy "Living Grows On You"), some tempered defiance ("Never Lonely," an instant classic) but mostly wistful resignation. "Let's Break Up" is frank and funny enough to be a lost standard, and producer Howie Beck makes sure



the settings for these songs are tidy and (for my taste, a little too) neat. In its quiet way, *The Place Where We Lived* is as inaccessible to non-fans as the most hardcore death metal in existence — it deserves a fair hearing, but ultimately you either get it and love it, or you don't.

» DAVE MORRIS



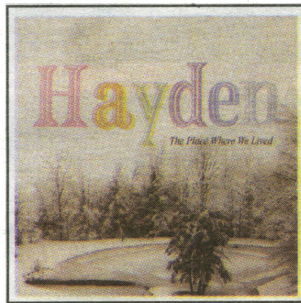
May 28, 2009

ALBUM REVIEWS

New Sounds

Hayden
The Place Where We Lived

(Hardwood)
 ★★★★★



EDEN MUNRO
 // EDEN@VUEWEEKLY.COM

Nearly 15 years have passed now since Hayden first became a fixture on the Canadian musical landscape with the lo-fi bedroom chording that marked *Everything I Long For*, and specifically the single "Bad As They Seem," the song's tortured shuffle acting as an introduction into the gloom that the songwriter worked within.

But while that early, grungy gloom has never disappeared entirely, Hayden's writing has matured over the years, each new album continuing along a logical sonic path while the lyrics reflect the thoughts and considerations of an aging songwriter.

The Place Where We Lived comes just over a year after Hayden's last album, so it's not surprising that there are no seismic shifts in style on the new record given the relatively brief—in today's milk-the-album-for-every-last-single music industry, anyway—period between releases. Like 2008's *In Field & Town*, there's a polish to the new album that has developed over time. It's not the sort of studio gleam that can be found all over pop music, though; rather, it's an elevated level of playing of the sort that comes from a decade-and-a-half of making music. Long gone are

the chugging chords of his early work, replaced by an openness in the sound, spaces that allow for subtler dynamics in place of sheer force.

The result is Hayden's exploration of a world that follows logically from his previous albums, a series of 10 songs that sees him contemplating lost love (the title track), mortality ("Living Grows On You") and the aftermath of a broken relationship. Other times he simply allows the music to speak for itself, as he does on the brief and quietly reflective instrumental "The Valley."

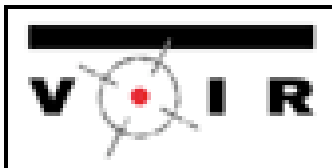
As troubled as some of the lyrics are here—"It's so sad that the memories that I have are the ones that I don't want back," he sings sadly on "Let It Last"—there is an intensity that makes it difficult to turn away as the songs unfold.

This unavoidability is exaggerated by the coupling of the lyrical side with the music, which shifts in degrees along a generally restrained line that runs between the sombre piano-with-a-hint-of-horns approach of "When the Night Came and Took Us" to something slightly—though not a lot—jauntier in "Message From London," where music and lyrics are in complete synch, and "Let's Break Up," where the two contrast joy and sadness against each other to great effect.

There's also a soulful piano-based groove on "Disappear" and a Neil Young-ish distorted rhythm on "Dilapidated Heart," making for an album cut from a nice variety of textures, and one with plenty of layers for listeners to peel back.

The Place Where We Lived is filled with snippets of life—maybe it's Hayden's, maybe it's a composite or perhaps it belongs to a fictional character—pasted together into what feels very much like a window into the good times and the bad times, along with the murky days that lie between both extremes. It's an album that draws one into its depths slowly, refraining from forcing itself upon unwilling ears by lying quietly, hushed tones whispering their secrets to anyone who dares to lean in close enough to decipher them. ♡

VOIR // JUNE 4, 2009



June 4, 2009



The Place Where We Lived

Hayden
(Hardwood/Universal)

Ma cote :
☆☆☆☆X

CRITIQUE DE VOIR



Marie H el ene Poitras

ARTICLE - 4 juin 2009

Pour la r elisation de ce sixi eme album studio, le Torontois s'est adjoint les services d'un ami-collaborateur   la sensibilit e tout   fait compatible avec la sienne: **Howie Beck**. D etail surprenant de la part de cet auteur-compositeur bien connu pour son temp erament solitaire dont le r epertoire  voque tant t l'oeuvre de Neil Young, tant t celle de Ron Sexsmith (le c ot e crooner d cal e ressort particuli erement dans la chanson qui donne son titre   l'album). Mention sp eciale pour l'adaptation d'un extrait des *Invasions barbares* de Denys Arcand (*Living Grows on You*). Riche en petits d tails, sinc ere. En plein dans la lign ee folk-rock sensible made in Canada s'appuyant aussi bien sur le piano que sur la guitare.

★★★★

GEORGIA STRAIGHT // MAY 25, 2009



May 25, 2009

Hayden goes country (sort of) on *The Place Where We Lived*

By John Lucas

Hayden

The Place Where We Lived (Hardwood)



Hayden goes country! Well, okay, not quite, but backed by members of Cuff the Duke, the Ontario tunesmith takes a few steps in that direction on *The Place Where We Lived*, the surprisingly quick (16 months!) follow-up to last year's fine *In Field & Town*. The most obvious nod toward Nashville is a short but gorgeous instrumental, "The Valley", in which keening steel guitar and harmonica weep softly over gentle acoustic-guitar and banjo picking. Elsewhere, "Let's Break Up" belies its theme with a jaunty two-step beat and a tunefully twangy guitar solo.

Paul Hayden Desser's latest isn't all about unironic John Deere caps and boot-cut Wranglers. "Dilapidated Heart", for example, boasts some off-the-rails electric six-string work that would make Crazy Horse (the band, not the Oglala Sioux warrior) sit up and take notice.

Mostly, though, it's business as usual—which, in Hayden's case, isn't a bad thing at all. He has been putting out records for 15 years, and each of them has been excellent, but Desser remains criminally underrated. Apart from a pair of Juno nominations 10 years ago (for best new solo artist and best alternative album—he lost in both categories), the guy can't even get his due from the Canadian music industry, which should really know better.

The Place Where We Lived is unlikely to rescue Hayden from cult status. The disc doesn't have any obvious potential hits on the order of "Where and When" (from *In Field & Town*) or "Home by Saturday" (from 2004's *Elk-Lake Serenade*). Even so, the already initiated will find much to love, including the title track, a tender portrait of an over-and-done relationship told through a description of the couple's former home. Equally poignant is the album-closing "Let It Last", a spare lament to sad but indelible memories that owes part of its heart-searing appeal to Australian songbird Holly Throsby, who contributes stirring harmony vocals.

Maybe Hayden is destined to remain a semi-obscure figure in the great CanCon pantheon, but at the very least he can take comfort in this fact: those who like him like him a lot.

Download This: "Let's Break Up"

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May 28, 2009

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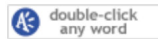
The Place Where We Lived by Hayden

GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM
FOR METRO CANADA
May 28, 2009 12:37 a.m.

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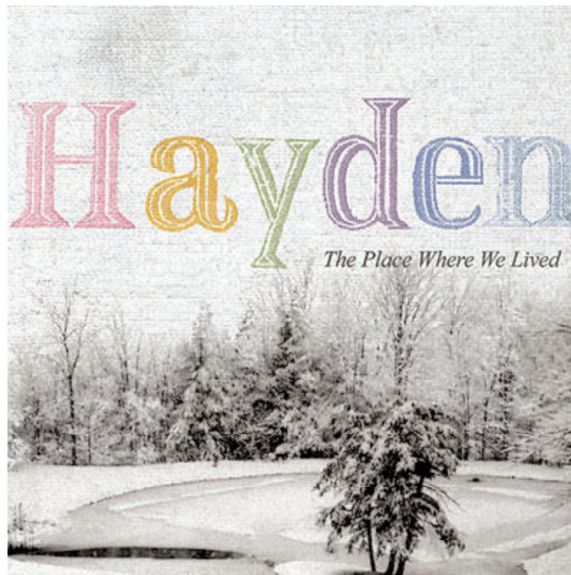
Hayden

Album: The Place Where We Lived

Label: Hardwood/Universal

Rating: ** 1/2

Sweet, shy, innocent Hayden. We all have friends like you ... hiding in their basement apartments for weeks on end, afraid to come out and admit that their girlfriend dumped them for some guy who actually has a life. There are moments on this album —like Hayden's ragged electric guitar duel with himself on Dilapidated Heart or the wonderfully self-fulfilling lyrics of Let's Break Up — that point to what Hayden could do if he would only come out and play. But Hayden, truth is that this tired act simply gets boring after awhile. This album will appeal to young women yearning to cuddle our hapless teddy bear out of his dank lair. Try a hot mug of Ovaltine. It always seems to work.



Hayden's album The Place Where We Lived

On the web

<http://www.myspace.com/hayden>



WINNIPEG FREE PRESS // JUNE 6, 2009

Winnipeg Free Press

June 6, 2009

HAYDEN

The Place Where We Lived

(Hardwood /Universal)

FOR 15 years, Toronto singer-songwriter Hayden Desser has been the prince of mope, telling sad tales in his scratchy, imperfect voice, and *The Place Where We Lived* doesn't break the mould (though the voice is higher and smoother now). Produced by Howie Beck with lots of nice country touches, this album is the perfect argument for enjoying a CD in its entirety, preferably with the liner notes and lyrics in front of you. Hayden's songcraft is low-key enough that it takes a while to penetrate, but once you've immersed yourself in it, you can't believe you didn't immediately see its charms.

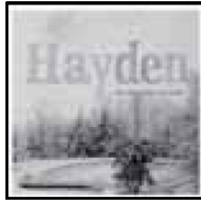
In *Living Grows on You*, Hayden's whispery voice delivers the shivers, and the austere lyrics are a perfect rumination on mortality (even if one wishes they didn't sound so arbitrarily married to the music). There are some sing-songy snoozer tracks, but the perversely jaunty roots romp *Let's Break Up* almost makes up for them, combining Hayden's lyrical acumen ("I was a half glass and you were a sad sack / together we were no good") with a tune that almost makes falling out of love worthwhile. 'Ö'Ö'Ö1/2

-- Jill Wilson

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SCENE

June 4, 2009



HAYDEN • THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVED (UNIVERSAL)

On his latest album, Canada's best-known musical recluse asked friend and producer Howie Beck to take over behind the board, brought in road buddies Cuff The Duke to act as his primary backing outfit and broke from his decade-long studio routine of playing virtually all the instruments and producing himself. The result is a generally easygoing, and for Hayden, almost light-hearted affair whose footloose feel is as much down to the material as the interplay between the songwriter and his supporting players. Although *The Place Where We Lived* includes several trademark introspective bed-sitter tunes that might teeter into the maudlin if it wasn't for the honesty of the lyrics and their delivery, a nice balance is nevertheless struck between the wry and the rueful here. – Rod Nicholson B+



CBC

June 2, 2009

CBCnews

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Things That Go Pop!

New Music 06/02: Hayden

Tuesday, June 2, 2009 | 03:33 PM ET

Love 'n' Hayden: The big news about *The Place Where We Lived*, the latest release from Canuck indie stalwart Hayden, is that for the first time in over a decade, the melancholic troubadour teamed up with a producer to spearhead the recording process. Granted, Toronto studio ace and songwriter Howie Beck isn't a new addition to the Haydenverse (his contributions provided some gorgeous sonic textures on last year's *In Field And Town*) but Beck's influence on the new album is palpable.

In the past, Hayden's recordings could occasionally feel claustrophobic. Sometimes they were so spare they nearly bowed under the weight of a prominent vocal; even the rich full-band arrangements had a lingering residue of woolly, wintry closeness. But right from the shimmering surfy guitar notes and playful surf-inspired bassline that kicks off the opening title track, *The Place Where We Lived* has a newfound sense of brightness and crispness. There's a brash swagger in the steady piano chords that dominate the foreground of the lovely march *Disappear*; *Let's Break Up* is a rollicking country number that rides a galloping upright bassline and jaunty strumming, with a silvery lightning bolt of lead guitar courtesy of ex-Heavy Blinker Dale Murray.

These shifts in tone aren't too dramatic. Hayden's still writing songs called *Dilapidated Heart* and *Let's Break Up* -- though even these are balanced by more optimistic sentiments like "living grows on you don't you know," and "I drink for free, and girls come to me. And I'm never lonely" -- and delivering his guardedly heartfelt sentiments in a crackly voice that follows parabolic arcs of melody. But the addition of Beck and tourmates Cuff The Duke, who add bright twangy touches to his winsome songs, seems to have given the singer-songwriter some much-needed breathing room. Even the sole Hayden-produced track, a beautiful instrumental centrepiece called *The Valley*, has little sunshine rays of possibility emanating from Murray's stunning pedal steel. If you're curious, Hayden's streaming a handful of tracks on his MySpace page.

--Sarah Liss

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FAST FORWARD WEEKLY // JUNE 11, 2009



June 11, 2009

CD REVIEWS

Hayden - The Place Where We Lived

Hardwood/Universal

Published June 11, 2009 *by* [Sean Marchetto](#) in [CD Reviews](#)

Despite the quick turnaround, Hayden's latest is more than a cast-off.

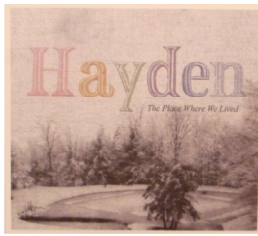
Last year's *In Field & Town* found Hayden Desser in an unusually jovial mood, and that translated into a much-appreciated sense of playfulness and a well-received album. A wry sense of melancholy humour likewise permeates Hayden's latest batch of recordings, *The Place Where We Lived*. The quick turnaround is somewhat new for Hayden, as is the appearance of members of Cuff the Duke as a backing band. However, the rustic country and western sensibilities that they bring to songs like the title track and "Never Lonely" go a long way to giving this 30-minute album its own identity, and rather than a cast-off companion piece to *In Field & Town*. As implied in the title, a feeling of nostalgia and longing, coupled at times with regret, dominates the album, but clever lines like "if you're gonna mess up/ give me a heads up/ I need to make some plans" from "Let's Break Up," matched with the band's up-tempo guitar work and rambunctious snare, never let things descend into melancholy.

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Tuesday, June 2, 2009

REVIEWS:: HAYDEN THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVED



It's no secret that the music industry has changed significantly in the last ten years. There are so many contributing factors – piracy, blogs and Myspace being the biggest instruments of change – but the end result is simple. *Music lacks icons*. No longer do talented musicians tower above us, living the lives we only dream of. As musicians trade emails with overzealous bloggers, any sense of mystique is removed and we all realize that most musicians are just awkward people and more like us than we'd like to admit.

It's hard to imagine a rock star from the 70's/80's taking the time to talk to the biggest publication, let alone a small run magazine with little understanding of music history, but in today's music scene that is exactly what happens on a daily basis. A few years ago, if you tried to tell someone that **Elvis Costello** would sit down for phoners with a high school or university aged hobbyist hoping to move units for the Momofuku release or that bands that hadn't even released an EP would have PR firms behind them and play huge European festivals, well you'd be laughed out of the bar. But this is 2009 and now that's how the music industry works.

The success of an artist is determined by the opinion of the untrained ear and inaccurate pen. Musicians are forced to pander to people that exist without accountability, and forging friendships often goes farther than the strength of the music they write. Stepping off the pulpit and into the congregation has made it virtually impossible for musicians to remain interesting. Trite remarks and attitude no longer make front page news, and arrogance is regarded as a fault. Musicians are forced to sit through pointless interviews, hoping not to offend a fickle interviewer that doesn't care if the questions have been asked countless times by countless journalists.

It's the way we operate now. Everyone knows everything about everyone. An incessant amount of social commentary from self-proclaimed experts has made the adage, "everyone has a voice", a destructive premise instead of a positive one. Sound bites and popular opinion have replaced critical thinking in everything as serious as politics to as relatively insignificant as music. Gone are the days that any press is good press. In fact, in most cases press is negative and we become so over saturated with artists that we want to see them at best fail, or at least go away.

Whether **Paul Hayden Desser** knows it or not, his promotional approach is helping solidify his image. Sure, he has some major label support behind his own imprint, but instead of falling victim to the game he essentially has removed himself from it. Rather than endless self-promotion, Desser retreats from the public eye and manages to stay somewhat of a mystery to his fans. His new record, **The Place Where We Lived**, dropped May 26th on Hardwood Records and I'm not sure anyone even knew it was coming, but other than the surprise of another Hayden record being released only 15 months or so after the last, the songs aren't that much different than his other records and strangely that makes it more appealing to me.

With each critically acclaimed but relatively uncelebrated release, you start to think of Hayden as an honest, small town song writer unconcerned with the success of his songs or the audience that will hear it. Unquestionably, you also start to think of him in better regard. His unique vocals and familiar strums are reassuring, and so is the fact we really don't know much about the man. He lives in a small town, is supremely talented and everything else is up for grabs.

Make no mistake, Hayden tries new things on **The Place Where We Lived**. First, he worked with Howie Beck and undoubtedly there are moments where the electric work falls into the realm of beautiful folk pop. He recorded it live off the floor with **Cuff the Duke** backing him up and the comfort level they have really shines through. Basically, he tried things he wanted to try and the quick hitting disc is stacked with somber and stark AND spontaneity. The horns that creep into the background of the beautiful, tender piano ballad **When The Night Came And Took Us**, the electric blasts that break the serenity of the record on **Dilapidated Heart**, the steel and banjo instrumental that comes out of nowhere or the country swing he throws into the fantastic single, **Let's Break Up** show him stretching his legs. You can see that Hayden's grown, that he's changed, but not enough for you to feel like you are different now.

No, you listen and smile knowing this sad sack is still writing the type of depressing songs we love and somehow make us smile, he just keep getting better at writing them. From the opening moments of this record, Hayden delivers ear pleasing melancholy - including the terrific song (**Message From London**) he offered up for the fantastic [YerBird comp](#) a few years back - that float buy unassumingly. Like your favorite shirt or an old book, Hayden's records are something you can reach for whenever you need him and in today's world of disposable heroes, that is something not to be taken lightly.

DOSE.CA // MAY 27, 2009



May 27, 2009

Hayden
The Place Where We Lived
(Hardwood)

Shambolic tenderness runs through the 10 songs on *The Place Where We Lived*, the sixth record from Canadian singer-songwriter Hayden, who's gone by only one name since he made his first album in 1994. Over a backdrop of Wurlitzer guitar, organs and the occasional flourish of trumpet and trombone, Hayden's cracked Jeff Tweedy-esque vocals reveal sad stories of Northern Ontario while an uptempo rhythm guitar places him above and beyond his navel-gazing peers.

Some credit for tone must go to producer Howie Beck, whose most recent album sounded like Elvis Costello meets the Beach Boys. While Hayden has worked alone for the past 11 years, Beck's contributions lend many of the break-up songs a toe-tapping, jukebox appeal. It takes a special talent to sing about "filling a room with sadness," in a voice which suggests a smile on the musician's face. Hayden may be pissed-off and beaten, but he's too wry to simply be sad.

A third of the album has a pronounced country and western feel. Backed up on several tracks by members of Oshawa's Cuff the Duke, saloon ballads like "Never Lonely" are given a kick in the torn denim pants thanks to steel guitars, keyboard and trombone. Indeed, on much of the record, Hayden almost sounds like Tom Petty singing with the Traveling Wilburys, a radical departure for a musician known as a hermit recording artist.

While less of a break-out album than last year's *In Field and Town*, which many believed was Canada's album of the year, this 30-minute record instead has a breezy musicality and campfire vibe. "The Valley" is an instrumental that features Hayden playing his heart out on the banjo and "Dilapidated Heart" mixes a simple acoustic guitar strum with a nasty electronic wallop to create something which sounds like a lost Neil Young and Crazy Horse tape. "I left you with so much sorrow, you just faded and wore down," Hayden sings over Howie Beck's bass and drums.

The best song on the record is called "Let's Break Up" and it's a kiss-off to an old lover whose title practically demands an exclamation mark. "If you're gonna leave me, don't be teasing, you need to take a stand," Hayden sings on the shuffling track. "If you're going to mess up, give me a heads up, I need to make some plans." On *The Place Where We Lived*, recorded after tours with The National and Feist, Hayden indeed sounds like a man with a plan. After all, making sad songs you can dance to takes a steady, deliberate hand.

Rating: 3.5/5

--Ben Kaplan, CNS

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NORTH SHORE NEWS // JUNE 5, 2009



June 5, 2009

Hayden returns to more electric sound on disc

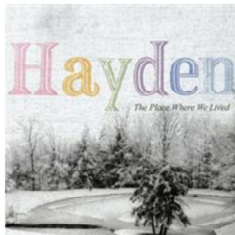
Erin Mcphee, North Shore News

Published: Friday, June 05, 2009

- Hayden -- The Place Where We Lived

(Hardwood Records)

Rating: 8 (out of 10)



Acclaimed Canadian singer/songwriter Hayden Desser is back with his sixth full-length album and while parting ways with a loved one is the focal point lyrically, it's a pleasurable ride nonetheless.

The Place Where We Lived marks a return to a more electric sound for Desser, featuring his own electric guitar stylings as well as those of members of Cuff the Duke, a band signed to his label Hardwood Records.

At the helm of The Place Where We Lived, as producer, is Howie Beck, an accomplished solo artist in his own right. Beck's latest album, How to Fall Down in Public, released in February, was well-received. Both Cuff the Duke and Beck bring an energy that paces the record a little differently than Desser's previous works, resulting in a few songs with a country rock feel. For example, the album's standout track, Let's Break Up is an up-beat, foot stomping number complete with an electric guitar solo during the bridge.

That's not to say there aren't some stripped back songs on this record as well. When the Night Came and Took Us is primarily just Desser and a piano with a few horns and bass thrown in for good measure.

The shortest period between releases of Desser's 15-year career, The Place Where We Lived comes out a year after 2008's In Field and Town. While staying true to what his fans have come to know and love, Desser's ever-earnest approach to songwriting and his seamless delivery means breaking up never felt so good.

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June 3, 2009

JESSICA'S JUKEBOX: FRESH TUNES YOU GOTTA HEAR



Hayden – *The Place Where We Lived* (Hardwood)

Hayden may be fated for anonymity as a Canadian singer, but that's why we love him so. His lost-soul persona and reclusive nature has garnered a devout following of sad boys and forlorn gals. Trust me, I'm one of them. I've said this before, but Hayden has had a place in my heart since I was a grungy teenager sitting on the floor of Oshawa's Eclipse/Moon Room listening to him crooning about bunk beds. Now, the poignant singer has impressively churned out his sixth album in just over a year after releasing the fantastic and underrated *In Field & Town*. Here, he bequeaths the producer role to pop-smith Howie Beck, who tweaks his tearful folk tales into breezy acoustic country numbers and refined up-tempo ballads. Backed by the fine twangy talents of Cuff the Duke, this is Hayden at his finest, reeling in listeners with his sorrowful songs of heartache.

Recommended if you dig ... Neil Young, Iron & Wine or Bonnie Prince Billy.



PANICMANUAL.COM // JUNE 4, 2009



Quick Review: Hayden - The Place Where We Lived [2009, Hardwood Records]

04 Jun



Toronto - Holy crap, I had no idea the girl from Heroes has such a masculine singing voice. This album seems like a rather large departure from her previous musical venture. Apparently, used this joke already.

If you didn't know, Hayden is actually Paul Hayden Dresser, a Canadian acoustic singer songwriter from Thornhill, Ontario. They have some pretty good Chinese restaurants up there, I say. Surprisingly, this is Hayden's EIGHTH LP released. Clocking in at 30 minutes, is it reeeeeeally a LP? Much like his recent work, it's quiet, mellow and acoustic (except for the electric guitar tinged Dilapidated Heart). It sounds similar to the previous album .. somewhat folky, a hint of country and something all the girls will swoon to. I guess the banjo infused "Let's Break Up" is a nice little tune that could be a soundtrack to some CBC small town drama show that will get cancelled in about 4 months.

All in all, I guess this continues the momentum that Hayden has built with his previous records, I don't think this album will draw in any new fans, but the Hayden lovers out there will definitely be satisfied.



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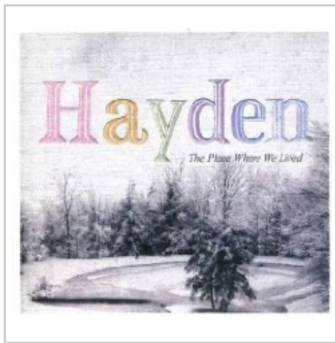
THEFIRENOTE.COM // JUNE 8, 2009

THE FIRE NOTE

RED HOT MUSIC REVIEWS

MONDAY, JUNE 08, 2009

Hayden: The Place Where We Lived



Hayden
The Place Where We Lived
Hardwood Records [2009]



Fire Drill Review:

Toronto's Hayden has always been an interesting story since his first record *Everything I Long For* [1996] put him on the scene along with MTV exposure because as most artists emerge and thrive in the spotlight, Hayden has gladly quietly drifted off the radar, while still releasing top-notch records. On his sixth LP, *The Place Where We Lived* he brings more of the same quality, while recruiting the help of Howie Beck to produce and backed by country/folk group Cuff The Duke. This clearly has influence on *The Place Where We Lived*, as songs have a slight more twang to them but with Hayden's distinct and commanding vocals the pairing works for another entertaining listen and solid record in Hayden's catalog!

Key Track: "Let's Break Up"

Band With Similar Fire: Elliott Smith

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TORONTOIST.COM // MAY 26, 2009



May 26, 2009

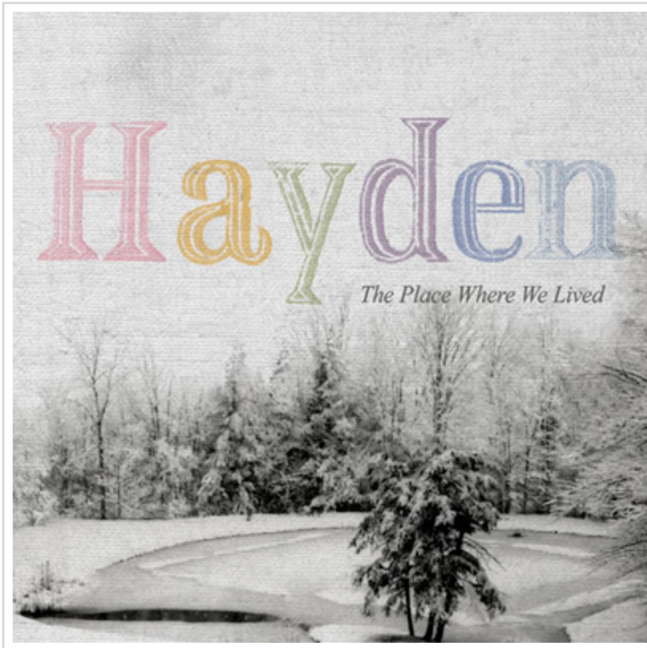
Sound Advice: *The Place Where We Lived* by Hayden

Every Tuesday, Torontoist scours record store shelves in search of the city's most notable new releases and brings you the best—or sometimes just the biggest—of what we've heard in [Sound Advice](#).

Throughout his fifteen-year career, [Hayden](#) has been travelling a leisurely path from gravelly grunge-folkie to a more refined folk-pop sound. It's a transition still in progress, and on *The Place Where We Lived*, out today on Hardwood Records, Hayden gets a little help from his friends on a fitting next chapter in his ever-expanding sad-boy saga.

Hayden's recording process has always mirrored his sound: slow, thoughtful, a bit isolated and dark. *The Place Where We Lived* is the first release since 1998's *The Closer I Get* that uses the ear and the stimulus of an outside producer—Toronto's popsmith Howie Beck—and in turn, this is the fastest album turnaround yet for Hayden. Off-the-floor full-band tracks with long-time tour-backing band Cuff the Duke are the first ear-grabbers here ("Disappear," complete with hand claps!), but fear not, long-time fans of Hayden's sober sounds; the stark, hushed piano and vocals are plentiful too, and contribute some of the most striking moments on the album ("When the Night Came and Took Us"). It's a familiar dynamic, and with the familiar lyrical musings on love gone awry, again (still?), making up the bulk of the fodder for Hayden's standard ragged anti-melodies, one can't help but hear the sarcasm dripping off of self-affirming lines like "I'm never lonely" ("Never Lonely"), or to laugh at his calling someone else the sad sack ("Let's Break Up").

With ten tracks in under thirty minutes, it's certainly not a challenging listen for the uncertain. Hayden may not be covering the newest of ground, but fans of his uber-earnest emoting will always find comfort in his sleepy voice and reluctance to get caught up anything fleeting, be it musical trends, or, you know, happiness.



By [Nicole Villeneuve](#) in [Culture](#) on May 26, 2009 4:00 PM

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Features

Sunshine Girls: May 2009 Mix



If young hearts do in fact spark fire then Sunshine Girls are only a figment of your tabloid newspaper reading soul. And if this makes absolutely no sense to you it's time to move to Canada and stop worrying about dying. Oh, you may as well stop taking advice from strangers while you're at it, too. But, from one stranger to another, please have a listen to this podcast, because, quite simply, we all need a distraction from time to time, and more often than not your hometown team will let you down.



06. Hayden - "The Place Where We Lived" - *The Place Where We Lived* [Hardwood]

See, Annie? See how easy it can be? See how simple? For the love of all things folkie!

[Hayden on MySpace](#)

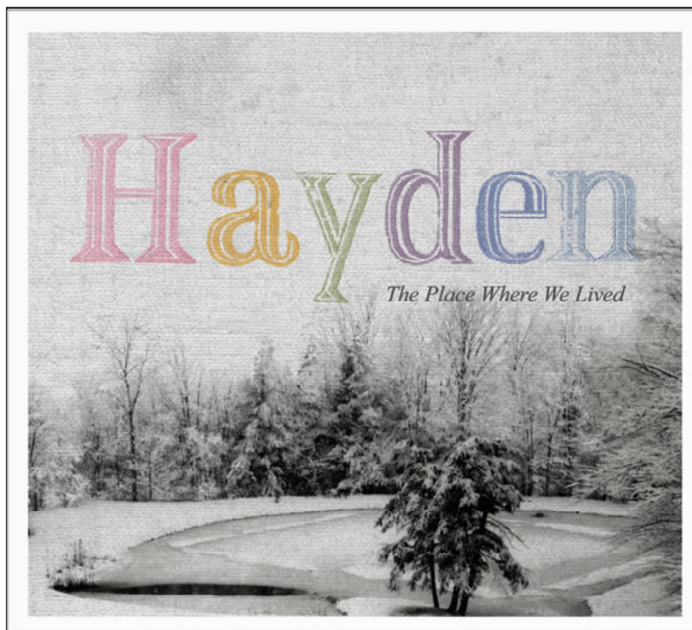
CAPTAINSDEAD.COM // MAY 29, 2009

CAPTAINS DEAD

HAYDEN'S THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVED

Written by [gregor](#) on **May 29, 2009** in [announcement](#), [new stuff](#).

[No Comments](#)



paul hayden desser aka [hayden](#), is nothing if not consistent. not like some people i know – see below. i have listened to, and continue to with semi-regularity, every record that he's put out since his debut, *everything i long for*. they are all good to great records and dont try to be something that they're not. he's not changing up the formula, he's not challenging the listener, he's just doing what he does and thats ok.

his latest, *the place where we live*, was released this past tuesday, 5.26. its everything you have come to expect from a hayden record. to be honest i find that pretty comforting.

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