

## MUSIC REVIEW: LUCERO BRINGS ON THE HORNS

October 15, 2009

By Chris Talbott

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20091015/ap\\_en\\_mu/us\\_music\\_review\\_lucero](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20091015/ap_en_mu/us_music_review_lucero)



### **Lucero, "1372 Overton Park" (Republic)**

Lucero waited three years to give us something new, and boy did it ever.

Four years removed from producing one of the decade's best country albums, "Nobody's Darlings," Lucero has remade itself into something very different.

"1372 Overton Park," the band's major label debut, is a surrender without terms to the Memphis sound, complete with horns and backup singers. The album, named for the space where members lived during the band's formative years, is painted with bright colors and big, complex sounds, completing Lucero's slow crawl away from alt-country that began with its 2006 release, "Rebels, Rogues & Sworn Brothers."

These 12 songs, propelled by Memphis session player Jim Spake's energetic horn arrangements, will blend in smoothly with Lucero's incendiary live show. The album fits in neatly with today's wave of bands looking for inspiration in Bruce Springsteen and is reminiscent of recent radio-ready work by The Hold Steady and other Boss devotees.

The perfect example here is opener "Smoke," an anthemic party song that magically blends keyboards with singer Ben Nichols' textured guitar work and whiskey-scarred voice. Other fun

entries include "Sixes and Sevens," with its sly chorus ("I've been drinking women and chasing whiskey") and backup singers, and "The Devil and Maggie Chascarillo."

The music doesn't have the emotional depth of the band's earlier work, which often reached for and achieved the status of high art. But Nichols is always on his game with tales of heartbreak, loneliness and joy.

**CHECK THIS TRACK OUT:** For a band that's made its name with up-tempo barnburners, few singers can spin a slow, emotional song like Nichols. "Mom," the closer, is stripped down and raw, one of the few tracks that harkens back to the band's early work (highlighted exquisitely on "The Attic Tapes").