

Review: Aldean blends country and rock on new CD



AP — In this album cover provided by Broken Bow records, Jason Aldean's 'My Kinda Party' is shown. (AP Photo/Broken Bow)

By MICHAEL McCALL, For The Associated Press — Mon Nov 1, 2010

Jason Aldean, "My Kinda Party" (Broken Bow)

With his fourth album, "My Kinda Party," Jason Aldean stands at the forefront of a movement combining country themes with hard-rock chords. This time out, he branches out into country rap too, on a cover of "Dirt Road Anthem," previously recorded by co-writers Colt Ford and Brantley Gilbert.

To balance his rocking sound, Aldean ties his songs to country music with stories about southern boys making noise to blow off steam — usually in a rural field with speakers stacked on the tailgate of a pickup truck, as Aldean describes in the title song.

A rare platinum-selling country act on an independent label, Aldean may rap about "swervin' like I'm George Jones," but his 21st century version of country music takes its sonic cues from rock acts like Nickelback and its rap flow from Uncle Kracker. Aldean realizes that, in the modern South, blue-collar kids are as likely to party to Jay-Z and Metallica as they are to Hank Williams Jr. and Brad Paisley.

Even Aldean's ballads take a roughneck's point of view, as in "I Ain't Ready To Quit," about enjoying his vices and his lover too much to give either up. The focus, however, is on reflecting and celebrating life in dirt-road America. More than ever, Aldean succeeds at bringing alive a demographic rarely seen or heard in the media — and he does so with a fresh sound that steers clear of lyrical cliches.

CHECK OUT THIS TRACK: On the power ballad "Don't You Wanna Stay" — a string-laden duet with Kelly Clarkson — Aldean shows what a potent vocalist he's become. Matching roof-shaking notes with his strong-lunged partner, Aldean proves he can sing as solidly as he rocks.