

FILMSTAR

GOOD MUSIC WILL PREVAIL

DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

The Big To-Do



ATO

78%

Venerable Southern rock outfit Drive-By Truckers just polished off a solid decade. They jump-started their dependability rating right out of the gates with 2001's impressive, career-catapulting double LP, *Southern Rock Opera*.

And in 2008, the Athens, Georgia, six-piece charmed our pants off with the country jukebox joint *Brighter Than Creation's Dark*. In between, their sweat-soaked and beer-battered tableaux of "the duality of the Southern thing" shook off some of the dust accumulating on the concept of a dependable rock group. Bearing all that in mind, you can excuse lead songwriters Patterson Hood, Mike Cooley and Shonna Tucker for resting on their laurels with their eighth album, *The Big To-Do*. Familiarities aside, the bifurcated storytelling duo of Hood and Cooley dip their toes into modern-day barstool tales for the first time. Tucker's contributions—particularly the lovelorn ballad "You Got Another"—are welcome divergences from old schema. Hood's Springsteenian blue-collar anthems ("This Fucking Job," "Santa Fe") go down like a fine bottle of Jack and Cooley's mirthful "Birthday Boy" and hillbilly two-stepper "Get Downtown" reticently echo the sullied character melodramas of past efforts. *The Big To-Do's* melodies may be workman-like at times, but flair was always for the flame-outs. **KYLE LEMMON**