
UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by Nutopia - 2009/03/17 21:51

Sorry if this was posted somewhere already - I don't remember seeing it. A pretty glowing review - makes me much more excited to hear this album.

UNCUT previews the upcoming Dylan release...

We now know that the new Bob Dylan album, which unexpectedly will be with us on April 27, is called Together Through Life. We know also that it was written and recorded quickly.

Dylan had been asked by the French film director Olivier Dahan, who made the Edith Piaf biopic, La Vie En Rose, which Dylan had apparently liked, to write some songs for his new movie, My Own Love Song. Dylan duly came up with a ballad called "Life Is Hard", and was so inspired the next thing anyone knew he'd written nine more new songs and not long after that - bingo! - here's Together Through Life in all its rowdy glory.

What's it sound like? Well, early reports have hinted at a mix of Dylan's beloved Chicago blues and the loping border country feel of, say, "Girl From The Red River Shore", the latter courtesy of Los Lobos' David Hidalgo, whose accordion features on every track, alongside Dylan's formidable current touring band and as yet unidentified guest musicians.

Both musical elements are indeed here, brazenly matched on nearly ever track, Hidalgo either providing lyrical lilting counterpoint to the band's hard driving blues muscle or flinging himself headlong into the fray with pumping riffs, as on the jumping "If You Ever Go To Houston" ("keep your hands in your pockets and your gun-belts tied").

The broad template for much of the album would appear to be, let's say, "Thunder On the Mountain" and "Rollin' And Tumblin'" from Modern Times, but in truth these tracks are, overall, much punchier, a raucous edge to everything in sight. Only the noble "Life Is Hard" is in the crooning style of something like "Beyond The Horizon" and even here there's a ragged edge to things that wasn't apparent on Modern Times, a rawness - emotional and musical - that separates it from that album and its immediate predecessors, "Love And Theft" and Time Out Of Mind.

Together In Life gets in your face immediately - with the wallop of the cheerfully-titled "Beyond Here Lies Nothin'", which is driven by spectacular drumming and massed horns, a trumpet prominently featured - and over the course of its 10 tracks doesn't back off, doesn't appear to even think about doing so, Dylan's voice throughout an unfettered roar, a splendid growl.

The album broadly is preoccupied with themes of mortality, lost love, grief, the passing of time, memory, waning days and lonely nights. The mood of these songs, however, couldn't be more different to the mordant reflection of, for instance, "Not Dark Yet". Together Through Life is a rowdy gut-bucket, by turns angry, funny, sassy, Dylan heading noisily in the direction of that last good night.

"My Wife's Home Town", "Shake Mama Shake" and the stingingly ironic "It's All Good" - an hilariously-wrought litany of personal and national woe - are all eventfully robust, heartily defiant.

"Forgetful Heart", meanwhile, is set to a measured stalking beat that recalls "Ain't Talkin'", while the cantina drift of "This Dream Of You", with accordion and fiddle taking lead instrumental spots, is fleetingly reminiscent of the first version of "Mississippi" on last year's Tell-Tale Signs. Elsewhere, there may be things about "Feel A Change Coming On" that will remind you of "Workingman's Blues".

On first listen, then, a great album that when it comes out and goes on repeat will get better and better.

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Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by bobbycat - 2009/03/17 22:09

Oh boy, that sounds good!

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by Derek - 2009/03/17 22:32

Damn. Can't wait.

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by Mick - 2009/03/17 23:13

sounds like MT2. oh well.

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by JudasPriest - 2009/03/17 23:29

Sounds more like L&T on afterburners to me.....whatever happened to the raw country love songs that Rolling Stone heard?? I'm as confused as I am excited!

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by Garilia - 2009/03/17 23:43

confused, excited...meh, I'm aroused!

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by walkindowntheline - 2009/03/17 23:55

talk about horns. . . could anyone see bobby adding a horn section to his troupe of traveling musicians? that would shake up things for sure.

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by zimmy1 - 2009/03/18 01:04

i cant wait !!

Re:UNCUT review of TTL

Posted by Joshua Chamberlain - 2009/03/18 03:06

Garilia wrote:
confused, excited...meh, I'm aroused!

Take two aspirin and call me in the morning.....

