



Album Review

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Xavier Rudd - Koonyum Sun

Reviewed by: Gregory Robson (05/20/10)

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Record Label: Fontana North

Release Date: April 20, 2010

Australian singer-songwriter Xavier Rudd has a voice that needs to be heard to be understood. Soaring, plaintive and deeply emotive, he sings every verse as if it were his last. There's a poignancy, intimacy and gravitas he achieves with each utterance and intonation that makes nearly every moment worth remembering. It's an achievement many artists can strive a whole career to achieve and never attain.

Author's Rating

Vocals	8.5
Musicianship	9
Lyrics	9
Production	8.25
Creativity	8.75
Lasting Value	8.25
Reviewer Tilt	8.75

Final Verdict: 86%

Member Ratings

Vocals	6.67
Musicianship	7
Lyrics	6.17
Production	6.75
Creativity	6.92
Lasting Value	4.58
Reviewer Tilt	4.58

Average: 61%



Rudd is fortunate enough to possess such a voice, but he is far from a one-trick pony. Having already garnered a sizable following for writing socially conscious songs that speak about pestilence, conservation and the plight of the Aboriginal people, he is also a favorite at music festivals for his multi-faceted live sets. It is widely documented that Rudd travels with a trunk full of instruments, including but not limited to: three didgeridoos, electric bass, banjo, stompbox, assorted percussion and an arsenal of Weissenborn slide guitars.

Returning to the blues and roots feel of his album *White Moth*, *Koonyum Sun*, his sixth studio album, marks his first studio foray with bassist Tio Moloantoa and percussionist Andie Nqubezelo. The album opens with "Sky to the Ground," a soaring, hypnotic anthem that is arguably one of the best songs he has ever written. That claim though is repeated nearly a half-dozen times before *Koonyum Sun* draws to a close. Though he's not the kind of artist to be pigeonholed, there's no denying Rudd's love of reggae. "Fresh Green Freedom," and "Time to Smile," are surefire proof of this, with the former drawing on a harmonica lick and a breezy swagger while the latter draws on banjo, bongos and a cresting chorus.

Diving into the Aboriginal landscape, he incorporates tribal chanting into the 1:40 acapella cut "Reasons We Were Blessed," and on the swampy title-track, which draws on a bellowing didgeridoo and the reedy vocals of a young child. For those that prefer music far more spartan and self-assured, look no further than the intimate reflection "Loves Comes and Goes," and the affectionate valentine "Woman Dreaming." While Vampire Weekend has drawn acclaim for drawing on Paul Simon's *Graceland*, it feels almost criminal to not lend some support and praise for Rudd, who seems to chase down the same thing.

There's an age-old adage that music is supposed to take you to a different place and make you feel better about the world, but what if music was trying to make the world a better place and make the world feel better about itself? That is the essence of what Rudd is trying to do. And thank the cosmos, he's here.

Track Listing

1. Sky to Ground *
 2. Set Me Free
 3. Fresh Green Freedom
 4. Reasons We Were Blessed
 5. Love Comes and Goes *
 6. Soften the Blow*
 7. Koonyum Sun
 8. Time to Smile*
 9. Woman Dreaming
 10. Breeze*
 11. Yandi
 12. Bleed
 13. Badimo
- *=recommended listening