



"Live/1975-85"
Bruce Springsteen
& the E Street Band
Columbia Records

Ten years ago, rock critic Jon Landau wrote: "I have seen rock 'n' roll future and its name is Bruce Springsteen." If that statement needs proof, "Live/1975-85" should suffice.

Aside from being the best American songwriter since Bob Dylan, Springsteen is one of the best American performers. A Springsteen concert, which usually lasts over four hours, is a draining experience. Few artists can keep that much energy going for that long.

Springsteen's latest release, "Live/1975-85," is a five-album set that collects performances from a 10-year period — performances in various places from small clubs to giant auditoriums across the nation. It takes almost as long as a Springsteen con-

cert to listen to the entire set.

There are songs from Springsteen's seven studio albums, songs that have never appeared on a Springsteen album, songs that other people and a few cover versions of other people's songs.

The set kicks off with an early version of "Thunder Road," the first track on the "Born to Run" album. This version, recorded in 1975, features only piano, harmonica, glockenspiel and Springsteen's incredible voice. "Born to Run" (1975), Springsteen's third album, was the album that threw him to the top of the American music scene. The other songs from that album, "Backstreets," "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" and "Born to Run," also are fantastic.

Fortunately, "Live/1975-85" includes live versions of some of the best songs from Springsteen's first two al-

bums. The live versions of "Spirit in the Night," "Growin' Up" and "It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City," from Springsteen's debut album, "Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J." (1973), are much better than the studio versions. The songs from Springsteen's second album, "The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle" (1973) "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" and the marvelous "Rosalita (Come Out Tonight)," also take on a new life.

Two of the best songs are "Candy's Room" and "Racing in the Streets," originally from the "Darkness on the Edge of Town" (1978) album. "Racing in the Streets," a ballad about a grown man who hasn't given up his high school pastime of drag racing, is slow and soulful. "Adam Raised a Cain," "Badlands," "The Promised Land" and the title track from "Darkness

on the Edge of Town" are included.

Springsteen introduces a killer version of "The River," the title track from his 1980 album, with a touching story about his father and the draft. Other songs from "The River" include "Hungry Heart," "Two Hearts," "You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)," "Independence Day" and the hard-rocking "Cadillac Ranch."

In 1982, Springsteen released "Nebraska," a solo album with music orchestrated with nothing more than acoustic guitar, harmonica and voice. On "Live/1975-85," Springsteen performs the songs from "Nebraska," "Johnny 99," "Reason to Believe" and the title track, the same way he did on the album. These live tracks, which were recorded during the "Born in the U.S.A." tour, show that Springsteen had a lot of guts to perform these non-commercial songs for an audience that knew him only from his latest album.

"Born in the U.S.A." (1984) is Springsteen's most successful album to date. Older audiences caught onto the Boss years before, but the younger, mainstream crowd made "Born in the U.S.A." one of the top-selling albums of the '80s. The live versions of "Darlington County," "Working on the Highway," "Cover Me," "I'm on Fire," "Bobby Jean," "My Hometown" and "Born in the U.S.A." are interestingly different. The acoustic version of "No Surrender" however, is a religious experience.

Springsteen fans will be thrilled to find songs that weren't available until now. "Seeds," a song written about the jobless citizens of Houston, and "Paradise by the 'C'" make it to disk for the first time. "Fire," a song written for Robert Gordon and later made into a hit

by the Pointer Sisters, and "Because the Night," a song Springsteen wrote with Patti Smith, sound great as performed by the Boss and the Band.

The songs that Springsteen takes from other artists and makes his own are fascinating. The versions of Booker T and the M.G.s' "Raise Your Hand," Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land," the Temptations' "War" and Tom Waits' "Jersey Girl" allow Springsteen to pay homage to some of his influences.

The price for "Live/1975-85" may be a bit steep, but these five albums of good, hard rock 'n' roll are almost priceless.

by Karl Pallmeyer

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