

FEEL THE BEAT

Music Review V 2.002

"Cold Mountain - Original Soundtrack" Sony Music Soundtrax

All too often, a soundtrack is released for a movie in which the music has nothing to do with the film by which it was inspired. From the first track of "Cold Mountain," listeners will realize they are in for a rare treat as the music manages to not only transport listeners back to the film, but expands and enriches the overall experience.

The movie is an epic tale of love and loss set during the final years of the Civil War. The album features a top-notch collection of contemporary musicians from varying genres. T-Bone Burnett, the Grammy-winning producer known for his work on the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" soundtrack, produces the album.

Much like the previous album, the music on "Cold Mountain" consists of soulful bluegrass music, or more precisely, the Appalachian-inflected traditional folk music that would later grow into bluegrass.

The album begins with a mournful song of hope, "Wayfaring Stranger." The oxymoronic nature of the song fits in with the poignant performance by Jack White of the White Stripes. Mostly known for his catchy punk anthems, White sings in powerful vocals that seem to harmonize along with the various string instruments used. White also contributes four other tracks, ranging from the foot stomping "Christmas Time Will Soon Be Over" to the pleasantly romantic "Never Far Away."

Alison Krauss contributes two excellent tunes, each written by different talented musicians who have strayed from their conventional musical styles. The Elvis Costello-penned "The Scarlet Side" features the soft crooning of Krauss accompanied by piano. Much like a lullaby, the song features great harmonizing.

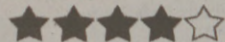
Sting writes and accompanies Krauss on "You Will Be My Ain True Love." Without departing drastically from the previous song's style, "True Love" manages to offer a harsher ballad. Heavy use of a cello helps to create an epic tone that parallels the song's somber message of the search for love among war.

Tim Erikson, Riley Baugus and Tim O'Brien turn in the moving "I Wish My Baby Was Born." From the powerful vocals to the blend of the fiddle, the song manages to convey the depression that plagues the singer.

The album track listing manages to convey a complete, whole work. Following the vocally-driven songs are four haunting tracks from Gabriel Yared. Utilizing an orchestra, Yared composes several beautiful themes for the movie. From the peaceful tranquility that Yared's themes, listeners are then shocked back into a stupor with the last track, "Idumea," from the Sacred Harp Singers at Liberty Church. The powerful a cappella track features an incredible ferocity of voices singing in strange tribal rhythm that manages to both sound

clustered and messy and harmonize in a strange and wonderful way.

"The Cold Mountain" soundtrack may easily be compared with the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" soundtrack, and it is very similar in nature. While the earlier album was a charming collection of whimsical folk music, "Cold Mountain" is haunting and epic, creating a feeling of oppression and hope at the same time. From White's amazing diversity in talent to the pleasant fiddle work, the CD features a wide collection of music that is sure to quench any folk music lover's taste.



- Robert Saucedo

Music Review V 2.002

Incubus "A Crow Left of the Murder" Epic Records

Where does one draw the line between flashing her right breast in front of a large portion of the human population and making music that matters?

The razor-thin fence between bubble-gum stardom and powerful music-making is one that is difficult to prance, but Incubus may well be standing strong right in the middle with an insanely large following and underground appeal... without all the flashing.

"A Crow Left of the Murder," Incubus' fifth release, holds many of the trademark elements of the band while pushing the envelope to the next level of music-making creativity.

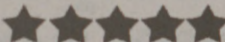
More political than the band's other efforts, their first single, "Megalomaniac," is a searing political song probably about our country's leadership that goes: "Hey megalomaniac/ You're not Jesus/ Special, as you know yourself, maniac/ Step down."

This is not the only risky tune on the album. Many of the songs are filled with themes of American society. The song "Talk shows on mute" compares humans' television-filled lives to that of George Orwell's classic novel "1984." "Sick, Sad Little World" is also a musically amazing song.

Fans of Incubus' love-drenched ditties will find that they make quite a statement with their poetic lyrics. "Southern Girl" has some great verses which say: "We'll try each other on to see if we fit and with our roots, become a tree/ To shade what we make, under it."

Lead vocalist Brandon Boyd's voice has leapt up a notch on this album. Already crowned as one of the premiere voices in rock music, Boyd extends his range, and his musicianship shines through as he sings in upper registers.

Incubus has evolved to become an even more mature and seasoned band. Its new album should not disappoint fans and will win over many listeners who were not convinced of their legitimate musicianship. Enjoy this album. It's very tasty.



- Daniel Chapman

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