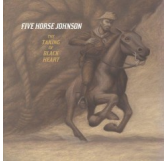


Five Horse Johnson – The Taking Of Black Heart (2013)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 03 December 2018 16:10 -

Five Horse Johnson – The Taking Of Black Heart (2013)



1 *The Job* 2 *Keep On Diggin'* 3 *Black Heart Baby* 4 *Mexico* 5 *Beating In My Hand*
6 *Quick On The Trigger* 7 *Smash & Grab* 8 *Hangin' Tree* 9 *You're My Girl (I Don't Want To Talk About It)* 10 *Shoot My Way Out* 11 *Die In The River* Bass – Steve Smith
Drums – Jean Paul Gaster Guitar – Phil Dürr Organ, Percussion – J. Robbins Vocals – Robin Zander (tracks: 9) Vocals, Guitar – Brad Coffin Vocals, Harp – Eric Oblander

Released in January 2013, *The Taking of Black Heart* literally sees retro-rock survivors Five Horse Johnson "galloping" back into action -- or at least that's the rhythmic feel of the album's opening number, "The Job," the image gracing its cover art, etc. Given all they've been through (none of it more traumatizing than frontman Eric Oblander suffering a stroke!), few would expect the group to come riding in to rescue classic rock from a fate worse than death (irrelevance), especially some six years removed from their last long-player's release. But as song after song rolls by, oftentimes driven by bluesier and rootsier songwriting ethics than 5HJ's ever displayed before, hope does spring eternal -- amen, bruvvers and sistahs, alright. Wailing harmonica and slippery slide guitars wrap themselves round and round laid-back groovers ("Keep on Diggin'," "Smash & Grab," "Die in the River") and foot-stomping bruisers alike ("Black Heart Baby," "Shoot My Way Out"), thereby luring patrons left and right into 5HJ's juke joint -- and the first shot of canned heat is on them. Heck, and if any additional credibility were needed, get a load of Cheap Trick's Robin Zander taking over the mike stand for the album's funkiest, most euphoric moment in "You're My Girl" -- Otis Redding surely would approve. Perhaps more than any other track, the latter also highlights Five Horse Johnson's enduring faith and pure joy in playing rock & roll, regardless of how many paying customers show up on any given night. They're a band's band, at the end of the day: playing to play -- and *The Taking of Black Heart* is therefore a welcome return, bringing good news to the rock & roll faithful everywhere.

---Eduardo Rivadavia, AllMusic Review

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