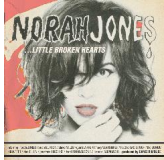


Norah Jones - Little Broken Hearts (2012)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 25 April 2012 16:08 - Last Updated Tuesday, 24 February 2015 22:01

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01 – Good Morning 02 – Say Goodbye 03 – Little Broken Hearts 04 – She’s 22 05 – Take It Back 06 – After the Fall 07 – 4 Broken Hearts [play](#) 08 – Travelin’ On [play](#) 09 – Out On the Road 10 – Happy Pills 11 – Miriam 12 – All a Dream

On 2011’s *Rome*, singer Norah Jones, producer Brian ‘Danger Mouse’ Burton, guitarist Jack White and film score composer Daniele Luppi paid homage to old Italo-Western movies with twinkling chimes, twangy guitar riffs, and notable vocal performances. While many of the instrumentals held up without words, the concept album saw new life when White and Jones took to the microphone. On the song *Black*, for example, Jones’ rich textures added a sultry layer to the reflective composition. On *Problem Queen*, she injected the same dreamy resonance into the melody, except the results were livelier than before, thanks to the track’s rolling keys and buoyant percussion. If anything could be gleaned from the project, it’s that good things happen when Jones sings atop Burton’s arrangements.

On *Little Broken Hearts*, the two musicians explore the concept of heartbreak, investigating its unpleasant aspects with refreshing candour and sardonic wit. Albums about heartbreak certainly aren’t new, but Jones puts a fresh spin on the familiar topic with lovelorn musings that are wistful and carefree, meditative and ebullient. *Good Morning*, the album’s effective opener, is a delightfully sweet blend of airy synthesizers and melancholic strings, held together by Jones’ angelic falsetto. “I’m folding my hand,” the singer softly repeats over Burton’s oceanic production. *She’s 22* carries a similar ventilated backdrop, but the result is a bit more pensive when paired with Jones’ gloomy deliberation: “You can throw away, every word I say.”

Then there’s the haunting *Miriam*, a morbidly sublime tune on which the singer threatens the woman with whom her man cheats. Here, Jones sings: “I’m gonna smile when I take your life.”

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Conversely, Happy Pills and Say Goodbye are cheery pop fare, on which the vocalist sings joyously about the break-up. Amid funky guitar grooves, Jones sounds playfully detached from said relationship. Therein lays the success of Little Broken Hearts. Unlike other disheartened recordings, some of which are more sullen than others, Jones never sounds too depressed on this set. Instead, she keeps the mood fairly moderate amongst Burton's fluid soundtrack, setting the pace with a wry bravado that makes this album a dynamic listen, even if she's dumping a guy. Heartbreak is inevitable if you love hard enough, yet Jones and Burton make it enjoyable.

--- Marcus J. Moore, BBC Review

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