

Jason Mraz – Love is a Four Letter Word (2012)

Written by bluelover

Wednesday, 18 April 2012 18:40 - Last Updated Thursday, 16 February 2017 14:34

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01 – The Freedom Song 02 – Living In The Moment 03 – The Woman I Love 04 – I Won't Give Up 05 – 56 06 – Everything Is Sound 07 – 93 Million Miles 08 – Frank D. Fixer 09 – Who's Thinking About You Now 10 – In Your Hands 11 – Be Honest (Feat. Inara George) 12 – The World As I See It

Underneath his tongue-twisting wordplay, Jason Mraz fancies himself a loverman -- and given that his greatest success came from the sticky sentiment of "I'm Yours," who can blame him for thinking this way? Nevertheless, he's never made a full-blown makeout record until *Love Is a Four Letter Word*, an album steeped in '70s soul. Mraz doesn't neglect his acoustic guitar nor does he abandon his showy verbal gymnastics, but apart from a cut or two -- including "I Won't Give Up," the album's first single -- they're buried underneath stacks of luxurious strings and thick, insistent grooves, touches that tie the record together with elegance. Mr. A-Z has hinted at soul before but he's never placed music over words, a shift of emphasis that delivers great dividends. He can still be a nasally, hyperactive twit, too eager to succumb to clever-clever puns and quips, but there's an acknowledgment that even if he can't change who he is -- witness the terribly titled "Fred D Fixer," an ode to a grandfather who lived by his hands, not his wits -- he can build upon this foundation. If all he adds is color and flair, not some serious depth, that winds up being enough: by making alterations and affecting his pose, Mraz pushes himself into new territory, creating music that's perilously close to sounding seductive. What holds *Love Is a Four Letter Word* from actually being seductive is that Mraz seems more lech than Lothario -- there's always a sense that he's around for nothing longer than a night. But, as *Love Is a Four Letter Word* plays, Mraz can convince you that his pleasures are a bit more than fleeting. It may be a lie, but it sure sounds good as it's told. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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