

Josh Groban – Awake (Special Edition) [2006]

Written by bluelover

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"Mai" (Leo Z./Andrew Sandri/Marco Marinangeli) - 4:35 # "You Are Loved (Don't Give Up)" (Thomas Salter) - first single - 4:49 # "Un Dia Llegara" (Oksana Grigorieva/Claudia Brant) - 4:18 # "February Song" (Josh Groban/Marius de Vries/John Ondrasik) - 5:12 # "L'Ultima Notte" (Marinangeli) - 4:22 # "So She Dances" (Asher Lenz/Adam Crossley) - 4:54 # "In Her Eyes" (Michael Hunter Ochs/Jeff Cohen/Andy Selby) - 4:54 # "Solo Por Ti" (Mark Hammond/Marinangeli) - 3:59 # "Now Or Never" (Groban/Imogen Heap) - 3:38 # "Un Giorno Per Noi" (Nino Rota/Lawrence Kusik/Edward A. Snyder/Alfredo Rapetti) - 5:11 # "Lullaby" (featuring Ladysmith Black Mambazo) (Groban/Dave Matthews/Jochem Van Der Saag) - 2:32 # "Weeping" (featuring Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Vusi Mahlasela) (Dan Heymann) - 4:45 # "Machine" (featuring Herbie Hancock) (Groban/Eric Mouquet/Dave Bassett) - 4:54 # "Verita" (Only available on the Special Edition) - 4:01 # "Awake" (Groban/Eric Mouquet/Dave Bassett)(Only available on the Special Edition) - 5:11

Longtime fans of Josh Groban should be pleased to know that the vocalist's third studio album, *Awake*, features more of the polished, well-crafted, and emotionally grand classical crossover pop he has become known for. In fact, the album is perhaps his most appealing and deviates little from his previous outings. Here listeners get a mix of original songs -- some co-written by Groban -- that trade between more classical/opera-oriented songs sung in Italian and more pop-oriented songs in English. Interestingly, the tracks co-penned by Groban are some of the most compelling, and showcase his knack for a kind of '60s Scott Walker baroque pop meets '80s Diane Warren adult contemporary vibe. This brings up the only problem with *Awake*, which is that as Groban's music has moved closer and closer to pop, the necessity of utilizing Italian becomes increasingly nebulous. Truthfully, barring any awkward translations, most of these songs would sound fine sung in English and generally come off as very good Italian pop songs. So, despite being quite listenable, from a mainstream pop point of view the use of Italian is great for lending the album a sheen of pan-European classical regality, but in some ways limits the emotional impact of the songs to only those who understand Italian. None of this really matters, though, to fans of Groban, who justifiably respond to his superb technique, silky tone, and bedroom eyes. It doesn't hurt either that he's brought along some unexpected guests this time around in the African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo, appearing here on two

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tracks, as well as legendary jazz pianist Herbie Hancock, who shows up on the angular and half-funky "Machine." It's also great to hear Groban dig into an adaptation of "Un Giorno Per Noi," Nino Rota's theme to Franco Zeffirelli's classic 1968 film Romeo and Juliet. The song, as Awake itself, is a grand collision of pop culture and co-opted classical themes from then and now, and perfectly embodies everything that has made Groban so successful. ---Matt Collar, AllMusic Review

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