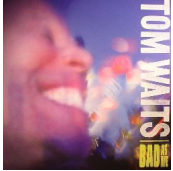


Tom Waits – Bad As Me (2011)

Written by bluelover

Monday, 21 November 2011 19:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 24 August 2017 20:44

Tom Waits – Bad As Me (2011)



01 - Chicago 02 - Raised Right Men 03 - Talking @ the Same Time 04 - Get Lost [play](#)
05 - Face to the Highway 06 - Pay Me 07 - Back in the Crowd 08 - Bad as Me 09 - Kiss Me
10 - Satisfied 11 - Last Leaf 12 - Hell Broke Luce 13 - New Year's Eve 14 - After You Die
[play](#)
+ 15. She Stole the Blush 16. Tell Me 17. After You Die

Tom Waits – vocals, guitar, piano, percussion, banjo, tablas, pump organ Marc Ribot – guitar
Clint Maedgen – saxophone Casey Waits – drums David Hidalgo – guitar, violin, percussion,
accordion, bass, background vocals Ben Jaffe – trombone, bass clarinet, tuba Charlie
Musselwhite – harmonica Patrick Warren – keyboards James Whiton – bass Keith Richards –
guitar, vocals Augie Meyers – vox organ, piano, accordion Gino Robair – percussion,
vibraphone Larry Taylor – guitar, bass Chris Grady – trumpet Flea – bass Will Bernard –
guitar Dawn Harms – violin Marcus Shelby – bass Les Claypool – bass Zack Sumner – bass

Sixty-one-year-old artists releasing the 17th studio album of their careers have normally earned the right not to make things easy for anyone. That theory should go double for song men such as Tom Waits, a bloody-minded old goat not overly given to the vagaries of commerce or fashion. He sings with a gulletful of acid reflux. He wears hats like it's 1947. There is only the one (unofficial) dubstep remix of his work online and it's not half bad.

And yet Waits's latest album is a primer of what a reality TV show host might call his best bits. It is the sort of disc you can hand to a Waits novice or sceptic with the confidence that this collection of brawlers, bawlers and bastards (as he characterised the three-way split in his work on his 2006 compilation) will do the job of conversion. All Waits is here, more or less: the barfly, the romantic, the curmudgeon, the method actor and the self-parodist. Only the clangorous experimentalist of The Black Rider is missing. Laughing along with Waits isn't hard. "Yerrr the sayme kinda bad as muy!" he yowls on the lurid, cartoonish title track, keeping up the appearance of a dissolute lowlife despite being a happily partnered-up man whose missus helps

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him write this stuff. Indeed, the terrific second track rues the lack of men "raised right", like someone ringing into a 5 Live phone-in.

"Satisfied" is another hoot. Taking its cue from the infamous Rolling Stones track, Waits demands satisfaction, but more in the florid style of an 18th-century duellist. "Now Mr Jagger! And Mr Richards! I will scratch where I been itching!" he blusters, as the very same Mr Richards struts and frets conspiratorially along on his guitar. Having cropped up as a guest on previous Waits albums, Richards lends a hand on four songs here, and it's easy to imagine Waits as having written "Bad As Me" as a love song to this twin soul.

For all the excellent clowning around, *Bad As Me* is, chiefly, an album full of compassion, anger and sorrow – the stuff that puts Waits on the same page as upstanding Bruce Springsteen and the emotional surgeon Leonard Cohen, as well as bad old Nick Cave and professional drunks the Pogues. "Pay Me" tells the story of an exile with a woozy weep that sounds both sentimentally Irish and quintessentially French. "They pay me not to come home," Waits rasps stoically. There are compromised men hitting the road here, failed relationships starting again (in "Chicago"), and lovers trying to rekindle their spark. The terrific "Kiss Me" is all vinyl hiss and jazzy antiquity, with Waits doing his gruffest bluesman growl. The warmongers and bankers get it in the neck so hard, you can't help but punch the air. "Talking at the Same Time" rues the downward turn of the economy with restrained elegance, while "Hell Broke Luce" is a lot angrier – a Waits-own rap set to left-right marching and machine gunfire. Indeed, *Bad As Me*'s 13 tracks fairly rip along, alerting a new generation that there are few as fine as Waits. ---Kitty Empire, guardian.co.uk

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