

Jessie J - Who you are [2011]

Written by bluelover

Wednesday, 29 June 2011 08:40 - Last Updated Sunday, 19 February 2017 10:17

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01. Price Tag (Ft. B.o.B) [play](#) 02. Nobody's Perfect 03. Abracadabra 04. Big White Room (Live) 05. Casualty Of Love 06. Rainbow 07. Who's Laughing Now 08. Do It Like A Dude 09. Mamma Knows Best [play](#) 10. L.O.V.E. 11. Stand Up 12. I Need This 13. Who You Are 14. Domino 15. My Shadow 16. LaserLight

Described by Justin Timberlake as "the best singer in the world right now," and a recent recipient of both the Brits Critics Choice Award, and the BBC Sound of 2011, 22-year-old Jessie J has received the kind of hype that could suffocate the careers of lesser fledgling artists before they've even begun. However, backed-up by a thriving songwriting sideline (she penned Miley Cyrus' number two Billboard smash "Party in the USA") and some solid performing credentials (she appeared in Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Whistle Down the Wind as a teen), her debut album, *Who You Are*, reveals she's more than capable of coping with the pressure. Blessed with an astonishing voice which can effortlessly shift from emotive, tender restraint to hurricane-force powerhouse in the space of three minutes, the album's 13 tracks are a vocal tour de force, which for the most part, wisely avoid the over-elaborate gymnastics of the likes of Carey and Aguilera. But *Who You Are* is more than just a showcase for her impressive set of pipes. Produced by Dr. Luke (Pink), Toby Gad (Fergie), and the Invisible Men (Sugababes), it's a highly inventive genre-straddling affair which boasts at least half-a-dozen potential chart hits. Of course, lead singles "Do It Like a Dude," a brawling fusion of rock guitars, urban beats, and tongue-in-cheek female empowerment lyrics which ooze pure swagger, and "Price Tag," a Natasha Bedingfield-esque slice of infectious, summery hip-pop featuring the laid-back tones of B.o.B., have already taken care of business. Then there are the likes of "Nobody's Perfect," whose thunderous synths, spacious drums, and splashy hi-hats recall Rihanna's anthemic "Umbrella," the beautifully understated "Casualty of Love," which echoes the classic soul balladry of Alicia Keys, and the driving pop/rock of "I Need This," a faithful rendition of the track she penned for Chris Brown's *Graffiti* album, which could all quite easily join them in the upper reaches of the charts. Elsewhere, "Big White Room" is a gorgeous stripped-back acoustic number influenced by her spell in hospital after suffering a minor stroke; "Mamma Knows Best" is a bombastic, old-school jazz number, albeit one featuring lyrics like "Always keep my Adidas

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on the ground", which could have been lifted from the recent Burlesque soundtrack, while "Who's Loving You" is a feisty stab at En Vogue-style sassy R&B, where Jessie unleashes her rather unfortunate Madonna-circa-American Life MC skills. But Who You Are doesn't always meet the same high standards. "Rainbow" is the kind of formulaic fluff you'd find on a Kesha album, "Abracadabra" sounds like a a Saturdays' B-side, while the inspirational message on the epic power ballad and closing title track is overshadowed by Jessie's occasional but irritating nails-scratched-down-a-blackboard tendency to oversing. Who You Are, therefore, isn't flawless, but it more than lives up to its weighty expectations, and in the process, heralds the long-awaited arrival of a U.K. singer who finally has the ability to compete with the Beyoncé and Lady Gagas of this world. ---Jon O'Brien, AllMusic Review

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