

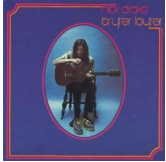
## Nick Drake - Bryter Layter (1970)

Written by bluelover

Tuesday, 17 June 2014 16:04 - Last Updated Friday, 12 May 2017 14:11

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01. Introduction 02. Hazy Jane II 03. At The Chime Of A City Clock 04. One Of These Things First 05. Hazy Jane I 06. Bryter Layter 07. Fly 08. Poor Boy 09. Northern Sky 10. Sunday  
Nick Drake – guitar, vocals Richard Thompson – guitar Dave Pegg – bass  
Dave Mattacks – drums Ray Warleigh – saxophone (alto) John Cale – organ, piano Mike Kowalski – drums Ed Carter – Ed Carter Ray Warleigh – flute Lyn Dobson – flute

With even more of the Fairport Convention crew helping him out -- including bassist Dave Pegg and drummer Dave Mattacks along with, again, a bit of help from Richard Thompson -- as well as John Cale and a variety of others, Drake tackled another excellent selection of songs on his second album. Demonstrating the abilities shown on *Five Leaves Left* didn't consist of a fluke, *Bryter Layter* featured another set of exquisitely arranged and performed tunes, with producer Joe Boyd and orchestrator Robert Kirby reprising their roles from the earlier release. Starting with the elegant instrumental "Introduction," as lovely a mood-setting piece as one would want, *Bryter Layter* indulges in a more playful sound at many points, showing that Drake was far from being a constant king of depression. While his performances remain generally low-key and his voice quietly passionate, the arrangements and surrounding musicians add a considerable amount of pep, as on the jazzy groove of the lengthy "Poor Boy." The argument could be made that this contravenes the spirit of Drake's work, but it feels more like a calmer equivalent to the genre-sliding experiments of Van Morrison at around the same time. Numbers that retain a softer approach, like "At the Chime of a City Clock," still possess a gentle drive to them. Cale's additions unsurprisingly favor the classically trained side of his personality, with particularly brilliant results on "Northern Sky." As his performances on keyboards and celeste help set the atmosphere, Drake reaches for a perfectly artful reflection on loss and loneliness and succeeds wonderfully. --- Ned Raggett, Rovi

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