

Oasis – Dig Out Your Soul (2008)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 12 October 2009 14:19 - Last Updated Sunday, 30 September 2018 21:30

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1. "Bag It Up" – 4:39 2. "The Turning" – 5:05 3. "Waiting for the Rapture" – 3:03 4. "The Shock of the Lightning" – 5:02 5. "I'm Outta Time" – 4:10 6. "(Get Off Your) High Horse Lady" – 4:07 7. "Falling Down" – 4:20 8. "To Be Where There's Life" – 4:35 9. "Ain't Got Nothin'" – 2:15 10. "The Nature of Reality" – 3:48 11. "Soldier On" – 4:49 Backing Vocals – The National In-Choir (tracks: 2) Bass, Electric Guitar, Keyboards – Gem Drums – Noel Gallagher (tracks: 1, 3, 11), Zak Starkey, Zak Starkey (tracks: 1, 3) Drums, Electric Guitar, Electronics, Keyboards, Vocals – Noel Gallagher Drums, Electric Guitar, Electronics, Tambura [Tamboura] – Andy Bell Electronics, Mellotron – Jay Darlington (tracks: 7) Mixed By, Producer – D. Sardy Vocals – Liam Gallagher

Maturity always seemed an alien concept to Oasis. The brothers Gallagher may have worshiped music made before their birth but there was no respect to their love: they stormed the rock & roll kingdom with no regard for anyone outside themselves, a narcissism that made perfect sense when they were young punks, as youth wears rebellion well, but the group's trump card was how their snottiness was leveled by their foundation in classic pop. This delicate balance was thrown out of whack after the phenomenal success of 1995's (What's the Story) Morning Glory?, when the group sunk into a pit of excess that they couldn't completely escape for almost a full decade. When Oasis did begin to re-emerge on 2005's Don't Believe the Truth they sounded like journeymen, purveyors of no-frills rock & roll.

All this makes the wallop of 2008's Dig Out Your Soul all the more bracing. Colorful and dense where Don't Believe the Truth was straightforward, Dig Out Your Soul finds Oasis reconnecting to the churning psychedelic undercurrents in their music, sounds that derive equally from mid-period Beatles and early Verve. This is heavy, murky music, as dense, brutal, and loud as Oasis has ever been, building upon the swagger of Don't Believe and containing not a hint of the hazy drift of their late-'90s records: it's what Be Here Now would have sounded like without the blizzard of cocaine and electronica paranoia. Dig Out Your Soul doesn't have much arrogance, either, as Oasis' strut has mellowed into an off-hand confidence, just like how Noel

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Gallagher's hero worship has turned into a distinct signature of his own, as his Beatlesque songs sound like nobody else's, not even the Beatles. His only real rival at this thick, surging pop is his brother Liam, who has proven a sturdy, if not especially flashy songwriter with a knack for candied Lennonesque ballads like "I'm Outta Time." To appreciate what Liam does, turn to Gem Archer's "To Be Where There's Life" and Andy Bell's "The Nature of Reality," which are enjoyable enough Oasis-by-numbers, but Liam's numbers resonate, getting stronger with repeated plays, as the best Oasis songs always do.

But, as it always does, Oasis belongs to Noel Gallagher, who pens six of the 11 songs on Dig Out Your Soul, almost every one of them possessing the same sense of inevitability that marked his best early work. Best among these are the titanic stomp of "Waiting for the Rapture" and the quicksilver kaleidoscope of "The Shock of the Lightning," a pair of songs that rank among his best, but the grinding blues-psych of "Bag It Up" and gently cascading "The Turning" aren't far behind, either. These have the large, enveloping melodies so characteristic of this work and what impresses is that he can still make music that sounds not written, but unearthed. These six tunes are Noel's strongest since Morning Glory -- so strong it's hard not to wish he wrote the whole LP himself -- but what's striking about Dig Out Your Soul is how its relentless onslaught of sound proves as enduring as the tunes. This is the sound of a mature yet restless rock band: all the brawn comes from the guitars, all the snarl comes from Liam Gallagher's vocals, who no longer sounds like a young punk but an aged, battered brawler who wears his scars proudly, which is a sentiment that can apply to the band itself. They're now survivors, filling out the vintage threads they've always worn with muscle and unapologetic style.
---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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