

Velvet Underground - Loaded (1970)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 05 June 2010 23:05 - Last Updated Tuesday, 26 March 2019 22:31

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01. *Who Loves The Sun* – 2:45
02. *Sweet Jane* – 4:04
03. *Rock & Roll* – 4:42
04. *Cool It Down* – 3:01
05. *New Age* – 5:01
06. *Head Held High* – 2:55
07. *Lonesome Cowboy Bill* – 2:42
08. *I Found A Reason* – 4:14
09. *Train Round The Bend* – 3:18
10. *Oh! Sweet Nuthin'* – 7:24

Personnel:

- Lou Reed - vocals, guitar, piano
- Doug Yule - vocals, acoustic & electric guitars, piano, organ, bass, drums
- Maureen Moe Tucker - drums
- Sterling Morrison – gitar

After The Velvet Underground cut three albums for the jazz-oriented Verve label that earned them lots of notoriety but negligible sales, the group signed with industry powerhouse Atlantic Records in 1970; label head Ahmet Ertegun supposedly asked Lou Reed to avoid sex and drugs in his songs, and instead focus on making an album "loaded with hits." Loaded was the result, and with appropriate irony it turned out to be the first VU album that made any noticeable impact on commercial radio -- and also their swan song, with Reed leaving the group shortly before its release. With John Cale long gone from the band, Doug Yule highly prominent (he sings lead on four of the ten tracks), and Maureen Tucker absent on maternity leave, this is hardly a purist's Velvet Underground album. But while Lou Reed always wrote great rock & roll songs with killer hooks, on Loaded his tunes were at last given a polished but intelligent production that made them sound like the hits they should have been, and there's no arguing

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that "Sweet Jane" and "Rock and Roll" are as joyously anthemic as anything he's ever recorded. And if this release generally maintains a tight focus on the sunny side of the VU's personality (or would that be Reed's personality?), "New Age" and "Oh! Sweet Nuthin'" prove he had hardly abandoned his contemplative side, and "Train Around the Bend" is a subtle but revealing metaphor for his weariness with the music business. Sterling Morrison once said of Loaded, "It showed that we could have, all along, made truly commercial sounding records," but just as importantly, it proved they could do so without entirely abandoning their musical personality in the process. It's a pity that notion hadn't occurred to anyone a few years earlier.

--- Mark Deming, allmusic.com

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