Green Day – 21st Century Breakdown (2009)



Act I - Heroes and Cons

- 1. "Song of The Century
- 2. "21st Century Breakdown"
- 3. "Know Your Enemy"
- 4. "¡Viva La Gloria!"
- 5. "Before the Lobotomy"
- 6. "Christian's Inferno"
- 7. "Last Night on Earth"

Act II - Charlatans and Saints

- 8. "East Jesus Nowhere"
- 9. "Peacemaker" play
- 10. "Last of the American Girls"
- 11. "Murder City (Desperate)"
- 12. "¿Viva La Gloria?"
- 13. "Restless Heart Syndrome"

Act III - Horseshoes and Handgrenades

- 14. "Horseshoes and Handgrenades"
- 15. "The Static Age"
- 16. "21 Guns" play
- 17. "American Eulogy"
 - * I. "Mass Hysteria"
 - * II. "I Don't Wanna Live in the Modern World"
- 18. "See the Light"

Band:

- * Billie Joe Armstrong lead vocals, guitar, piano
- * Tré Cool drums, percussion
- * Mike Dirnt bass guitar, backing vocals

Additional musicians:

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- * Jason Freese piano
- * Tom Kitt string arrangements
- * Patrick Warren string conducting

American Idiot was a rarity of the 21st century: a bona fide four-quadrant hit, earning critical and commercial respect, roping in new fans young and old alike. It was so big it turned Green Day into something it had never been before -- respected, serious rockers, something they were never considered during their first flight of success with Dookie. Back then, they were clearly (and proudly) slacker rebels with a natural gift for a pop hook, but American Idiot was a big album with big ideas, a political rock opera in an era devoid of both protest rock and wild ambition, so its success was a surprise. It also ratcheted up high expectations for its successor, and Green Day consciously plays toward those expectations on 2009's 21st Century Breakdown, another political rock opera that isn't an explicit seguel but could easily be mistaken for one, especially as its narrative follows a young couple through the wilderness of modern urban America. Heady stuff, but like the best rock operas, the concept doesn't get in the way of the music, which is a bit of an accomplishment because 21st Century Breakdown leaves behind the punchy '60s Who fascination for Queen and '70s Who, giving this more than its share of pomp and circumstance. Then again, puffed-up protest is kind of the point of 21st Century Breakdown: it's meant to be taken seriously, so it's not entirely surprising that Green Day fall into many of the same pompous tarpits as their heroes, ratcheting up the stately pianos, vocal harmonies, repeated musical motifs, doubled and tripled guitars, and synthesized effects that substitute for strings, then adding some orchestras for good measure. It would all sound cluttered, even turgid, if it weren't for Green Day's unerring knack for writing muscular pop and natural inclination to run clean and lean, letting only one song run over five minutes and never letting the arrangements overshadow the song. Although Green Day's other natural gift, that for impish irreverent humor, is missed -- they left it all behind on their 2008 garage rock side project Foxboro Hot Tubs -- the band manages to have 21st Century Breakdown work on a grand scale without losing either their punk or pop roots, which makes the album not only a seguel to American Idiot, but its equal. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

Po sprzedaniu 12 milionów kopii punkowej opery "American Idiot", trudno było oczekiwać, by

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zespół Green Day wrócił jeszcze do nagrywania piosenek prostych i buntowniczych. Taki styl uskuteczniał przez lata i najwyraźniej ich nowe wcielenie nie było jedynie stanem przejściowym. W bliźniaczym duchu trio Green Day nagrało "21st Century Breakdown" - historię Glorii i Christiana, pary, która narodziła się w głowie Billiego Joe Armstronga w wyniku dualizmu jego osobowości. Christian ma raczej destrukcyjne (a może nawet autodestrukcyjne?) podejście do otaczającej go rzeczywistości. Z kolei Gloria żyje marzeniami o odbuodowaniu zepsutego świata. Tak jak w przypadku poprzedniego albumu, punk nadal pozostaje tłem dla rockowego eksperymentu angażującego rozbudowane formy i orkiestrowe instrumentarium. Wbrew zapowiedziom, nie jest to power pop bliższy Foxboro Hot Tubs, a po prostu zgrabna kontynuacja docenionego przez krytykę i słuchaczy "American Idiot". Na bazie tych doświadczeń muzyka stała się jeszcze dynamiczniejsza, a odmienne kompozycje bardziej barwne. Niestety, nie jest już tak oryginalnie, jak w przypadku słynnego przewrotu w historii Green Day w 2004 roku, co jednak nie powinno wpłynąć na zmniejszenie zainteresowania ich fanów. ---M. Kubicki, audio.com.pl

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