

The Hives – Lex Hives (2012)

Written by bluesever

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01 – Come On! 02 – Go Right Ahead 03 – 1000 Answers 04 – I Want More 05 – Wait a Minute 06 – Patrolling Days 07 – Take Back the Toys 08 – Without the Money 09 – These Spectacles Reveal the Nostalgics 10 – My Time Is Coming 11 – If I Had a Cent 12 – Midnight Shifter Personnel: Howlin' Pelle Almqvist - vocals Nicholaus Arson - lead guitar/backing vocals Vigilante Carlstroem – rhythm guitar/backing vocals Dr. Matt Destruction – bass guitar Chris Dangerous – drums + Gustav Bendt - saxophone Per Ruskträsk Johansson - saxophone Jonas Kullhammar - saxophone

Swedish garage rock band The Hives have released their first full-length album in five years, but don't stray far from their signature style.

The album, titled "Lex Hives," is irritatingly hyper-repetitive at times. The opening track, "Come on," consists only of the lyrics "everybody come on," sung over a canned track of a cheering crowd. Intended as a pump-up album opener, the result is mildly depressing. An opener doesn't need to be mind boggling, but it should set the stage for what the album will be, not repeat the same meager chorus over and over to fake enthusiasm.

In "1000 Answers," The Hives attempt to breakdown the lingo of every womanizing male. "I got a thousand answers, one's gotta be right / Give me a thousand chances and I'll get it right." Unfortunately, this guess-and-check method seems to be the approach they took with their songwriting as well. The album lacks coherency and seems almost like The Hives slapped together a bunch of songs that didn't necessarily work together. They didn't try anything new, and carelessly released a mediocre album to satisfy their eagerly awaiting fans, who only had only the three cover songs of 2010's "Tarred and Feathered" EP to appease them.

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In “Go Right Ahead” and “Midnight Shifter,” my ears perked up a bit. I heard something that the rest of the album sorely lacked—instrumental diversity. These tracks, shocking as it may be, included a saxophone. I would have liked to see more instrumentals on the album. The saxophone seemed to digress as soon as it emerged.

In “Without the Money,” frontman Pelle Almqvist falls a little flat when attempting to carry on a gospel-reminiscent song that seemed to rely heavily on vocals. When he returns to the status quo of wailing on “These Spectacles Reveal the Nostalgics” and “Patrolling Days,” he seems to be at his strongest. The vocals are one area in which The Hives should stick to what has worked for them.

The band’s recording situation could account for a lot of the incoherence and inconsistent quality of the album. “Lex Hives” was self-produced, and was recorded over the course of two years in many studios with eight different engineers. That being said, it manages to do what The Hives have always attempted to do: make their audience tap their toes, kick back and have a good time. As a longtime fan, I genuinely enjoyed listening to the album. It just left me wanting a little more from them.

While The Hives certainly don’t have a highbrow-art reputation to live up to like many of their rock counterparts, it still would have been nice for fans to receive an album with some more sophistication or at least diversification of style. Though it has enough punch to be a fan pleaser and enough sound reminiscent of their early-2000’s style to please critics, as a whole, the album feels utterly forgettable, despite their promising performance and great stage presence on the Coachella webcast. Those who wanted another installation of the same catchy, sing-along music will not be let down, but those who desire more should look elsewhere. ---
Emily Wells, highlandernews.org

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