

The National – Trouble Will Find Me (2013)

Written by bluesever

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01 – I Should Live in Salt 02 – Demons 03 – Don't Swallow the Cap 04 – Fireproof 05 – Sea of Love 06 – Heavenfaced 07 – This Is the Last Time 08 – Graceless 09 – Slipped 10 – I Need My Girl 11 – Humiliation 12 – Pink Rabbits 13 – Hard to Find 14 – Learning Band members: Matt Berninger - lead vocals Aaron Dessner - guitar, keyboards Bryce Dessner - guitar, keyboards, orchestration Bryan Devendorf - drums, percussion Scott Devendorf - bass guitar

Remote and reserved, the National has never been a crowd-pleaser, with an aesthetic favoring prickly lyricism and unadorned musicianship, the flashiness and hooks kept to a bare minimum. Yet despite these reticent qualities, the group has always been accessible, their stoicism belying a low-key, neurotic charm, anchored by the quiet bluster of frontman Matt Berninger's lyrics, which explore disillusionment and self-doubt with consistently wry flatness. However, even with their brushes with mainstream success, the band seems increasingly intent on guarding their mystique rather than developing it, issuing another aloof album that will likely further narrow their appeal.

Trouble Will Find Me arrives as the end result of a years-long process; each effort since their 2005 breakthrough, *Alligator*, has been leaner and more taciturn than the last. The similarity between songs and static pacing that made many condemn 2007's *Boxer* have only become more ingrained, and by now it's clear that this is less a weakness than a stylistic choice, granting the music a drugged, somnolent feel. It's a tone that certainly suits accounts of suburban ennui like "Humiliation," which skirts surrealism while remaining rooted in the real world via Berninger's serious delivery, or lead single "Demons," in which the singer masterfully rhymes an entire line with a single exasperated "fuck."

Still, despite the overall solidness of the presentation, there's not a lot to latch onto here. The

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band has pared down the lyricism into something beguilingly simplistic, dropping the character sketches and developed structures for a system of detached couplets, free-floating images, and goofy bon mots. Rife with repetition, these lyrical passages are suspended within languid, often unexpressive rock, which limits the climactic moments to some tinkling piano keys, skittering snare drum, or an ominous cello yawn.

It's a style that feels like a definitive dead end, which leads to questions of where the National will take their sound next. If they're to be believed, the planned follow-up to *Trouble Will Find Me* is a relative lark, in which they'll release their recent MoMA PS1 art-installation set, a six-hour-long version of High Violet's "Sorrow." Whatever the future holds, the National has definitely entrenched themselves in a style that requires some level of endurance to appreciate; few bands are so unwelcoming and unambitious at the same time. So while *Trouble Will Find Me* remains well crafted and satisfying, there's something inherently stultifying about it as well. ---Jess Cataldo, slantmagazine.com

Trouble Will Find Me to szósty studyjny album rezydującej na nowojorskim Brooklynie amerykańskiej grupy indierockowej The National. Po dwudziestu dwóch miesiącach trasy koncertowej, promującej poprzedni album *High Violet*, dzięki któremu formacja zyskała miano najsmutniejszego zespołu świata, muzycy ponownie weszli do studia nagraniowego.

Trouble Will Find You jest inny w porównaniu do pięciu poprzednich albumów The National. Sami muzycy przyznają, że praca nad nim przebiegała inaczej niż zwykle. Trwałe zmęczenie i niewyspanie powodowały, że pomysły pozostawały niedopieczzone. Nie oznacza to jednak, że przestali zagłębiać się w świat kompozycji i klasycznych tekstów, tworząc muzykę dla mas. Pomysły wszystkich artystów zazębiały się, układając pierwszy album, w którym można wyczuć zaskakujący optymizm i nutę radosnego słońca.

Płyta *Trouble Will Find You*, jak przystało na The Nation, nie jest łatwa w odbiorze. Skomplikowane struktury rytmiczne, wysublimowane melodie i pozytywne teksty wprowadzają charakterystyczny nastrój melancholii. Pojawiają się także utwory z subtelną aranżacją (*Fireproof* czy *I Need My Girl*) zrównoważone zadziornymi kawałkami (*Gracelass* czy *Demons*). Nie zabrakło również emocjonalnego podejścia do wokali, które szczególnie można odczuć w *Pink Rabbits* i *Slipped*. ---empik.com

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