

## Bon Jovi - The Circle (2009)

Written by bluesever

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1. *We Weren't Born To Follow* 4:03
2. *When We Were Beautiful* 5:18
3. *Work For The Working Man* 4:04
4. *Superman Tonight* 5:12
5. *Bullet* 3:50
6. *Thorn In My Side* 4:05
7. *Live Before You Die* 4:18
8. *Brokenpromiseland* 4:57
9. *Love's The Only Rule* 4:38
10. *Fast Cars* 3:16
11. *Happy Now* 4:21
12. *Learn To Love* 4:39

Personnel    Jon Bon Jovi – lead vocals, rhythm guitar    Richie Sambora – lead guitar, backing vocals    Hugh McDonald – bass guitar, backing vocals    Tico Torres – drums  
David Bryan – keyboards, backing vocals    +    Hugh McDonald - bass guitar    Charlie Judge - additional keyboards and strings

New Jersey rockers Bon Jovi return with their eleventh album and are reunited with Lost Highway producer John Shanks, fresh from recent stints working with Take That and Alesha Dixon.

Bon Jovi fans, and there's plenty of them, who have not been put off by recent output will find plenty to love here. The band long ago developed into a slick, stadium-filling act, and although this album marks a slight return to their more traditional rock roots after the Nashville-influenced Lost Highway, not much has changed. Like a hairier and less-subtle version of Bruce Springsteen, they like to give voice to the blue-collar worker and refuse to progress stylistically beyond a form that's served them so well already.

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Long-standing bands often believe their own hype; indeed, they are often the last ones left believing it, and someone's clearly exploded a lyrical cliché bomb in the studio here. They've even titled a song Live Before You Die, which is wrong on too many levels to even begin listing here. There is no denying their skill with a tune, but there is the lingering sense that were Flight of the Conchords to do a heavy metal pastiche of, say, millionaires sticking it to the 'man', it would sound exactly like Work for the Working Man. It is commendable that Jon Bon Jovi can keep a straight face while writing lines such as "working man, empty pockets full of worry / had to get two jobs", presumably referring to a rock star's need for an acting career on the side.

That said, other than the band, few listen to Bon Jovi with a straight face, and stupid grins are to be found. The atmospheric Broken Promiseland could be lifted from Slippery When Wet, while swelling keyboards herald moments of genuine emotion, such as on Fast Cars. Love's the Only Rule also utilises synthesized strings to great effect, and perhaps illustrates where referees are going wrong around the country.

The Circle is not going to surprise anyone, but maybe in such turbulent times this is exactly what people need: dependable drive-time rock dripping with references to getting up from your knees and not giving up. ---Tom Hocknell, BBC Review

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