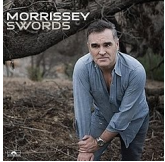


Morrissey - Swords (2009)

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Morrissey - Swords (2009)



01. Good Looking Man About Town 02. Don't Make Fun Of Daddy's Voice 03. If You Don't Like Me, Don't Look At Me 04. Ganglord 05. My Dearest Love 06. The Never-Played Symphonies 07. Sweetie Pie 08. Christian Dior 09. Shame Is The Name (With Chrissie Hynde) 10. Munich Air Disaster 1958 11. I Knew I Was Next 12. It's Hard To Walk Tall When You're Small 13. Teenage Dad On His Estate 14. Children In Pieces 15. Friday Mourning 16. My Life Is A Succession Of People Saying Goodbye 17. Drive-In Saturday (Live) 18. Because Of My Poor Education

While Morrissey is no stranger to the world of B-sides and rarities compilations, the series of three albums in his new millennium comeback represent a particularly fertile creative era for one of pop's most idiosyncratic wordsmiths and fussbudgets. Considering the quality of the singles drawn from *You Are the Quarry*, *Ringleader of the Tormentors*, and *Years of Refusal*, it's an utter disappointment that *Swords*, the collection of B-sides from those singles, is so uneven. "The Never-Played Symphonies" comes from the perspective of a man on his deathbed; even if the song is given some gravity by Morrissey's recent on-stage collapse, it perhaps better represents his flair for the grandiose. Along with the lush, extravagant "Christian Dior," "Symphonies" stands as one of the few highlights scattered among a great deal of over-written tracks. "Don't Make Fun of Daddy's Voice" squanders a delicious title with a punchline that falls flat both as comedy and self-referential metaphor ("When he was a teenage boy/Something got stuck in his throat"), while the swampy "Ganglord" takes swipes at the LAPD that sound badly dated and lack any true first-person authenticity. The molasses-thick production on "Ganglord" is just one of the misfires, with "Sweetie-Pie" dragging on interminably and the harmony vocal from Chrissie Hynde smothered in the mix on "Shame Is the Name." With just a few exceptions, it isn't hard to hear why these tracks were relegated to B-sides. A bonus disc of live performances that includes some of Morrissey's best tracks from this era, including "I'm Throwing My Arms Around Paris" and "I Just Want to See the Boy Happy," plus a terrific cover of David Bowie's "Drive-In Saturday" that pays tribute to the New York Dolls, is what ultimately salvages the collection. Even with these live cuts, though, *Swords* doesn't have a particularly sharp point. ---Jonathan Keefe, slantmagazine.com

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