

Nick Drake - Pink Moon (1972)

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01. Pink Moon 02. Place To Be 03. Road 04. Which Will 05. Horn 06. Things Behind The Sun 07. Know 08. Parasite 09. Free Ride 10. Harvest Breed 11. From The Morning
Nick Drake - Composer, Guitar, Guitar (Acoustic), Piano, Vocals

After two albums of tastefully orchestrated folk-pop, albeit some of the least demonstrative and most affecting around, Drake chose a radical change for what turned out to be his final album. Not even half-an-hour long, with 11 short songs and no more -- he famously remarked at the time that he simply had no more to record -- *Pink Moon* more than anything else is the record that made Drake the cult figure he remains. Specifically, *Pink Moon* is the bleakest of them all; that the likes of Belle and Sebastian are fans of Drake may be clear enough, but it's doubtful they could ever achieve the calm, focused anguish of this album, as harrowing as it is attractive. No side musicians or outside performers help this time around -- it's simply Drake and Drake alone on vocals, acoustic guitar, and a bit of piano, recorded by regular producer Joe Boyd but otherwise untouched by anyone else. The lead-off title track was eventually used in a Volkswagen commercial nearly 30 years later, giving him another renewed burst of appreciation -- one of life's many ironies, in that such an affecting song, Drake's softly keened singing and gentle strumming, could turn up in such a strange context. The remainder of the album follows the same general path, with Drake's elegant melancholia avoiding sounding pretentious in the least thanks to his continued embrace of simple, tender vocalizing. Meanwhile, the sheer majesty of his guitar playing -- consider the opening notes of "Road" or "Parasite" -- makes for a breathless wonder to behold. --- Ned Raggett, Rovi

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