

MIX TAPE MUSINGS

CD reviews of indie artists

 Melissa Kucirek

Go All In for 'Exile'

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As The Band draws obvious comparisons to Radiohead and Coldplay, but from track one, A.S. makes its case.



By **Melissa Kucirek** on Feb 3, 2013

For the last decade or so, every time a piano, swooping guitar riffs and a modern rock outfit rock are mentioned, the instant comparison is Coldplay. Rightfully so, it seems, that the eclectic duo, [As The Band](#) (A.S.) draws strong correlations and dramatic vocals in the stirring *Exile*. This mesmerizing package unfolds like a diary, leaving the listener emotionally changed.

In the opener, "Do What You Want," the mood is dark. It is melancholy, but not Depeche Mode or early The Cure doom and gloom. It is dark as in Danny Elfman and aristocratic like the theme song from *Downton Abbey* (probably not, but like most people this writer/listener is currently obsessed with this show and it is obviously seeping itself into this story. Just go with it. Don't fight it). The vocals reach a high falsetto at perfect moments much like Radiohead and Silverchair ([Ana's Song](#)).

Soul Invasion

What is most amazing is the instant feeling that this band is worldly; their viewpoint is not American. They have this aura and bountiful music bed that thrusts years of classical influence onto a soundscape.

In the title track, this very complex layer of music invades the listener. The percussion sounds a bit fabricated, but the vocals are mesmerizing. The orchestration is very modern and at times feels so intuned, so a part of the listener, it is as if one is levitating to the airy force. "Exile" is amazing.

"Time" invades the soul. The piano keys bleed with this sharp arrangement, meshed against baritone vocals and percussion that crushes at the ears just like the waves crash against the beach rocks, interrupting a conversation.

At this point, this writer/listener felt euphoric and drained at the same time. It is not to say that these songs put one in a bad place emotionally, they just seem to take hold of a more somber part of one's state. In "Fast", "Probable Cause" and "Invisible Kiss," A.S. captures the listener's attention with a vast wall of sound.

"Pleasure and Pain" evokes a dark beauty. The delay in vocals between stanzas is shocking, yet understandable. The vocals seem to sweep lazily alongside, only to burst out like a wound. "Fall In" (a song just under six minutes) has this endearing acoustic guitar intro. The guitar strings seem to wrap themselves around the subtle orchestration. In true form, A.S. changes the tempo of the song and burts into moving chorus.

"Why the Hell Not?" and "Reasonable Doubts" (acoustic) conclude the CD in familiar territory and take the listener into a reflective state-of-mind. Wow.

Don't Resist

Overall, *Exile* garners an A+ review. This one really took an emotional toll on this writer/listener. It is a challenge to listen to each track - the first instinct is to resist the daunting orchestrations and morose moods. Fear not, this journey is worth taking. Fans of Coldplay, Radiohead, Snow Patrol, Echo and the Bunnymen and Vega will see the connection and like what they hear.



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