

Keith Lowell Jensen - 'Cats Made of Rabbits'

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9/26/2011

Stand-up comedy albums are always difficult to review, especially when it's the first time you've heard the comedian in question. Often they make the most sense to someone who is already familiar with a comedian's act - a souvenir of a great performance or a way to take your favorite taped performance on a road trip. Like



any live entertainment, part of the magic of the event is lost in hearing disembodied cheers coming from speakers and that holds especially true for comedy. Some essential pieces of an act - like Chris Rock's constant pacing, for example - are completely lost on listeners who can't come across that final hurdle to being there.

The album format, then, is really a test of a comic's ability to tell stories. Thankfully, that is what Keith Lowell Jensen can do right. The only problem, then, is that Jensen takes a couple minutes to get it. *Cats Made out of Rabbits* opens with a couple minutes of slightly dull jokes, taking the easy opener route of talking about junk emails and pregnancy. These are pretty standard topics for comedy, and it seems as if Jensen has some difficulty finding his footing in the more "safe" areas. As he gets deeper into his set, however, things get more interesting. Jensen seems to warm up to his audience and go from a timid, shaky tone to one more befitting someone telling jokes to a room full of people.

"Into the Woods" marks the departure into more original stories, ones based on life experiences that are relatable, but uniquely Jensen's to tell. The nearly nine-minute joke centers around Jensen going to see the BMX course his 11 year-old nephew built in the woods, and highlights the type of disconnect everyone feels in dealing with people of drastically different ages. This story serves as a perfect segue into "Less Delightful Fruit," which contains probably the best bit

on the album. Here Jensen really seems in his element, taking the audience through a rant on "the good old days" that turns into a story about trespassing on a farm before ending up at a truly bizarre discussion of dreams.

Jensen's act is at its strongest when he is weaving stories down bizarre pathways, and they are what make the album's middle its most engaging moments. Strangely enough, the self-professed "atheist comedian" has his weakest moments when he is actually discussing religion.

His religious material isn't as biting as George Carlin's, or as clever as Patton Oswalt's "Sky Cake" segment off 2009's *My Weakness Is Strong*. The atheist bit seems to go for surface-level jokes, and one bit about Mormons going door-to-door seems awfully similar to one found on Robin Williams's *Live on Broadway*. While it is important for comedians to build a persona, Jensen seems like he may be selling himself on the wrong front. Ultimately, his best material comes from the way he interacts with people, not the debatably-there Almighty.

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