

America - Struttin' Our Stuff / 2004 Inakustik / 17 Tracks /
<http://www.in-akustik.com> / Reviewed 18 August 2006

America is an act that had their years of fame well before I was even born. Of course, individuals can still here "A Horse With No Name" on any classic rock radio station. The band is closing in on the forty-year mark, and do not show any hints of age on this recording. The guitar work of these compositions is still crisp and clear. If a band would have lost it in the mean time, individuals would be able to hear that during this recording; live performances are much harder to doctor than studio recordings. Even if the only thing that is currently being played on radio station is "A Horse With No Name", the rest of the tracks on "Struttin' Our Stuff" are fun and full of energy.

The two things that stand out clearest on this CD have to be the vocals and guitar work. The other pieces of the band, while still important to contributing a full sound, do not add as much to it as those two aforementioned pieces of the puzzle. In fact, a song like "Ventura Highway" seems to be extraordinarily influential, with a sound that is tied to the jam band sound of the nineties and the current period. When the other singer starts up "You Can Do Music", the style differences between the two is something that listeners will have to get used to if they have not heard the band in the past. Why the band is still together is shown during songs like "You Can Do Magic".

There are a number of different levels at which the track works, and America is able to create a full sounding sound with little beyond the vocals, guitars, drums, and bass on the track. Doing that, it is no surprise that they were able to hold their own during this time period. This is not a short concert, as America themselves go on for over an hour. Pulling songs from all periods of their existence as a band, America is able to tell a tale in which all listeners are included. The styles are different ("Daisy Jane" and anything else on the disc, for example), but this only adds to the interesting tale that the band has to tell. The band may be closing in on their fortieth year of existence, but the freshness of these compositions should bring in listeners by the boatful.

Top Tracks: Wheels Are Turning, A Horse With No Name

Rating: 7.0/10

-James McQuiston
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