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Music Review: Victor Krummenacher - *The Cock Crows At Sunrise*

by **El Bicho**

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Founding member and bassist of Camper Van Beethoven releases his fifth solo album, *The Cock Crows At Sunrise*. It is a wonderful collection about love and longing, sin and regret, as the characters struggle to make it through life and their choices. The album appears to be a series of interconnected short stories due to Victor's repeated use of motifs and imagery throughout his lyrics. The music is a great sampling of Americana; bits of Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans create a melting pot soundscape that accentuates every song.



The album opens with “Sunday Morning Blues,” a slow, shuffling number out of the southern swamps about a faithless man searching for redemption after his perfect plan for betrayal fails. The song offers a glimmer of hope for the narrator as the cock only crows twice. Its moody guitar and organ bring to mind Chris Isaak while Victor's voice sounds closer to Lyle Lovett.

“If I Could Ride That Train” can catch you off guard when he sings about finding “my way back to him/And... redemption in his kiss.” I wondered what type of relationship he was singing about, until “C’Mon Miss Nancy” where he implores her to leave town with him. It’s great to see that Victor serves the story and doesn’t limit himself to only telling tales from a male’s point of view.

An accordion solos into “Morphine Conceals 1,000 Sins” and an organ creates a dreamy, floating sense. The narrator sings about having “No remorse and no regrets and no second guessing,” yet he sings about a boy who drowned. Did he have any connection to it? Could that be one of the sins he is concealing? It’s certainly plausible considering the subject matter of other songs. “In The Queen City The Girls Are Weeping” because of the murder of Old Billy by that song’s narrator while the narrator of “I Have Always Loved A Party” explains that “A dead boy’s running back to me.”

A betrayal of another type occurs in the funky, horn-driven “He Gave Me A Diamond.” A woman knew her husband wasn’t an upstanding citizen, so she “never asked where it came from.” She loses him after he loses everything, but first he goes on a three-day drunk. Then he leaves her behind without explanation, heading out of town before being found.

Diamonds also appear on the album’s cover, in the gambling tale “Jack of Diamonds,” and “My Baby’s Brown Hair” where the narrator, a prostitute, tries to clean her account with an old man by paying with a diamond. The latter song is a crawling epic. The organ sounds fantastic as it unwinds at its leisure on the bridges. The lyrics reference a previous song when the old man “says sure/ Morphine conceals a thousand sins.” The way the songs connect the old man very well could be the man who hustles out of town in “He Gave Me A Diamond.”

Every listen to *The Cock Crows At Sunrise* enriches the experience and reveals connections within that could well be just in my mind and not what Victor intended, but the potential inter-connectedness makes the album a

Video for My Baby’s Brown Hair:



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1. Mark Saleski
[18 March 2007 21:21](#)
1

he said ‘cock’. huh, huh...huh...huh,huh,huh.

seriously tho, really cool tune there. man, i hadn’t thought about Camper in years.

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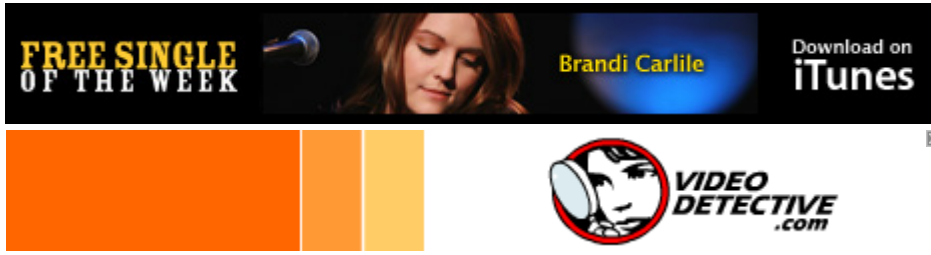
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