

Ben Harper – Welcome To The Cruel World (1994)

Written by bluesever

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01. *The Three Of Us* 2:35 02. *Whipping Boy* 5:31 03. *Breakin' Down* 4:00 04. *Don't Take That Attitude To Your Grave* 4:25 05. *Waiting On An Angel* 3:53 06. *Mama's Got A Girlfriend Now* 2:29 07. *Forever* 3:23 08. *Like A King* 4:18 09. *Pleasure And Pain* 3:44 10. *Walk Away* 3:49 11. *How Many Miles Must We March?* 3:07 12. *Welcome To The Cruel World* 5:36 13. *I'll Rise* 3:35 Ben Harper- (Vocals, Acoustic & Electric Guitar, Dobro); Taylor- (Background Vocals); Suzie Katayama- (Cello); Richard Cook- (Uilleann Pipes); Gail Deadrick- (Piano); Jelani Jones, Kevin Williams, Clyde Allen, Clarence Butler, Clabe Hangan, Kenneth McDaniel, John John McKnight- (Accordion, Bass); Rock Deadrick- (Drums, Percussion, Background Vocals).

The full range of Ben Harper's influences would not come to bear until later albums, but his debut, *Welcome to the Cruel World*, lays a strong foundation. "Like a King" and "Take That Attitude to Your Grave" burn with a political conviction rarely heard during the 1990s. "Forever" has a tenderness which demonstrates Harper's emotional range. Lackluster hippie jams that cultivated his early following may have served a purpose but feel fluffy by comparison when compared to the meatier tracks. Ben closes the album with a song that frequently closes his concerts, "I'll Rise." This song, built around Maya Angelou's 1979 poem "And Still I Rise," reminds one of art's ability to pierce through society, self, and the soul. --- Ryan Randall Goble, Rovi

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