

Robin Trower – What Lies Beneath (2009)09

Written by bluesever

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1. "Wish You Were Mine" 4:02 2. "What Lies Beneath" 3:30 3. "As You Watch The City Fall (Part 1)" 3:25 4. "As You Watch The City Fall (Part 2)" 2:12 5. "Freefall" 3:05 6. "Once The Spell Is Broken" 4:57 7. "Sleeping On The Moon" 3:40 8. "Time And Emotion" 4:39 9. "Skin And Bone" 3:04 10. "Buffalo Blues" 4:56 11. "Find A Place" 4:51
Personnel: Robin Trower - guitar, vocals Livingston Brown - bass guitar Sam Van Essen - drums Roger Cotton - organ Andrew Haveron & Clare Hinton - strings Chris Taggart - drums on tracks 2, 8 & 9

Though Robin Trower found his greatest career success in the mid-'70s, his intensely soulful brand of Jimi Hendrix-inspired psychedelic blues-rock guitar playing helped him maintain a healthy audience decades past his commercial heyday. During his long career he worked with several different singers, most notably ex-Stone the Crows bassist James Dewar, who, along with drummer Bill Lordan, constituted the "classic" Robin Trower band lineup found on the legendary albums *Live!* and *Bridge of Sighs*. Surprisingly, however, Trower himself never assumed sole lead vocal duties until 2009's *What Lies Beneath*. Fortunately, the veteran rocker was revealed to be possessed of wonderfully earthy, R&B-influenced pipes often reminiscent of J.J. Cale and Dire Straits' Mark Knopfler. On the majority of tracks, including highlights "Time and Emotion" and "Wish You Were Mine," the London native favors a mellower, more ethereal approach that will please lovers of vintage fan favorites "Daydream" and "I Can't Wait Much Longer." That said, there are a few nods to Trower's "Day of the Eagle"/"Too Rolling Stoned"-style power blues numbers of yore, especially on the viciously funky, Thin Lizzy-esque "Skin and Bone" and the muscular, hooky "Freefall." As with the majority of Robin Trower's catalog, however, the most striking feature about *What Lies Beneath* is the man's utter mastery of electric guitar tone and phrasing. Though the vocals and songwriting are appealingly solid, it's the deeply emotional warmth of Trower's subtly magnificent Stratocaster work that will put listeners under the virtuoso axe slinger's aural spell. ---Pemberton Roach, Rovi

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