

## Chris Isaak – Mister Lucky (2009)

Written by bluelover

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1. *Cheater's Town*
2. *We Let Her Down*
3. *You Don't Cry Like I Do*
4. *We've Got Tomorrow*
5. *Breaking Apart (duet with Trisha Yearwood)*
6. *Baby Baby*
7. *Mr. Lonely Man*
8. *I Lose My Heart (with Michelle Branch)*
9. *Summer Holiday*
10. *Best I Ever Had*
11. *We Lost Our Way*
12. *Very Pretty Girl*
13. *Take My Heart*
14. *Big Wide Wonderful World*

Mr. Lucky is the first album Chris Isaak has released in seven years but it's hard to call it a comeback: it's been so long since Isaak had something approaching a crossover hit that it's hard to say that he's been away, that he has something to come back from -- he just appears every few years, such as in March of 2009, when Mr. Lucky appeared as part of a coordinated multimedia attack. In addition to this new album, Isaak has a new talk show on A&E -- like Elvis Costello's Spectacle but on basic cable -- and Mr. Lucky isn't strictly a soundtrack for the show, but it's fair to say that the show gives Mr. Lucky a larger potential audience than any Isaak album in a long time, probably since the last time he had a television show in the early-2000s sitcom The Chris Isaak Show. Given this bigger platform, it makes perfect sense that Mr. Lucky feels carefully considered: from its production to its construction, it's a deliberate attempt to modernize Isaak's retro obsessions without abandoning them. Usually, this modernization surfaces in echoey atmospherics partway between U2 and Coldplay, textures that suit his melodramatic Roy Orbison tributes. Mr. Lucky works because Isaak and crew don't overplay

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their hand -- he's never swallowed in waves of digital delay, the way Roy himself was on his swan song, Mystery Girl -- but tweak subtly, then alternate these coolly romantic mood pieces with swinging rockabilly, sly low-key grooves, duets with Trisha Yearwood and Michelle Branch, breezy pop that harks back to a time prior to the British Invasion, and a big, glitzy Vegas number to close the whole show. As a sensibility, it's no different than anything Isaak's done, so the difference is the execution, not just in the light, fresh touch of the production but the songs, which are his strongest in a long time -- and that's good enough to please his longtime fans as well as anybody whose interest might be piqued by the new show. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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