

Linkin Park – Minutes To Midnight (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Wake* 2. *Given Up* 3. *Leave Out All The Rest* 4. *Bleed it Out* 5. *Shadow of The Day*
6. *What I've Done* 7. *Hands Held High* 8. *No More Sorrow* 9. *Valentine's Day* 10. *In Between* 11. *In Pieces* 12. *The Little Things Give You Away* Chester Bennington – vocals; rhythm guitar (5) Mike Shinoda – vocals, rap vocals (4,7), rhythm guitar, piano Brad Delson – lead guitar Dave "Phoenix" Farrell – bass; backing vocals (12) Joseph Hahn – turntables, sampling Rob Bourdon – drums, percussion + David Campbell – string arrangements and conducting Charlie Bisharat – violin Mario DeLeon – violin Armen Garabedian – violin Julian Hallmark – violin Gerry Hilera – violin Songa Lee-Kitto – violin Natalie Leggett – violin Josefina Vergara – violin Sara Parkins – violin Matt Funes – viola Andrew Picken – viola Larry Corbett – cello Suzie Katayama – cello Oscar Hidalgo – bass

Damned if they do, damned if they don't -- that was the conundrum facing Linkin Park when it came time to deliver *Minutes to Midnight*, their third album. It had been four years since their last, 2003's *Meteora*, which itself was essentially a continuation of the rap-rock of their 2000 debut, *Hybrid Theory*, the blockbuster that was one of the biggest rock hits of the new millennium. On that album, Linkin Park sounded tense and nervous, they sounded wiry -- rap-rock without the maliciousness that pulsed through mock-rockers like Limp Bizkit. Linkin Park seemed to come by their alienation honestly, plus they had hooks and a visceral power that connected with millions of listeners, many of whom who were satisfied by the familiarity of *Meteora*. They may have been able to give their fans more of the same on their sophomore effort, but Linkin Park couldn't do the same thing on their third record: they would seem like one-trick ponies, so they'd be better off to acknowledge their advancing age and try to mature, or broaden their sonic palette. Yet like many other hard rockers, they were the kind of band whose audience either didn't want change or outgrew the group -- and considering that it had been a full seven years between *Hybrid Theory* and *Minutes to Midnight*, many fans who were on the verge of getting their driver's license in 2000 were now leaving college and, along with it, adolescent angst.

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So, Linkin Park decided to embrace the inevitable and jumped headfirst into maturity on Minutes to Midnight, which meant that poor Mike Shinoda was effectively benched, rapping on just two songs. In many ways, it seems like even the guitarists were benched this time around, since Minutes to Midnight doesn't really rock, it broods. Apart from a handful of ringers -- "Given Up," the Shinoda-fueled "Bleed It Out," easily the best, most visceral track here -- this is quiet, atmospheric stuff, dabbling with electronic textures that were cutting edge in 1996 but sound passé now. Also sounding passé are the tortured musings of lead singer Chester Bennington, who still is tormented by love, loss, family, any number of items that sound convincing coming from a man in his early twenties, but not so much so when the thirties are approaching rapidly. And yet the way Bennington and his mates, shepherded by producer Rick Rubin, try to sound mature isn't always convincing, either, possibly because it sounds like a skate punk uncomfortably trying on his big brother's suit. They have the chops to rock, and when they deign to do so on Minutes to Midnight they sound comfortable, they sound right, but too often they run away from this core strength. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

Fani to taki specyficzny podgatunek człowieka. Od swoich idoli wymagają, by czymś ich zaskakiwali, ale zarazem by byli ciągle tacy sami. Najprostszym wyjściem dla sztukmistrzów z tej patowej sytuacji, jest nieoglądanie się na innych i robienie tego, na co akurat w danej chwili ma się ochotę.

Jestem już z tej generacji, dla której takie (niezrozumiałe dla starszych fanów rocka) zespoły jak Linkin Park są istotne. Wszystkie studyjne płyty chłopaków na półce mam, przy "In The End" banią machałem do teledysku w Vivie. Ale pewne rzeczy są domeną przeszłości, i doskonale rozumiem, że nie wolno stać w miejscu i trzeba się rozwijać.

Linkin Park stworzył swego czasu popową efemerydę opartą o ciężkie rockowe gitary i hip-hopowy vibe. Słowo "popową" napisałem w pełni świadomy swoich słów. Dla mnie Amerykanie od zawsze grali pop. To, że zarzeźbili od czasu do czasu mocniejszym motywem na wiośle nigdy mnie nie zmyliło. To był zawsze "radio friendly" zespół, którego mocne refreny miały po prostu dobrze "rockujące" serduszka młodzieży.

Toteż zupełnie nie rozumiem utyskiwań i narzekań fanów na "Minutes To Midnight". Duch pozostał ten sam. Muzycy po prostu zdjęli maski i nagrali płytę szczerą. Nie od dziś wiadomo, że gdy za produkcję albumu bierze się Rick Rubin zespół jakoś dociera do sedna swego

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brzmienia. Tak było z Red Hot Chili Peppers, ze Slipknot na "Vol. 3", czy nawet ostatnio Metallicą. I to w brodatym jegomościu, mistrzu konsolety, upatruje katalizatora przemian muzyki Linkin Park.

A jak już wspomniałem, oblicze "Minutes To Midnight" jest jawnie popowe... I dobrze! Wolę słuchać mainstreamowej muzyki, która niekiedy romansuje z mocniejszą gitarą ("No More Sorrow") albo posiada ciekawy aranż ("In Pieces") niż słuchać kolejnych hitów diamentowych suk.

Starego brzmienia Linkin Park nie ma na "Minutes To Midnight" (no może trochę w "No More Sorrow" i "Valentine's Day"). Mamy za to tutaj różnorodną (choć lekko przeballadowaną) mainstreamową muzykę, która jednak gdy chce to pobuja. Amerykanie dojrżeli do zmian, i do tego by pokazać swe prawdziwe oblicze. Do odważnych świat należy. ---Grzegorz Żurek, magazyngitarzysta.pl

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