

Nickelback - Here And Now (2011)

Written by bluesever

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01. *This Means War* 02. *Bottoms Up* 03. *When We Stand Together* [play](#) 04. *Midnight Queen* [play](#)
05. *Gotta Get Me Some* 06. *Lullaby* 07. *Kiss It Goodbye* 08. *Trying Not To Love You* 09. *Holding On To Heaven* 10. *Everything I Wanna Do* 11. *Don't Ever Let It End*
Musicians: Chad Kroeger – vocals, guitar Ryan Peake – guitar, backing vocals Mike Kroeger – bass, backing vocals Daniel Adair – drums, backing vocals

Nickelback seems to hold a special place in critics' hearts. Seldom has a band drawn such slings and arrows. It's as if every time one of their fans buys a Nickelback album— and they've bought more than 50 million of them— a critic's puppy gets kicked and evil edges one step closer to winning.

Please. That's such wasted energy. There's always been a space for acts that folks in the flyover states love and that snobs on the coasts hate (I can say that since I'm originally from North Carolina). Or to put it in political language, even though they are from Canada, Nickelback is about as red state a band as ever existed.

On "Here and Now," out today, Chad Kroeger and the boys do nothing to endear themselves to any of their haters, including those 50,000+ people who signed a petition protesting the band's halftime performance during Thanksgiving's Detroit Lions/Green Bay Packers game.

Instead, the meat-and-potatoes rockers have stuck with a tried-and-true formula of well-crafted songs that celebrate their common-man status (despite their presumably millionaire savings accounts) and love for pliant strippers, a certain leafy plant, and all forms of alcohol.

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Nickelback is back to producing themselves, but the lessons learned from working with uber-producer Mutt Lange on 2008's "Dark Horse" remain: Even if there's little here that possesses the potential stickiness of 2005's mega-smash "Photograph," the songs on "Here and Now" are tightly-coiled bullet blasts with little bloat for the most part starting with opening slab "This Means War." Ryan Peake's gunfire guitar work and Kroeger's screaming chorus give notice that they aren't going down without a fight. It's a rallying cry that permeates much of the rest of the album.

The first two singles, released simultaneously — the party-til-you-puke-or-pass-out anthem "Bottoms Up" and the strumming, acoustic "When We Stand Together," which addresses world hunger among other societal ills — demonstrate the inherent paradox in Nickelback.

What undoubtedly confuses folks is that Nickelback can go from these Neanderthal anthems about women who will "lick my pistol clean" on "Midnight Queen" and that reduce men to their absolute basest urges and women to cartoon playthings to songs that uplift and inspire, such as "Lullaby" which is a soothing love letter to someone who is contemplating suicide. Guess what? You're thinking too hard about it. Trust me, the members of Nickelback hasn't spent a minute contemplating why they can have hits with such seemingly disparate songs as "Rockstar" and "If Everyone Cared." They're too busy spending their money on the next lap dance or buying a new Maserati.

What's a little harder to reconcile is their ability to totally objectify women and compare them to cars and turn around and write love songs that resonate with equal validity. The best of the trio of love tunes on "Here and Now" is "Don't Ever Let It End," a song, that quite frankly, is so sweet that the Kroeger who's singing on "This Means War" would punch out the wimpy Kroeger who's singing this love ode and push him into a locker. Despite that, it's a punchy pop song that has a great melody and lovely harmonies.

If you're looking for innovation, Nickelback's music has always been the wrong place and when the band tries to experiment, the results are spotty at best, such as on "Everything I Wanna Do," a mess of a song that mashes up metal, rock, weird pastiches of electronica, and distorted vocals. I bet it was a blast to create in the studio, but it should have stayed off the record. Same with the fuzzy stomp of "Kiss It Goodbye," which attempts to reinforce Nickelback's outsider status. --- Melinda Newman, hitfix.com

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