

Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers - Echo (1999)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Room At The Top* 5:01 2 *Counting On You* 4:05 3 *Free Girl Now* 3:30 4 *Lonesome Sundown* 4:32 5 *Swingin'* 5:30 6 *Accused Of Love* 2:45 7 *Echo* 6:37 8 *Won't Last Long* 4:22 9 *Billy The Kid* 4:09 10 *I Don't Wanna Fight* 2:48 11 *This One's For Me* 2:42 12 *No More* 3:16 13 *About To Give Out* 3:13 14 *Rhino Skin* 3:57 15 *One More Day, One More Night* 5:38 Acoustic Guitar, Electric Guitar, Backing Vocals – Scott Thurston Bass Guitar, Backing Vocals – Howie Epstein Drums – Steve Ferrone Guitar [Lead], Bass – Mike Campbell Percussion – Lenny Castro Piano, Electric Piano, Organ, Mellotron [Chamberlin], Clavinet – Benmont Tench Vocals, Guitar, Harmonica – Tom Petty

Although the stripped-down, immediate production of *She's the One* was reminiscent of *Wildflowers*, Tom Petty's forays into Lindsey Buckingham-inspired pop turned out to be a passing thing, since *Echo*, his first full-fledged record with the Heartbreakers since 1991's *Into the Great Wide Open*, is an extension of *Wildflowers*, at least in terms of sound and feel. The weird thing is, *Echo* sounds like a sinewy band recording, but its sentiment makes it feel like a solo record. To be blunt, much of *Echo* feels like a by-product of Petty's divorce from his wife of over 20 years; even the intoxicating hard rock of "Free Girl Now" has a layer of sorrow and regret. That weary melancholy is the bond that keeps *Echo* together, bridging the gap between the ballads and the rockers, providing an emotional touchstone that makes the record more than just another Petty record. Then again, the music on *Echo* manages to sound like every other Petty album, yet it stays fresh. Petty, Mike Campbell, and Rick Rubin (along with some help from George Drakoulias) keep the spirit of *Wildflowers* alive by keeping the production uncluttered, direct, and muscular -- which just reveals what a strong, versatile band the Heartbreakers are. And while there are no surprises, Petty once again delivers an album that works as a whole while having several clear highlights -- which is a pretty neat trick, actually. At times, the disc feels a little long, but all the pieces work individually and illustrate that Petty is the rare rocker who knows how to mature gracefully. Although the album is spiked with sadness and regret, nothing on the album feels forced or self-conscious, either lyrically or musically -- and he is one of the few rockers of his generation that can make such a claim.---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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