

Soul Asylum - Change Of Fortune (2016)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Supersonic* 3:00 2 *Can't Help It* 3:00 3 *Doomsday* 2:58 4 *Ladies Man* 3:22 5 *Moonshine* 4:03 6 *Make It Real* 2:19 7 *When I See You* 3:46 8 *Dealing* 4:04 9 *Don't Bother Me* 3:28 10 *Morgan's Dog* 3:35 11 *Change Of Fortune* 2:55 12 *Cool* 2:55 Ian Allison Moog Synthesizer, Synthesizer Bass Michael Bland Drums, Keyboards, Vocals (Background) Dan Lawonn Cello John Fields Bass, Guitar, Keyboards, Mixing, Percussion, Producer Dave Pirner Bass, Guitar, Keyboards, Percussion, Trumpet, Vocals Winston Royce Guitar (Bass), Vocals (Background) Justin Sharbono Guitar, Moog Synthesizer, Vocals (Background), Wurlitzer

In 2016, Dave Pirner is the last man standing in Soul Asylum. The band's co-founder, guitarist Dan Murphy, retired in late 2012, making Pirner the band's only original member and uncontested leader on their 11th studio album, *Change of Fortune*. Murphy's last album with SA, *Delayed Reaction*, was their liveliest and best focused album in years. But while *Change of Fortune* is certainly energetic, that sense of focus is gone, and these 12 songs wander all over the place. With Murphy gone, Pirner has infused the band's trademark hard rock/punk hybrid with pop and R&B accents, laying in plenty of keyboards along with the guitars. Even the Led Zep-flavored guitar groove of "Can't Help It" has a funky undertow, and "Make It Real" plays more like a '90s dance track than Soul Asylum. There's nothing wrong with Pirner giving Soul Asylum's approach an update, but this batch of songs doesn't find a new groove so much as muddy the group's attack. New guitarist Justin Sharbono and bassist Winston Royce play well, and drummer Michael Bland knows what to do with the band's new rhythmic diversity. But these songs are too rock to work as pop tunes, and too diluted to connect as rockers, and the studio trickery on "Ladies Man" and "Dealing" is mostly clutter. And sadly, Pirner stumbles most as a lyricist when he's writing something that clearly matters to him. Easily the worst offender in this respect is "Morgan's Dog," a clumsy and puzzling mess about a kid who shoots his dog. Producer John Fields has given *Change of Fortune* a polished sound and an inviting surface. But the songs just don't carry the weight, and this album inspires little confidence in Soul Asylum's creative future with Pirner at the helm. ---Mark Deming, AllMusic Review

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