

Ben Harper - Burn To Shine (1999)

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1. *Alone* 3:58 2. *The Woman In You* 5:41 3. *Less* 4:05 4. *Two Hands Of A Prayer* 7:50
5. *Please Bleed* 4:37 6. *Suzie Blue* 4:29 7. *Steal My Kisses* 4:05 8. *Burn To Shine* 3:34 9. *Show Me A Little Shame* 3:44 10. *Forgiven* 5:17 11. *Beloved One* 4:03 12. *In The Lord's Arms* 3:06
Ben Harper - guitar, vocals Richard Barnes - washboard Bruce Bishop - guitar Jim Bogen - clarinet Eve Butler - violin Dean Butterworth - drums, snare drums Jon Clarke - English horn, oboe Joel Derouin - violin Tyrone Downie - keyboards Michael Fay - banjo David Firman - bass Matt Funes - viola Suzie Katayama - cello David Leach - percussion James Leigh - trombone David Lindley - banjo, fiddle, mandolin Juan Nelson - bass Real Time Jazz Band Nick Rich - human beatbox Eric Sarafin - piano, harmonium, recorder

Burn to Shine presents proof positive that you can always distill the essence of rock & roll down to a solitary man alone with his guitar and conscience. It sounds inventive yet firmly rooted in the blues-rock singer/songwriter/guitarist tradition of Taj Mahal and of Neil Young and Cat Stevens at their most confessional. Harper's guitar with falsetto vocal in "The Woman in You" even suggests a Curtis Mayfield tune in the hands of Prince. "Steal My Kisses" is one of those uncluttered, radio-friendly rock shuffles that simply makes you bob your head and feel better. Even Harper's detours -- like the wobbling New Orleans shuffle with the Real Time Jazz Band, "Suzie Blue," and charred Black Sabbath metal in "Less" -- prove worth exploring. Other cameos include guitarists David Lindley and former Bob Marley sideman Tyrone Downey. Burn to Shine is a minor masterpiece that may prove to be not so minor. ---Chris Slaweki, Rovi

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