Don McLean – Believers (1981)



1 Castles In The Air 3:42 2 Isn't It Strange 4:18 3 Left For Dead On The Road Of Love 2:57 4 Believers 6:15 5 Sea Man 4:11 6 I Tune The World Out 3:33 7 Love Hurts 3:08 8 Jerusalem 4:44 9 Love Letters 3:59 10 Crazy Eyes 2:58 11 Sea Cruise 3:03 12 Dream Lover 3:47 Backing Vocals – The Jordanaires Bass – Bob Moore Bass [Six Strings] – Leon Rhodes Drums – Gene Chrisman, Jerry Carrigan Guitar – Billy Sanford, Don McLean, Jerry Shook, James Capps, Ray Edenton, Steve Chapman Percussion – Ronald Vaughn Piano – David Briggs, Hargus "Pig" Robbins Producer – Larry Butler Saxophone – Dennis Solee Strings – Sheldon Kurland Strings

Who would have expected that Believers -- part of the second phase of Don McLean's career -- would not only be one of his strongest albums of his whole career, but a solidly competitive singer/songwriter effort, even as late as 1981? Or that it holds up on CD in the 21st century? It would be easy to say that Believers is worth picking up just for McLean's re-recording of "Castles in the Air" -- ten years after he first wrote and recorded it, McLean gave the song more warmth and feeling than the earlier rendition and, in doing so, proved just how special the song was to him. But the remainder of the album is every bit as strong, if not as familiar as "Castles in the Air" (which became a worldwide hit in this version): the slightly bluesy "Isn't It Strange," an irony-laced lament about love that is wryly clever in its bittersweet exploration of men's and women's foibles; "Left for Dead on the Road of Love," a punchy roots rock-style number that recalls John Fogerty; and the very bluesy "Believers," with what sounds like a National Steel guitar, mixing '30s and '80s sounds in a very neat, tight, and catchy package, which pretty well sums up this album. Believers did fairly well at the time of its release, owing to the presence of "Castles in the Air," and the Hip-O Records CD reissue is about as essential listening as any of his best United Artists albums. ---Bruce Eder, AllMusic Review

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