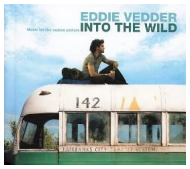
Eddie Vedder - Into The Wild (2007)



1 Setting Forth 1:37 2 No Ceiling 1:34 3 Far Behind 2:15 4 Rise 2:36 5 Long Nights 2:31 6 Tuolumne 1:00 7 Hard Sun 5:22 8 Society 3:56 9 The Wolf 1:32 10 End Of The Road 3:19 11.1 Guaranteed 2:40 11.2 (silence) 2:00 11.3 Guaranteed (Humming Vocal) 2:43 Eddie Vedder - solo performer + Jerry Hannan - Guitar, Backing Vocals (8) Corin Tucker - Backing Vocals (7) Track 11 contains the hidden track 'Guaranteed (Humming Vocal)', starting after about two minutes of silence following the regular version of 'Guaranteed'.

Eddie Vedder's Into the Wild is a collection of nine original songs and two covers for Sean Penn's film of the same name, based on Jon Krakauer's novel. The novel and film are concerned with the short life of Christopher J. McCandless, an honor student and athlete who literally walked away from his life, donated his 24,000 dollars in savings to Oxfam, and left what he perceived to be a sick society behind. He stepped into the hinterlands of Alaska and never returned. He eventually died of starvation. Penn handpicked Vedder to score the project. Vedder in turn came up with this collection of folksy, rootsy tunes where rock & roll makes fleeting appearances (most notably on the opener, "Setting Forth," and the first single, "Hard Sun"). It's a true solo project in that he played virtually everything on the set, and had help in only two places, backing vocals by Corin Tucker on "Hard Sun" (written by Gordon Peterson), and a little extra acoustic guitar assistance and backing vocals from Jerry Hannan on "Society," a tune Hannan authored. That said, these songs stretch Vedder to the breaking point as a writer. There are no enormous emotive vocal explosions like there are on Pearl Jam records save for one restrained attempt near the end of the album. As the cycle begins on "Setting Forth" ("Be it of no concern/Point of no return/Go forward in reverse/This I will recall/Every time I fall..."), the notion of walking away is one of "for good." The rest of the record deals with existential questions of losing everything in order simply to lose it and find something undetermined instead, rather than in terms of absolute "freedom." Vedder does a fine job of letting the listener know the cost in "No Ceiling" and "Far Behind." On "Long Nights," one gets the picture that the singer is whistling past the graveyard: "Have no fear/For when I'm alone/I'll be better off/Than I was before/I've got this life/I'll be around to grow/Who I was before/I cannot recall/Long nights allow/Me to feel I'm falling/I am falling...." These songs all feel like a score,

and that's not necessarily a good thing. They all seem to be of a piece, but musically there isn't enough imagination to distinguish them, to set the tension of dynamic in motion. There's something telling in the fact that "Hard Sun" is the single, because it's the only song that moves above the fray in terms of color, texture, and emotion. Most of the rest -- with the exception of an all too brief organ and voice tune called "The Wolf," which is where the well of Vedder's power as a singer gets touched but never dug -- is an extended meditation on this existential notion of freedom, and the words begin to repeat, even as the recording draws to a close. There is a poet at work here, but in some ways, outside the context of the images, the notion of a man freezing and starving to death even as he embraces beauty is a tough sell with a solid wall of calm enveloping the listener -- meaning that simple is fine but difficult is another, and Into the Wild contains not enough of either to really reach out and grab the listener, let alone convince. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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