

The Strokes - Comedown Machine (2013)

Wpisany przez bluesever

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01. Tap Out 02. All the Time 03. One Way Trigger 04. Welcome to Japan 05. 80?s Comedown Machine 06. 50/50 07. Slow Animals 08. Partners In Crime 09. Chances 10. Happy Endings 11. Call It Fate, Call It Karma Musicians: Julian Casablancas (lead vocals), Nick Valensi (guitar, backing vocals), Albert Hammond, Jr. (guitar, backing vocals), Nikolai Fraiture (bass guitar), Fabrizio Moretti (drums, percussion).

For anyone who was keeping up with the music press around the turn of the century, The Strokes were ubiquitous. Hailed as the saviours of an alternative scene that had grown dull and stagnant, they exploded into the public consciousness with *The Modern Age* EP and followed it up with *Is This It*, one of the most perfectly realised debut albums in recent history. Their career since then – or so the perceived wisdom goes – is one of diminishing returns: albums that never outdid this early benchmark, inter-band quarrels, solo releases and a lengthy hiatus. But perhaps it is time that perceived wisdom was revised a little. After all, the triumph of *Is This It* wasn't simply down to the group's appealingly dishevelled aesthetic and underdog mentality. In celebrating the past while aiming at something contemporary and meaningful, the debut succeeded because it was full of effortlessly brilliant pop songs. And here's the thing: The Strokes have always put out brilliant pop songs. Maybe they aren't quite so effortless these days: recording sessions for 2011's *Angles* were reportedly fraught, tension-filled affairs. Sure, maybe that earlier magic isn't quite so keenly felt. But the hit-to-miss ratio across their discography is, nevertheless, remarkable.

So it goes on *Comedown Machine*. The songs here might take a little longer to unlock than their predecessors, but none of them strike a false note. Although plenty of the group's signature sounds are present and correct, they form the backdrop to an unexpectedly wide range of styles and approaches. More than ever before, emphasis is placed on a tight, propulsive groove, such as that which opens proceedings in *Tap Out*. The following *All the Time* is fairly by-the-book, but their a-ha-plundering *One Way Trigger* signals something a little stranger and a little more unique. The almost-title track *80's Comedown Machine* is a swelling, low-key number in thrall

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to the decade it name-checks. It finds Julian Casablancas on rueful, eloquent form, and typifies the ease with which The Strokes open themselves up to new possibilities here. Welcome to Japan is enticingly odd, Slow Animals boasts a bittersweet, moving chorus, while finale Call it Fate, Call it Karma is by some stretch the dreamiest, most unusual thing they have ever put to tape. Brilliant pop songs, then. Sometimes that's all that really matters. --- James Skinner, BBC Review

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