

Whitney Reclaims Her Throne

Contributed by KeJuana Stanley -- Black College Wire
Tuesday, 08 September 2009

New album is half good, half forgettable, humble yet confident

Whitney Houston is no longer shouting out her love for the infamous Bobby Brown in courtrooms; instead, she's blowing out lyrical melodies on her much-anticipated album, "I Look to You";

Do not call it a comeback because she's been here for years. Since her last album six years ago, Houston's personal tragedies have flooded headlines and now she's reclaiming her throne as an untouched talented songstress. The album, which is half good, half forgettable, but never lame, hit stores yesterday. All 11 tracks are streaming live on whitneyhouston.com. Although the singer looks tired on the album's cover, she sings of tackling her demons with a refreshing clarity.

Her highs aren't quite as high anymore and that famous throaty low is now an awkward drag queen husky.

On the first single, "Million Dollar Bill," produced by Swizz Beatz, Houston lets it all hang out without overbearing digital trickery. It is a surprising moment that reminds the listener that in spite all of her tabloid trappings; she's still a fabulous singer with stellar control and phrasing.

The up-tempo, joyful track about love is arguably one of the most energetic songs Houston has ever done. "Million Dollar Bill" has an amazing bass line and almost recalls the late Michael Jackson in "Off The Wall"; with catchy hook, "you make me feel like a million dollar bill"; Her vocals are strong and it doesn't appear as if she's trying to compete with teenagers.

Although the album's second half loses its catch, there are nice singles to be discovered. Stargate, the Norwegian producers that made Beyonce's, "Irreplaceable" a smash, produced the mid-tempo, "Call You Tonight." This track is fun and mature and a song everyone can relate to.

Heavily produced, it was sometimes difficult to adjust to hearing a pure vocalist like Houston sing on top of such a heavily produced track. "Call You Tonight" is reminiscent of one of the better tracks from 2002's, "Just Whitney";

In the R. Kelly produced, "Salute," Houston is saying goodbye to a former lover who has done her wrong, and she's letting go with no anger. She confidently and boldly serenades, "I salute you" in this strictly R&B track. Could Houston be referring to the troublesome Bobby Brown? Who's to say?

Houston delivers meaningful lyrics and worked with the best in the music industry to produce a fresh album that will make her a positive household name.

Houston tried a few comeback albums during her troubled times, but there was always a level of insincerity and false confidence to each. Something was wrong, and fans knew it. This album is far more humble and confident.

Compared to all of the modern-day studio singers that need to be digitally enhanced to sell a record, it is nice to have a "real" singer re-surface.

{moshaloscan}

KeJuana Stanley writes for The Famuan, the Florida A&M University student newspaper, which originally published this article.