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MUSIC REVIEW

Rufus Wainwright



Release the Stars - Geffen Records

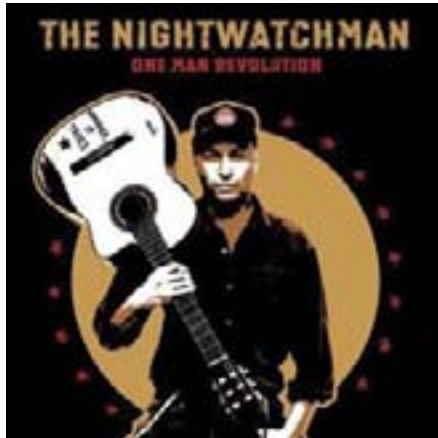
Release the Stars

MUSIC REVIEWED BY BOB JONES

The *Shrek* soundtrack was where I, and most of the rest of the world, first heard Rufus Wainwright, playing his version of "Hallelujah." (Seeing the movie the first

time at the Bell Tower with my daughter, I was stunned that a kid's flick had incorporated a Leonard Cohen song. And as a parent, relieved it wasn't "Chelsea Hotel.") *Release the Stars*, Wainwright's fifth album, is his most personal record to date. The tune that starts the record off, "Do I Disappoint You (I'm Just Being Human)," has a bit of a Brian Wilson *Smile*-era production quality to it. It seems that every thing from the timpani to the piccolo was used in this opening number. Like his other records, *Release the Stars* feels like it might be a original cast recording of a Broadway show that was never written or performed. Wainwright's timeless pop records, including this one, are more like Randy Newman or Harry Nilsson records than anything contemporary. But Wainwright is not living in the past. He is carrying that piano-singer/songwriter torch high, and into this century. ■

The Nightwatchman



One Man Revolution - Sony Music Group

One Man Revolution

MUSIC REVIEWED BY BOB JONES

Where are all the protest songs? The songwriter's pen is mightier than the sword and all that. I have been amazed at the wealth of protest songs that are **not** filling our airwaves. Are bloggers now filling the shoes once worn by our troubadours? Not if Tom Morello aka The

Nightwatchman has anything to say about it. Morello is the Grammy Award-winning guitarist for Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave, and he has rested his electric guitar against his Marshall amp and picked up an acoustic guitar to deliver his message the way Guthrie (Woody, that is) and Dylan did. Morello is a better guitar player than both Bob and Woody, and his voice is filled with authority like Johnny Cash. Unfortunately, the songs leave me cold. Woody Guthrie's songs of protest had humor and a bit of feigned innocence, and Dylan's protest poetry was a bit like Nostradamus in that they were, for the most part, so vague that they could apply to any event or injustice. On *One Man Revolution* Morello's Nightwatchman sounds a little like he is reading bits of his choosing from the newspaper. Though the choir might find it appealing, he won't win many converts in the pews with *One Man Revolution*. So far the loudest voice of protest of our times is still from that little pixie in the Dixie Chicks. ■

Bob Jones is the founder of Silver Platter CDs EST1998 in Fort Myers. For more info or to suggest music, email recordreviews@comcast.net

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