

COMMENTARY: Listening to Billy Bragg's New Album

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Billy Bragg's "The Million Things That Never Happened" is the newest album from the British musician.

The album opens with "Should Have Seen It Coming" a slower and more relaxed song reminiscent of a "jazzier" version of Bragg's classic slower songs.

The album then switches to some sort of Americana wannabe rock song that, while not insulting, just doesn't hit hard like the older Bragg songs that one might be accustomed to.

"Mid-Century Modern" is a song I could imagine

putting in a playlist, just not my Bragg playlist.

The album hits with two ballads in a row. "Lonesome Ocean" is Bragg's attempt to pull an American accent while also writing perhaps the shallowest song of his career, something that doesn't fit the image of angry British protest song writer he was famed for.

It makes one miss the man who used to rage against Thatcher. "Good Days and Bad Days" is in contrast an optimistic ballad with a very simple piano backing. Bragg's scratchy voice against the piano is very distracting.

The album takes another sudden shift as Bragg re-

turns to his lyrical roots with a "country twang" song about the New Hampshire Free State Project in "Freedom Doesn't Come for Free." The song is fun, if only because an elderly British punk rocker is singing about an American issue that most Americans have never heard of.

"Reflections on the Mirth of Creativity" marks the fourth sudden tone shift of the album and is much like "The Million Things That Never Happened," the following song, in that both are ballads. Neither are offensive or memorable, something that in the case of the album's title song is a grave sin.

"The Buck Doesn't Stop Here No More" is a politically charged ballad, a song about American racial and political discrimination. The song compares Jim Crow to Sharia, something that is both tone deaf to exactly what Sharia is and unfortunate given the coincidental timing of the American departure from Afghanistan.

"I Believe In You" and "Pass It On" are both insulting to the listener as empty meaningless songs that exist because the album needed 12 songs. At least "Pass It On" sounds close enough to "Let It Be" that you can convince yourself that you are listening to a better album.

"I Will Be Your Shield" is simply not a Bragg song.

"Ten Mysterious Photos That Can't Be Explained" is the best song off the album. A jiving beat about internet misinformation that one can easily bop to. The song does not justify the rest of the album by any means, though it certainly is a worth while song to look into.

The album is a waste of time overall. Billy Bragg, a musician with a backlog of phenomenal albums, fails to deliver this time.

Review: 3/10



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