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# Mogwai - Every Country's Sun (Album Review)



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Wednesday, 06 September 2017

Written by Jonathan Rimmer



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15

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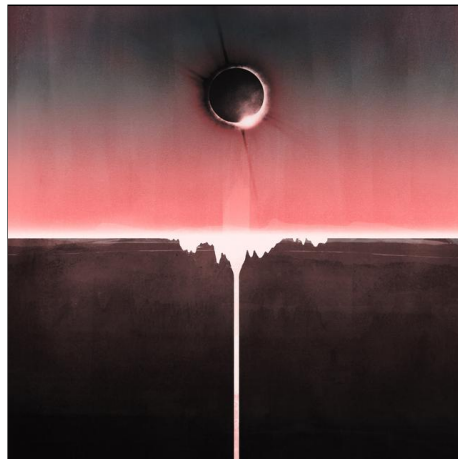
Anyone who attended Mogwai's back-to-back anniversary shows in 2015 will tell you the same thing: magic was in the air. The Glasgow post-rockers returned to their home city to play two nights of tracks spanning 20 years of material and the grim weather outside ironically added to the spectacle.

The quintet's natural humility has always reflected the city they grew up in and it felt appropriate that they presented hours of transcendental instrumental rock without offering much more than a 'thank you'.

Many fans expected the shows to be the closing of a chapter, especially given guitarist and keyboardist John Cummings' subsequent departure from the band.

Instead, they returned last year with 'Atomic', their third film soundtrack in 10 years. It was a brooding, atmospheric project that complemented the corresponding documentary well, but its lack of ambition was frustrating.

In that sense, 'Every Country's Sun' is a more satisfying return and serves as a better barometer of how far they've come. The key elements that define the various eras of the band's history are present here.



Aka 47 features the nostalgic synth melodies we've come to associate with them in recent years, while Battered at a Scramble's crunching guitars hark all the way back to their debut, 'Young Team'.

But the strongest cuts here are, surprisingly, the more upbeat ones. Mogwai have disappointingly abandoned the despondent slowcore sound they mastered on earlier records but, to their credit, their more rock-oriented material is now far more captivating.

Their use of dynamics as a dramatic device, for example, has clearly developed. The binary approach of 'near silent to deathly loud' that characterised much of their previous work is all but gone. Melodic ideas are introduced subtly, climaxes are unpredictable, and songs remain epic in scale without being stretched out to unnecessary lengths.

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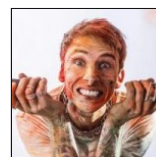
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## Mogwai // Party In The Dark (Official Video)

It's this more refined structure that makes *Crossing the Road Material* so enjoyable. Like so many Mogwai tracks, the build-up defines it: a stirring syncopated groove moves slowly while disparate guitars and synth lines intermingle above it. But the overall sonic progression is controlled, making the crescendo more powerful as a result.

Even the album's 'pop song' *Party in the Dark*, which includes a surprisingly catchy vocal hook from guitarist Stuart Braithwaite, is packed with interesting textures. The Mew-esque combination of driving bass, reverb-laden vocals and tremolo guitars suits Mogwai's natural inclinations.

Unfortunately, it's not a road they're willing to travel down headfirst as more meandering tracks like *1000 Foot Face* and *Don't Believe the Fife* demonstrate. These detours disrupt the momentum of 'Every Country's Sun' and unnecessarily stretch it beyond the 60 minute mark.

That's probably unsurprising given that Mogwai have made a virtue of extended instrumental passages in a way that countless of their peers haven't. Nevertheless, they have turned a page and their strengths now lie in different areas. They still have the ability to conjure up soundscapes, but their most awe-inspiring moments simply aren't as drawn out as they once were.

**Mogwai Upcoming Tour Dates** are as follows:

Fri December 15 2017 - LONDON O2 Academy Brixton  
Sat December 16 2017 - GLASGOW SSE Hydro

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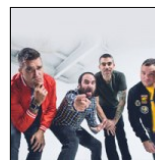
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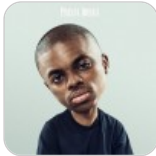
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Wed 09 Aug 2017

Photo: Brian Sweeney Mogwai have released a video for Party In The Dark.



Mogwai Stream New Track Party In The Dark

Thu 29 Jun 2017

Photo: Brian Sweeney Mogwai are streaming a new track, Party In The Dark.



Mogwai Post Coolverine Video

Wed 07 Jun 2017

Mogwai have posted a video for Coolverine, the opening track of their new album.



Mogwai Announce New Album 'Every Country's Sun', Share Opening Track Coolverine

Mon 15 May 2017

Mogwai have announced a new album, 'Every Country's Sun'.



Mogwai Announce December O2 Academy Brixton Date

Tue 21 Mar 2017

Mogwai will play London's O2 Academy Brixton on December 15.

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