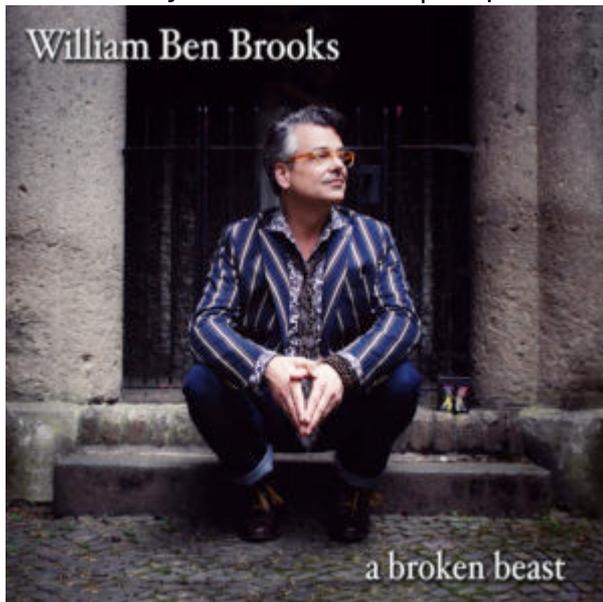


William Ben Brooks – A Broken Beast

written by Beach Sloth | September 19, 2019



William Ben Brooks crafts a thoughtful slice of Americana on the soulful “A Broken Beast”. Effortlessly blending together pieces of the blues, folk, funk and classic rock into a singular whole, the album radiates with tremendous life. Instrumentally vibrant, he incorporates gorgeous guitar licks alongside glowing organ vamps. The choir coming into the mix further emphasizes this interplay featuring some truly sweeping harmonies that feel angelic.

Perfectly balanced he ensures that it has a lush, luxurious quality to it. Layer upon layer of sound merge into a singular stream of consciousness which becomes all-consuming. Such a careful collection he even incorporates a bit of the psychedelic and dreamy into the already gargantuan sound.

His voice rests in the very center of it, confident and assured. Lyrically masterful he proves to be a deft storyteller. Reminiscent at times of Bob Dylan at his best, the entire album feels akin to a grand journey. Featuring stories told from a life lived to the almost fullest, his careful choice of words adds additional gravitas to the whole of the journey. An outright blast he designs the entire album to be felt as well as heard. Volume is a must for the impact can only be truly appreciated, all the consideration put into the arrangements and gleaming production.

Nicely setting the tone for what follows the colossal swagger “And I Heard” opens the whole of the work on a high note. Gentler with its folksy roots that at times touch upon Grizzly Bear’s chamber folk restraint, the piece has a hushed reverence to it. A western twang rolls through on the potent experience of “You And Me” where William Ben Brooks sing straight from the heart. Tenderness runs through the Billy Joel referencing work of “Sweet Safe And Sound”. Honky-tonk comes through on the bluesy “Worst Case Scenario #139”, easily the highlight of the album. Infectious grooves and incredible harmonica blend flawlessly with the playful lyricism.

“Too Many Fields” strips things down to the essentials as they go for introspection. Done with such care, the guitar further adds to the sense of loss that permeates it all. Cinematic with a hint of the theatrical is the intimate “Saved Me For Last”. A chaotic energy powers the wild, unhinged

rhythm of "Too Soon" allowing a bit of Southern Rock into the mix. Lovely to its core is the relatable Bruce Springsteen-inspired "We Ain't Going Anywhere". Effortlessly bringing the trip to a powerful conclusion is "Lisa's Lullaby".

"A Broken Beast" displays the uncanny knack of William Ben Brooks in creating a timeless world, one that possesses such a vivid sense of color and compassion.