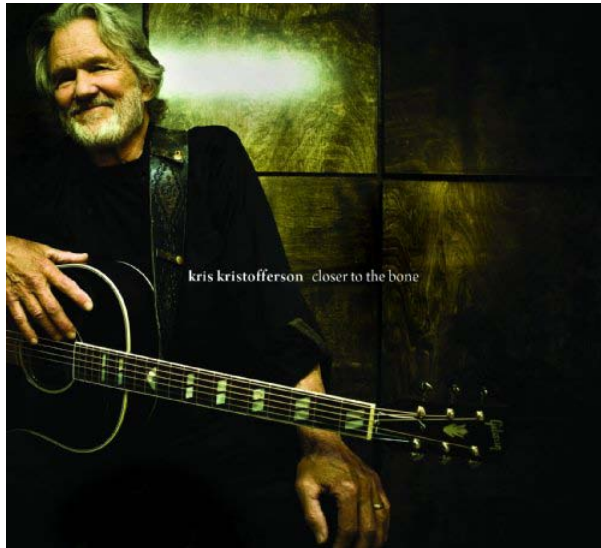


Kris Kristofferson - *Closer To The Bone* Review

Posted by Paul Hollingsworth on 10.10.2009

Sounding every bit of his 73 years, Kris Kristofferson delivers what may be his last will and musical testament, but are the songs a fitting summing up for one of music's premier songwriters?



Good Morning John - Kris Kristofferson

Complete Track Listing:

1. Closer To The Bone
2. From Here To Forever
3. Holy Woman
4. Starlight and Stone
5. Sister Sinead
6. Hall Of Angels
7. Love Don't Live Here Anymore
8. Good Morning John
9. Tell Me One More Time
10. Let The Walls Come Down
11. The Wonder

Kris Kristofferson has been around [music](#) since his tour with the U.S. Army ended in 1965. He's written hits for **Janis Joplin** ("Me & Bobby McGee") **Ray Price** ("For The Good Times") and his friend **Johnny Cash** ("Sunday Morning Comin' Down") He's been in [films](#) with everyone from **Barbara Streisand** (A Star Is Born) to **Wesley Snipes** (The Blade series.) He also released 19 albums of his own work while writing tunes for others and making movies. Except for a few notable exceptions, however, his own [songs](#) never achieved the success of the songs he's written for others. His 20th album, *Closer To The Bone*, is not likely to spawn any hit singles, but hits don't seem to be on Kristofferson's mind so much anymore.

'*This one is for my kids*', [Kris](#) says at the beginning of "From Here To Forever", and its not a stretch to say that each of these songs are gifts given freely to those people who have been important in his life, including his fans. His [singing](#) voice, which has never been his strong point, sounds ragged, occasionally breathless, and definitely seasoned. ("Sunday Morning Comin' Down", I can assure you, was written from firsthand experience.) For the most part, the songs are all stripped down to the bare minimums, with [acoustic guitars](#) as the only instruments, and those acting as the barest of backbones for Kristofferson's musings on life, death and what comes after.

There are songs about absent friends, ("Good Morning John", about Cash.), lost (maybe) loves ("Holy Woman") and

infamous events ("Sister Sinead"). The songs are confessional but never cross the line into self indulgence. While the songs are stripped down, the [lyrics](#) are some of the best he's ever written. "*an old soul standing his ground/sang his heart out to a world/passing him by/I can still hear every word/of a song nobody heard/cause he sang right out of his soul/into the sky*" from "Let The Walls Come Down" is a particular highlight. "Walls" might be about someone else, but I'd like to think it's Kris' (maybe) final thoughts on his own life.

The [album](#) ends with "The Wonder", which invites in a whole company of ghosts into the room. The song is the sparsest song on an album of sparse songs, but yet it carries more (hard earned) weight than any hundred songs currently on the radio. It's easy to [imagine](#) Kris sitting alone in a room with a guitar singing this song, thinking back on a well-lived life, inviting the memories of his departed friends to sit down for a spell and join him on one last chorus.



The 411: Kristofferson has survived a long time in a business that thrives on consuming youth and idealism with a insatiable appetite and spitting the pieces out at a buzz saw pace. This album sounds very much like a man coming to terms with his mortality and his space in history. It's not an easy album to digest whole, and in fact, is almost overwhelmingly depressing. But the craft of writing songs is something that Kristofferson does well, and it's obvious he's not lost his touch for writing a good lyric. Like Absinthe, however, it's better in small doses.

Final Score: 8.5 [Very Good] [legend](#)

