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Born Innocent

albums

the band: **The Proclaimers**

the label: **Persevere**

the release date: Mon 8th Sep 2003

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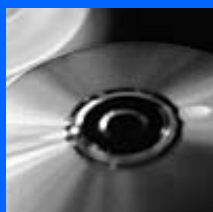
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Any doubts about the grass roots resurgence of **The Proclaimers** were ground to dust by their enormous crowd at this summer's **T In The Park**. The brothers occupied a late afternoon slot but punters came and came by the thousand, until **Craig** and **Charlie Reid** were cheered home by an audience equalling that of the evening's headliner, **R.E.M.** The obvious point being: The Proclaimers were always a band for the people, however the media snobs and cooler-than-thou pluck-ribbets have mocked. And nowadays, as our music industry squirms, trying to find a shape to fit the richness of its product, finally, real people can begin to make their choices heard.

'*Born Innocent*' is **The Proclaimers**' fifth album and comes hot on the heels of their successful '*Greatest Hits*' collection, which in turn followed closely behind a comeback record, '*Persevere*'. Before that they'd been in hiatus for seven years, putting family before career. It's thrilling to see this return to the fray stretching out into a real second wind. '*Born Innocent*' bowls along at a brisk pace, mixing earthy semi-acoustic rock with a soulful, retro feel, heavy on the Hammond. The boys are in superb voice, pulling off both their fantastic trademark hollerin' two-part harmony on the fast songs, as well as some lovely 'proper' Scottish soul singing when it slows down. Of the former, '*Blood On Your Hands*' is an angry highlight, blasting out the speakers with enough energy to hint of the young rock'n'roll pretenders like **The Hives**, while still firmly on safe ground for the Radio 2 boom. The cover of Sixties classic '*Five O'Clock World*' is also a killer, though I hope they resist making it a single when they wrote so many good tunes themselves.

Appreciation of this record - and in fact their entire catalogue - essentially boils down to whether you can cope with those two astounding voices. If you need your country rock sung by a deep-throat West Virginnian or New York radio announcer, then mayhap their Scottish lilt ain't for you - but it's your loss, dude. At least deal with the truths involved: here be fine, fine songwriting indeed, particularly when self-dissecting without vanity. There's a jaw-dropping depiction of an overlooked son and even the

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slushy romantic moments refuse to glycerine the lens, maintaining gritty honesty throughout.

Seeking a down side, **Edwyn Collins**' production isn't a hundred percent successful, coming across a bit like a compromise between kookiness and cleanliness. In the scuffle, a modern rough edge is lost and at least one twangin' **Duane Eddy**-style solo is criminally low in the mix. The threesome-gone-wrong 'tribute' to The Sun's agony aunt, '*Dear Deirdre*' is also annoying and smacks of playing to the thickos, though I could be overlooking an ironic undertone. But these are minor complaints. '*Born Innocent*' is a fiery winner and should still be a car stereo album of choice when the nights draw in. Act your age.

Rating: 

Author: **Toby Jarvis**

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