

TOTO: Falling in Between

Scritto da Administrator
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"FALLING IN BETWEEN"

One word keeps coming to mind every time I listen to each track on Falling In Between: Magnificent. No question, this is my favourite Toto album, despite 25 years hardcore appreciation of their musical excellence. Yet this has been the most challenging review I've ever tried to write - there's just so much to enthuse about. Falling In Between is everything I ever hoped the band would achieve beyond their commercial successes two decades ago. Toto have absolutely excelled themselves this time.

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FALLING IN BETWEEN

Will Minting, December 2005

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I've been listening to so-called rough mixes (which weren't very rough at all) since May 2005 and even had the privilege of witnessing many of the tracks being overdubbed at the studio in early October 2005. Over recent months, I'd grown familiar with the tunes and grooves but nothing prepared me for the arrival of the final mastered CD a few weeks ago. Friends and other fans had been pressing me for reviews and reactions to the album but I've wanted to really "live" with the album, so that I could try to do it the justice it completely deserves.

Falling In Between is outstanding in every aspect; from probably Toto's s richest production ever

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through an array of the classiest sounds to the impeccable vocal performances, and the abundance of musical brilliance which exceeds any expectations that I might have had. It's compelling listening and there's so much to enjoy. Stylistically, Falling In Between is completely incomparable to anything that Toto have recorded before. Toto have never lacked experience or intelligence in their albums but Falling In Between seems to take on a new level of musical maturity. This album is vintage Toto.

The genius is also in the breadth of material; I would venture to suggest that this is probably Toto's most diverse album to date. I've never been one to indulge in lyrical content but it's clear that these outpourings are deeply considered and intelligent musings. The real test of a truly great album is its longevity; whether the melodies and production stand the test of time, long beyond the initial "awe" when the great pleasure of familiarising oneself with the CD subsides. There are probably more concealed nuances in this new Toto album than even their most polished work of the last 28 years. One of the greatest facets of Toto for me has always been that I discover a nugget of brilliance every time I listen closely; there are truckloads of those moments on Falling In Between, just waiting to be found and enjoyed.

This album rocks HARD. It's very soulful. It's catchy. It's progressive, in places, yet it sounds timeless. It's a musical feast to challenge even the most schooled ears. And that's why Falling In Between could become a classic album; it's absolutely deserving of the best promotional campaign. Am I saying that this album is "better" than even Toto IV or The Seventh One? Yes. It's the ultimate display of their collective genius.

In the following review of each track, I've included some "out takes" from the band's CD track notes, which were written in November 2005. The album is due for release in Japan in late January 2006 and in Europe and other territories from 10 February 2006. The Falling In Between world tour kicks off in London on 25 February 2006.

Falling In Between

The title track is a Led Zep-esque masterpiece with Indian/Arabian type influences, the verse riff being reminiscent of "Kashmir". Bobby and Greg handle the lead vocals, with very heavy guitar riffing throughout, interspersed with massive keyboard flourishes. The latter half of the song is pure, unashamed instrumental indulgence. Truly awesome.

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Simon: This is essentially a band written song but Luke sparked it off with his killer riffs. Bobby came up with the first melody and Greg the second melody. We all added parts to it and it evolved into what you hear now.

Dying on My Feet

A song of many sections! Bobby's lead vocals and the Chicago Horns powerful injections are particularly notable. A song of many sections and featuring an outstanding Luke "Kid Charlemagne-esque" solo.

Simon: Another band written song put together section by section and in fact this was the demo track - it just had such a good groove. I particularly love Bobby's vocal performance on this one - exploiting a slightly lower range of his voice. Jim Pankow from Chicago wrote a killer brass arrangement on the outro and a very cool solo from Luke - probably my favourite on the album.

Bottom of Your Soul

The first single. A wonderful and haunting track, reminiscent of "Africa", and with a huge production. A hypnotic percussion loop coupled with melancholic lyrics about the humanitarian aftermath of world tragedies. Stunning vocal performances by both Luke and Joseph Williams and a truckload of hypnotic chants add to the plethora of textures. Pure Toto.

Luke: I sang the verses and we had Joseph Williams come back and did a duet with me. Its classic Toto and very "Seventh One" sounding style wise with a 2006 twist to it. Lenny [Castro] is on this as well. Greg and I did the acoustic solo section live together which was cool. You were there!

King of the World

A fab mid tempo rocker which reminds me a little of Isolation-era Toto, especially with Paich's

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vocals in the verses. Luke and Bobby also sing. Sure to be a live favourite of the future.

Paich: It's about the fall of Enron, as told from three perspectives. One, being the "man on the street"(narrating); two, being a low level worker and the third being the "Big Dog" exec. In addition to the band, Steve Porcaro played a major role with creative editing, intros and dazzling effects. Jason Scheff from "Chicago" also lent a hand on vocal harmonies.

Hooked

A prog masterpiece and loaded with cool hooks! Mike Porcaro's incredible touch and tone and his interplay with Luke and Simon really make this track groove. Steve Porcaro's genius comes to the fore once again, before the track smoulders over Luke's rasping guitar riff. A great Bobby lead vocal performance too - check out his (subliminal or otherwise) nod to Dire Straits "Money for Nothing" on the line "we love our MP3's". James Torme and Trevor Lukather augmented the backing vocals on this track, and Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull added his inimitable rock flute timbres to the mix. Hooked is already one of my all-time Toto favourites.

Simon: I had written the chorus a while back and played it to Luke and Mike. They came up with the verse which really work well. Dave made some harmonic changes to the overall piece and then I came up with the bridge section. Dave wrote some great lyrics. This was inspired by Led Zeppelin.

Simple Life

Probably one of Luke's finest ballads of all time; An ethereal effected piano sound underpins Luke's melancholic vocal performance, building to a huge and cleverly arranged chorus.

Mike: One of the things I always look forward to on a Toto album - a gorgeous ballad from Steve Lukather. These kind of songs flow out of him like a pure spring. Awesome! This one is short and sweet with a lovely chorus with that "wall" of background "oohs and aahs" as the backdrop.

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Taint Your World

No doubt that this track will be an instant Live favourite. I LOVE this track. The first time I heard this, Luke sat me down in the studio mixing desk chair, whacked up the volume and as the opening riff blasted out, I beamed from ear to ear. THIS is what I used to hope Toto would have recorded 20 years ago. The riff and groove are blantly Van Halen-esque, in the "Hot for Teacher" mould.

Greg: I always felt this is the kind of song that Luke just had to get "out of his system." It's definitely NOT for the faint of heart, and I'm gonna enjoy hitting it live. This is one of the reasons why I love being in this band!

Let It Go

Greg's debut lead vocal performance. A funky and soulful "Jake to the Bone with vocals". Greg's vocals fit seamlessly into the Toto sound but his keyboard touch certainly adds a funkier dimension when required.

Simon: We cut this with Greg Phillinganes - and he also had a hand in the writing. He sings the lead and there are some really intricate backing vocals.

Spiritual Man

Magnificent, a true Paich classic. A gospel song, featuring Dave, Bobby, Luke & Greg on vocals.

Mike: Dave's tune. I love the way the guys pass the vocal around on this one. Simple and few chord changes played to great effect.

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No End In Sight

My favourite on the album. THIS track is what I really love about Toto. The time changes, the syncopation, the subtle riffs, the progressions, the dynamics. I really love the instrumental version I have of this track but Luke & Bobby's vocal performances are exceptional. To me, this track is genius.

Simon: This was one of the last songs we wrote - I think it took about an hour to compose and then we cut it live - a couple of takes - and that's it. Bobby delivers another killer vocal on this one.

The Reeferman [Bonus Cut for Japan Release]

A whacky be-bop groove featuring a trumpet solo by Roy Hargrove!

Luke: This is a live jam written by basically me and Dave but as it's a jam I guess its a band tune. Dave had this riff and Si started playin the be bop groove and I wrote a melody on the spot. After we heard it back we dug it and got jazz legend Roy Hargrove to play trumpet on it. Its a Miles "Bi tches Brew" kind of a thing. Very short piece but cool. You wouldn't hear this on an other "70's-80's bands record that for sure! Its a "bonus cut" kinda thing but we dig it. It's a bookend to "Don't Stop me Now" from Fahrenheit with us and Miles back in 1986.