

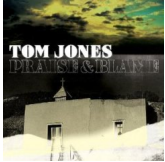
## Tom Jones – Praise And Blame (2010)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 24 July 2010 14:09 - Last Updated Thursday, 21 February 2019 08:26

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### Tom Jones – Praise And Blame (2010)



01. *What Good Am I?* 03:51
02. *Lord Help* 03:42
03. *Did Trouble Me* 04:16
04. *Strange Things* 03:01
05. *Burning Hell* 03:26
06. *If I Give My Soul* 03:30
07. *Don't Knock* 02:17
08. *Nobody's Fault But Mine* 03:41
09. *Didn't It Rain* 03:21
10. *Ain't No Grave* 03:09
11. *Run On* 03:59

Bass – Dave Bronze Drums – Jeremy Stacey Guitar, Mellotron, Banjo, Omnichord – Ethan Johns Organ – Christopher Holland Organ [Farfisa] – Augie Meyers Organ [B3], Piano – Booker T. Jones Steel Guitar – BJ Cole Backing Vocals – Gillian Welch, Dave Rawlings, Allison Pierce Bass – Ian Jennings Harmonium – Richard Causon Drums – Henry Spinetti Piano – Benmont Tench Vocals – Tom Jones

This gospel and blues set is the back to basics gambit from Sir Tom. It's worked for Johnny Cash and Neil Diamond in the past, this stripping of vogues to expose the singer's raw talent: perversely, it endeared both to younger audiences. Yet Jones is a different entity: his charm was never based on authenticity. In his early career he shifted his pelvis and hollered cracking pop songs, and even his big weepy ballads were knowingly camp. His comeback period – dreamed up by his son/manager – was all irony and winks, targeted at hen parties not critics. Blessed with a soulful voice, he made an unveiled Faustian pact long ago.

Thus a move that should by rights be applauded and affecting – this is, after all, a 70-year-old singing, often, about death – doesn't come off. It's a gauche mix of church and the rock'n'roll

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chestnuts he grew up on. Outside Robert Plant, it's hard to see who it'll appeal to. A sincere reimagining of more arch songs – like Cash doing Hurt – would have grabbed our throats and hearts. This, though, is an old fella singing songs that mean little to anyone outside his generation. It's like hearing war stories from wizened veterans: you should, by any moral compass, be impressed and attentive, but the guilty, undeniable truth is... you're a little bored.

Ethan Johns (Kings of Leon, Paolo Nutini) produces – minimally – and guests include Gillian Welch, Dave Rawlings and BJ Cole. Songs were recorded live and Tom relishes tackling the gothic-religious strains of Dylan's What Good Am I and the bluesy tropes of John Lee Hooker's Burning Hell. He's no slouch barking Sister Rosetta Tharpe's Strange Things or Mahalia Jackson's Didn't It Rain. He means it, sure. Yet these songs were what those people did, and Tom Jones is best at doing something else. Tom without flash is like The Wizard of Oz without a curtain. If you seek proof that he can cut it, and will live forever, look at moments in his scrapbook like I'll Never Fall in Love Again or I'm Coming Home, not here. --- Chris Roberts, BBC Review

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