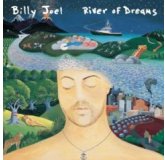


Billy Joel – River Of Dreams (1993)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 03 April 2014 15:49 - Last Updated Wednesday, 01 November 2017 22:25

Billy Joel – River Of Dreams (1993)



01. *No Man's Land* – 4:48 02. *The Great Wall Of China* – 5:47 03. *Blonde Over Blue* – 4:55 04. *A Minor Variation* – 5:36 05. *Shades Of Grey* – 4:11 06. *All About Soul* – 6:01 07. *Lullabye (Goodnight, My Angel)* – 3:34 08. *The River Of Dreams* – 4:07 09. *Two Thousand Years* – 5:20 10. *Famous Last Words* – 4:59

Billy Joel: Vocals, Piano, Clavinet, Organs, Keyboards, Synthesizer, Background Vocals Zachary Alford: Drums Phillip Ballou: Choir, Chorus Katreese Barnes: Choir, Chorus Tommy Byrnes: Guitar Richie Cannata: Tenor Sax Dennis Collins: Choir, Chorus Schuyler Deale: Bass Lew Del Gatto: Orchestra Manager Liberty DeVitto: Drums Will Downing: Choir, Chorus Laurence Etkin: Trumpet Wrecia Ford: Vocals Diane Garisto: Choir, Chorus Arno Hecht: Baritone Sax Lonnie Hillyer: Bass Jeff Jacobs: Synthesizer Stephanie James: Choir, Chorus Color Me Badd: Backing Vocals on 'All About Soul' Devora Johnson: Choir, Chorus Jef Lee Johnson: Bass Steve Jordan: Drums Curtis Rance King, Jr.: Choir Conductor, Choir Contractor Doug Kleeger Technical Support Danny Kortchmar: Guitar Andy Kravitz: Percussion Osvaldo Melindez: Trombone Ira Newborn: Orchestration Jim Saporito: Percussion Marlon Saunders: Choir, Chorus, Vocals Frank Simms: Background Vocals George Simms: Background Vocals T.M. Stevens: Bass Crystal Taliefero: Vocal Arrangement, Vocals Chuck Treece: Bass Mike Tyler: Guitar Leslie West: Guitar Brenda White-King: Choir, Chorus B. David Witworth: Vocals

Billy Joel had never taken as much time to record an album as he did with *River of Dreams*, and its troubled birth is clear upon the first listen. Never before had he recorded an album that sounded so labored, as if it was a struggle for him to write and record the songs. With *River of Dreams*, he's surrounded himself with ace studio musicians and star producer Danny Kortchmar, all of whom have the effect of deadening an already self-consciously serious set of songs. There are no light moments on the album, either lyrically or musically -- all the songs are filled with middle-age dread, even the two best moments, the gospel-inflected title track and his song to his daughter, "Lullabye (Goodnight, My Angel)." Those two songs have the strongest melodies, but they're not as natural as his best material. Everywhere he tries too hard -- the metaphors of "The Great Wall of China," the bizarre vocal intro to "Shades of Grey," minor-key melodies all over the place. He may be trying different things, but he doesn't sound comfortable

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with his detours, and by the end of the record, he sounds as exhausted as the listener feels. By that point, the closing track, "Famous Last Words," seems prophetic -- River of Dreams feels like a sad close to an otherwise strong career, and from all indications he's given in the press, Joel claims it is indeed the last pop album he'll ever make. It's an unworthy way to depart.

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