

The Killers - Battle Born (2012)

Written by bluesever

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01. *"Flesh and Bone"* 02. *"Runaways"* 03. *"The Way It Was"* 04. *"Here with Me"* 05. *"A Matter of Time"* 06. *"Deadlines and Commitments"* 07. *"Miss Atomic Bomb"* 08. *"The Rising Tide"* 09. *"Heart of a Girl"* 10. *"From Here on Out"* 11. *"Be Still"* 12. *"Battle Born"* 13. *"Carry Me Home"* 14. *"Flesh And Bone (Jacques lu Cont Remix)"* 15. *"Prize Fighter"* Musicians: Brandon Flowers – lead vocals, synthesizers Dave Keuning – guitar, background vocals Mark Stoermer – bass guitar, background vocals Ronnie Vannucci – drums, percussion, background vocals

Since 2004's British-flavoured debut *Hot Fuss*, The Killers have embraced the American landscape with an authenticity UK bands can only dream about. With nothing but horizons in every direction, their immersion in Vegas is now complete: like Springsteen is New Jersey, The Killers are inseparable from Nevada. Hammering this point home, they have taken the name for this fourth album proper from the state flag, and it's the distillation of everything they have done before.

It is surprising how patchy The Killers' albums have been, a trend bucked by Brandon Flowers' solo album *Flamingo*. *Battle Born* sits closest to 2006's *Sam's Town*, their album most lacking in great tunes, but lead single *Runaways* casts fears into the roadside dust. It sounds exactly how you would hope: military drums and epic verses, sparking wanderlust like a complimentary Cadillac. Opener *Flesh and Bone* sounds nervous, but its red-in-the-face bluster soon settles, and the band finds its stride, Flowers singing of prom queens and lonesome dreams of twists of fate.

Deserts have a tendency to make bands serious, and The Killers are no exception – although the slightly formulaic *Here With Me* actually channels Simple Minds' *Belfast Child* rather than U2. But if *The Way It Was* sounded any bigger it might be mistaken for Meat Loaf, albeit if he'd

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bundled Foreigner, John Steinbeck and a-ha into four glorious minutes.

Big guitars riff over widescreen escapism, until the synth-driven Deadlines and Commitments takes a break from the manly power chords, and then Miss Atomic Bomb sketches American 60s innocence watching nuclear-testing mushroom clouds while picnicking. The surging Rising Tide struts and flicks its microphone cable like it's been around forever, before Heart of a Girl finally succumbs to U2 influences, serving as the album's One. The title track is as triumphant as a song called Battle Born should be.

Flowers' recent declaration to NME that "everything will work (if) the songs are right" applies equally to his band as it does life in general. And Battle Born is a belter, an album made for bedrooms, stadiums and old-school denim jacket patches alike. --- Tom Hocknell, BBC Review

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