

ALBUM REVIEW

ALBUM REVIEW, NOVEMBER 1997:
Sixpence None the Richer
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I have no idea where to begin so I will start with the four words that grace the beautiful cover of this highly anticipated album: Sixpence None the Richer. I have never been fond of the idea of a band self-titling an album, but for this, Sixpence's third full-length release, it is perfect. This IS Sixpence None the Richer. It has been a long, wild ride, but the band has arrived. They have a completely different sound than when they started, but this is truly Sixpence.

Now the question is: What is Sixpence? Honestly, I have no idea how to classify their sound or style (except as terrific). This album is the epitome of what we have all begun to realize in the last year or so: different types of music are all blending together. Classifying a band's sound has begun to be impossible. Sixpence used to be a female-vocal led modern rock band. Those days are over. Most people will call this new album rock, but it is not. It is a symphony; and what a beautiful one it is. There are a few pop songs ("Kiss Me" and "I Can't Catch You"), but overall Matt's writing style has changed dramatically. And for the first time, Leigh's vocals are the focus of the music. Dale is also an amazing drummer, which I never realized until now. Just listen to "Puede Escribir."

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instrumentation. It is unbelievable. There are at least 14 different musical instruments used. There is the guitar, bass, and drums, of course, but strings (violin, viola, cello) are used just as much as the regular instruments. Other instruments also have primary parts, like the piano and trumpet in "The Lines of My Earth," and the B-3 organ and accordion in "Kiss Me." Matt has always been known for his use of a classic "U2" guitar tone. Not anymore. It's not that he has given it up, but he uses a different tone (or tones) in each song. There are at least 3-5 different guitar tracks used on each song.

My favorite part about hearing this album for the first time was the element of surprise. Most of the time I get a new cd I have never heard any of the songs on it before. This is the first studio album I have ever received when I had heard everything on it previously. I have seen every song on the album performed in concert at least three (and in some cases six) times. Even with all of this, the record is so much better than I could have (and did) imagined. I have never listened to an album so perfectly put together. Thanks to Steve Taylor for the production and other talents such as John Mark Painter for engineering.

Now on to the lyrics. If you are familiar with the band, you are going to love them. Much of the album is the story of the band's journey. The second track, "Anything," is Matt's plea to God to tell him whether or

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not he should continue with Sixpence: "cause we're all tired and we'd like to know if we show pack our tents, shut down the show. Yes, we should like to see a burning-bush type sign. But anything would be fine." The last song, "Moving On," speaks of the band's trouble with the industry and their previous record label: "I will not let them ruin me."

Since I am a graphic designer, I must mention the packaging. It is the most beautiful I have ever seen. There is an overall Renaissance feel with great choices for colors, illustrations, photographs, and fonts. But the greatest feature is the cover, or maybe I should say the "back." What usually is found on the cover of the booklet has been placed on the back, underneath the tray. And what would usually be put there (bar code, song list, record label), is on the front of the booklet. I have been told this was done to preserve the accuracy of Debbie Taylor's painting. But for whatever the reason, it has revolutionized the way cds will be packaged from now on.

It is widely known that Sixpence's "This Beautiful Mess" is my favorite album ever. I am not saying it is the greatest album ever, but there is nothing I would rather listen to. I'm not sure how I will rank this one in a few months, but this is by far the most impressed I have been with an album after only having it for four days. Go it get. Now.

P.S. I might as well mention my favorite song on the album is "Easy

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to ignore." And whatever happened to "Breakdown-Ready Engine?"

CONCERT REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 1999
Luxury
The EARL, Atlanta, GA

In July of this year, Luxury returned to the modern music scene with the release of their new self-titled cd. I could say that it is their best release, but "Kill the Famous" and "Solid Gold" keep me from doing so. However, I do believe it to be the most accurate representation of Luxury's sound- with layers of acoustic and electric guitars and production that the first two albums can't touch. In the words of Lee Bozeman, "we wanted to create a sound we couldn't recreate live." After listening to and loving this album, my only thought was "when are they going to play live?"

After seeing them in the fall of 1995 and the spring of 1996 they easily became my favorite live band. I have seen hundreds of concerts, and no one, (except maybe the Connells), has come close. The B.A.Zone crowned them "The world's greatest live rock band." When they broke up in 1996, they didn't lose the crown, but I didn't remember how great they were.

Until Friday.

Luxury played at the EARL (East Atlanta Restaurant and Lounge) and it was, simply put, amazing.

Until I found out Luxury was playing there, I had never heard of

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time, Leigh's vocals are the focus of the music. Dale is also an amazing drummer, which I never realized until now. Just listen to "Puedo Escribir." I think the thing that shocks me the most about this record is the instrumentation. It is unbelievable. There are at least 14 different musical instruments used. There is the guitar, bass, and drums, of course, but strings (violin, viola, cello) are used just as much as the regular instruments. Other instruments also have primary parts, like the piano and trumpet in "The Lines of My Earth," and the B-3 organ and accordion in "Kiss Me." Matt has always been known for his use of a classic "U2" guitar tone. Not anymore. It's not that he has given it up, but he uses a different tone (or tones) in each song. There are at least 3-5 different guitar tracks used on each song.

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