



### Ron Sexsmith “Exit Strategy Of The Soul” Yep Roc Records

“Exit Strategy Of The Soul” is Ron’s ninth release [\*] in a solo recording career spanning thirteen years. While not quite matching what went down in the sixties, that’s definitely an *above average* output. One aspect of his output is the manner in which Sexsmith has yo-yo’d between producers Mitchell Froom and Martin Terefe. To date Froom has four credits to his name, while Ron’s latest marks Swedish born, London based Terefe’s third time at the helm. Apart from “Brandy Alexander,” a Ron and Nova Scotia bred [Leslie] Feist co-write – it also appeared on her fourth solo release “The Reminder,” and subsequently became the 2008 Juno “Album of the Year” winner - Sexsmith penned the thirteen other cuts. The principal recording sessions took place in London, England and Havana, Cuba – the latter feature Cuban legends Amaury Perez [trombone] and Alexander Abreu [trumpet], as well as contributions from famed arranger Joaquin Betancourt - with additions captured in New York and Nashville studios Stateside.

The album is bookended by the piano led instrumentals “Spiritude” and “Dawn Anna,” the latter featuring the intriguing named Nashville based quartet The Love Sponge Strings. Ron Eldon Sexsmith is sat at the piano stool on both occasions. The album opener “This Is How I Know” works lyrically as a secular song – an ode to a loved one – and as a spiritually themed number. The brass featured on the latter cut also surfaces on the ensuing ‘wounded planet’ themed “One Last Round.” The hook-laden melodies in this collection are undoubtedly “Ghost Of A Chance” and the later totally fluid delight “The Impossible World.” Given the rather negative slant of the latter lyric – a prayer addressed to the Lord - the upbeat melody that accompanies it come over as something of a misnomer.

The co-write “Brandy Alexander” and the haunting “Travelling Alone,” which follows, feature female backing vocalists. In the case of the former it’s A Girl Called Eddy [aka U.K. based, New Jersey born performer Erin Moran] while on the latter Ron is joined by his wife, Colleen Hixenbaugh. While not exactly trapped and storm tossed in the midst of the pitch black of a night time hurricane, dark clouds pervade a number of the songs here, including the aforementioned “One Last Round” and “Brighter Still,” while elsewhere, as I’ve noted already, Sexsmith has come up with his usual quota of wistful and beautifully worded creations.

#### **Note.**

[\*] – I’m excluding the 2005 Ron Sexsmith and Don Kerr collaboration “Destination Unknown” from the total.

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

#### **Arthur Wood.**

Kerrville Kronikles 09/08.