



Nick Drake “**Made To Love Magic**” Island Records

This reassessment of Nick Drake’s musical legacy mostly features material that previously appeared on his 1969 debut album “**Three Leaves Left**” – three tracks, and the 1987 fourteen-song retrospective “**Time Of No Reply**” – nine tracks, plus the previously unreleased [and newly discovered] 1974 track “Tow The Line.”

“**Made To Love Magic**” opens with “Rider On The Wheel” which first appeared on “**Time Of No Reply**.” “Mayfair” also appeared on the latter disc, and the voice and guitar version that appears on this new collection [the track actually ends rather abruptly] was recorded by Drake’s orchestral arranger, Robert Kirby, in his room at Caius College on a mono tape-recorder during the early months of 1968. The version of “River Man” featured here was recorded at the same time, while a later studio version appeared on “**Three Leaves Left**.” Kirby’s contribution to Drake’s oeuvre should not be underestimated and “Magic” [aka “I Was Made To Love Magic”] features a new – actually the 1968 original – orchestration, as does the title track from “**Time Of No Reply**.” “Joey” and “Clothes Of Sand” are actually early songs penned by Nick, and they pre-date the “**Three Leaves Left**” sessions, but only surfaced in the *public domain* with the appearance of “**Time Of No Reply**.” On this collection both cuts have been re-mastered.

The tracks “Three Hours” and “Thoughts Of Mary Jane” are alternate versions to that which appeared on “**Three Leaves Left**,” and the former now features an un-credited flute player, while the latter re-mastered cut includes Richard Thompson’s understated electric guitar work. An alternate version of “Thoughts Of Mary Jane” also appeared on “**Time Of No Reply**.” Finally from “**Time Of No Reply**,” there’s “Black Eyed Dog” and “Voices” [aka “Voice From The Mountain”], plus a new reading of “Hanging On A Star.”

I’ve deliberately avoided a musical or lyrical analysis of the dozen tracks mentioned to date, since they are already well familiar Nick Drake compositions. The aforementioned “Tow The Line,” which dates from Nick’s final recording session during the summer of 1974, contains a lyric that belies his normally wistful or melancholic lyrical tone. In fact track thirteen [!], is rather positive with regard to the sentiment expressed, which adds further ambiguity to the sad event that occurred a handful of months later. As this 2 minute 16 second long cut ends, you can hear Drake lay down his guitar.....

What this latest visit adds to Nick Drake’s recorded legacy, well, I’ll leave you, dear reader, to draw your own conclusions.

Folkwax Rating 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 05/04 & 06/04.