

Hothouse Flowers can save your soul

Hothouse Flowers
People

Friends, can I witness to you? These are troubled times and I know that you have been feeling put down, let down, kept down and many of your fellow neighbors have turned out to be low down. But things are going to change. Somebody say "Amen." *Amen!*

Yes, things are going to change because music can make you whole and rock 'n' roll can save your soul. The Lord works in mysterious ways, friends, and from the misty isle of Ireland he has called forth a band of prodigious power.

They are called Hothouse Flowers, but don't let the name fool you—these boys are wolves in sheeps' clothing. Their debut album is *People* and they commence to testifying on the very first track.

It's called "I'm Sorry" and the band rips through this gospel-drenched rave-up with the spirit of conviction. Lead singer Liam O'Maonlai tosses off lyrics with a mangy assurance that took John Mellencamp years to master.

He has confidence because the Lord is with them, as evidenced by such inspired lines as, "There comes a time in every man's life when he's got to\ Look over his misdemeanors, misgivings, misfortunes and miss\ Whatever her name is\ Yeah, and say you're sorry."

They also offer the comfort of "It'll Be Easier In The Morning" and the cautionary tale of "Hallelujah Jordan," the story of a man who fell desperately in love only to see his sweetheart tempted away by a smart young man in a real fast car.

Obviously, this band is blessed. They have soulful back-up singing. They have saxophone solos.

And they have wisdom to share, such as on "The Older We Get," wherein Brother Liam says, "As a child touching age, we think that it's so\ That life, love and everything is easy to know\ The old they can't reach us\ Their ways are not ours\ Though they furrowed our futures\ Our Freedom they bore\ The older we get, the further we see\ The more we mean to each other\ The more you mean to me."



But sin is everywhere, friends. *Amen.* Yes, sin is everywhere and this album is no exception. Satan rears his ugly head on "The Ballad of Katie."

Any song written after 1970 that's called "The Ballad Of..." is the work of the devil and this one is no exception. Brother Liam does his Jim Morrison imitation, it's the longest tune on the album and it has... a Western Theme!

This smacks of pride! *Amen!* This smacks of gluttony! *Hallelujah!* This smacks of excess! *Lordy!*

But everyone stumbles and God is there for Hothouse Flowers, the way he'll be there for you. He picks them up and carries them through the last three glorious numbers. Those last three tracks are redemption indeed, as is the rest of this album.

Yes, there is always hope, there is always love. As they sing on "Forgiven," "We have been wrong\ But the light will save us." Somebody say "Amen." *Amen!*

By Michael Giltz