

Nathan Bell Love > Fear (48 Hours In Traitorland) (Stone Barn)

The role of the protest folk-singer seems have gained an even greater relevance in recent (darker) times. Echoing a time when the guitar and harmonica wielding story-teller and oracle of truth was front and centre.

Now they work on the fringes. What you see is what you get here with this album: Bell with guitar and harmonica and a bunch of songs that tell it as he sees it.

Songs of the working man, the working woman and of lost souls.

In these songs ordinary people are given a voice. It is a voice that has some portent and potency.

One that is set against his simple but effective guitar playing. Raise Your Fist, is as it sounds, a call to action to make yourself know.

It is dedicated to the athletes at the 1968

Olympics who gave the black power salute.

While Coal Black Water takes to task those coal companies who abused the land and the miners for profit. One Man Walking is about how an individual can face up to those things in life that he finds difficult to face but makes an individual stand against.

Traitorland is a song that set some guidelines for living (and loving). Perhaps the immediate standout though is MIA (Bill In 1975), wherein the turns the acronym into a number of alternatives like Missing In America and Mad In America about a brother who after returning from the Vietnam War went to live in Montreal and lost contact with his family.

Bell stands alongside the likes of Joe Purdy as a man who follows the path laid down by Woody Guthrie and the stripped down harshness and hardness of Springsteen's Nebraska.

This is how Bell would sound live and in fact half the songs here are live recordings and full of life and light.

This is a raw recording that follows previous albums like the studio recorded I Don't Do This For Love, I Do This For Love which was released in 2016.

This is a timely release that will hit home for many.

– *Stephen Rapid, Lonesome Highway (Ireland)*