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## Album Review- W.E.T., "W.E.T."

By tylenwoodbridge



W.E.T.'s self-titled debut album

Most casual music listeners and hipster critics live in the belief that anthemic rock died out some fifteen-odd years ago and only belongs in cheesy montages, ironic references, middle-aged flashbacks and the bottom of department store bargain bins. Wrong. Since the (mainstream) downfall of hair metal, arena rock, glam, and AOR there have been a contingent of artists who have slaved, labored, toured, and rocked their way through life just to bring us quality music. Three of these bands are the funk-influenced Talisman, the Toto-esque Work of Art, and the riff-oriented Eclipse. Members of the aforementioned bands have come together to bring us the band W.E.T., and combine their talents to showcase what, on the surface, looks like what could be a melodic rock masterpiece.

Before I continue on with this review, I must acknowledge and promote a website that has done more to promote this genre of music than any other. Visit [Melodic Rock](#) to read reviews, news, press releases, and interviews centered around melodic rock bands old (Journey, Styx, Survivor, Van Halen), little-known (Pride of Lions, Gotthard, Tall Stories, Tyketto), and new (Anberlin, Airbourne, Shinedown, and now W.E.T.) Be sure to visit the forums for a wealth of entertainment and knowledge, and stay tuned for weekday updates on a variety of independent and major-label artists.



The website through which I've discovered dozens of Melodic Rock and metal bands

Now for a bit of background on W.E.T. Robert Sall of Work of Art, Erik Martensson of Eclipse, and Jeff Scott Soto of Talisman are all veterans of the Swedish and international music scene, having decades of professional experience between them. Perhaps the most well-known of the lot is Jeff Scott Soto, who has also spent time with Yngwie Malmsteen's band, Soul SirkUS, and even the gods of the genre, Journey. One can't speak enough of Soto's vocal talents, he's one of the most underrated voices in any style of music. Equal parts Sammy Hagar, Chris Cornell, and Steve Perry; there isn't much Soto can't sing, and emote well while doing so.

The first track, "Invincible," has a calm intro before an explosion of riffs splits the speakers. Soto's voice combines soul, R&B, and funk influences with soaring, anthemic notes. The band is incredibly tight; the instruments weave in and out of one another while maintaining a punch. The guitars shift from heavy and surging to wafing and epic. Major props go out to the understated yet effective keyboard theme, and the fact that Soto's vocals sound especially "from the heart" on this record thus far.

The first song seamlessly gives way to the second, "One Love." This song sounds like a sequel to the first, but there's evident difference in the feel. The method by which the riffs give way to Soto's vocals, and the brilliance of the snappy rhythm section, make the song flow rather well. The vocals are mixed extremely well and this is definitely a "sing-along" type of tune. I love Soto's vocal especially about 2/3 through the song, right before the destructive tapping solo that is equal parts Van Halen and Schon, but all W.E.T.

"Brothers in Arms" has a very effective main riff. This song soars just as much if not more than the others before it. It's not proven, but I believe this song to be a tribute to the late Marcel Jacob, Soto's longtime bassist in Talisman and friend. I find Soto's voice to be inspirational, full, vibrant, and deep. The guitars chug in the bridge, and the song turns on a dime. It defies the typical formula of the genre, especially after the chugging near-metal section gives way to peaceful drum-and-key interludes. The ending blast to the song is pseudo Dream Theater before the record gives way and lessens pace to the fourth tune.

"Comes Down Like Rain" does just that, a gentle shower of moody and moving lyrics from Soto. W.E.T. manages to keep an epic sound even in their first ballad of the record. The guys are masters of melody and prove it yet again here. The guitar solo is very technically good, but it honestly has a "come out of nowhere" feel to it and don't think it fit well to the mood and rhythm section. Good, but just not for the song.

"Running from the Heartache" is another dark and moody yet surging and big up-tempo number. The keyboards are tasteful yet again, and have been throughout the record. One criticism of the genre is that synths could be too overstated or used too much... but yet in this album the keys are beautiful and accent the music rather than take it over. Guitars are big in melodic rock and this record is no exception.

I really do love "I'll Be There." This is the fastest track yet and its feel is a mix of Survivor, Soto's solo material, and the best of pop rock. The lyrics could be passed off as "cheesy" but Soto emotes them well enough to make them authentic; one can really "feel" listening to music like this. I love the riff, it's very fist pump-worthy, and I can see myself cruising around to this song for years to come. "I'll Be There" fits in well with any playlist of uptempo rock and roll. The best solo of the record thus far shreds through the speakers halfway through the tune. Melodic rock is packed to the brim with extremely talented instrumentalists. Martensson, Sall, and helpers Magnus Henriksson and Robban Back deserve their fair share of accolades and respect. It's a shame that great players like these guys are relatively unknown and unappreciated while folk like the Jonas Brothers and Daughtry sell out stadiums and rack up platinum records.

"Damage is Done" is yet another up-tempo head-bobbing rocker. The shifts in timing and lush harmonies keep a fresh feel to the otherwise consistent mood of the record. There's a great flow to this album, and should be listened to as an album despite the single-worthy qualities of the tunes. These songs could definitely be hits in the U.S. if it weren't for the average listener being a sheep force-fed with ringtone rap and overmarketed pop-tarts... but that's a rant for another blog.

Songs like "Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is" prove that the boys in W.E.T. are having a little fun with this album. It's bluesier with more hard rock roots than the rest of the songs thus far. It wouldn't sound out of place on a modern Whitesnake or Winger record, and that's not a bad thing. It's not as serious and dire as some of the other tunes but it's a change in mood that's very well-timed.

Another ballad comes in the form of "One Day at a Time." In the vein of Journey's "After the Fall" or Whitesnake's "Is This Love?", it's a dense song with a snappy flow. I love how the twin guitar solo is layered, and how the harmonies are mixed. Production is top-notch; I can hear the instruments clearly. Authenticism isn't subtracted and there isn't any trickery, it's just very well-recorded. The song takes nearly a minute to close out, with intense and morose keyboard and bass tones lulling me unsuspectingly into the next song.

"Just Go" revisits some of the gnarliest Talisman rockers with its churning feel. The drumming is impeccable and I really can't say enough of the piercing guitar work. The keyboard is again wonderfully understated and accents the song. "Can't choose the way we die/But we can choose how we live." Brilliant lyricism and an inspirational feel. Are the guys saving the best guitar work on the album for the latter half? It sure seems so with this dynamic solo.

"My Everything" revisits the feel of "I'll Be There," and keeps a smile on my face as I tap my foot to these relentless riffs. The guitar solo, again, is beautiful and fits smoothly into the rhythm section. Soto's reflections and vocal trademarks are well-timed and precise, he's a master of the vocal craft.

The album comes to a less hectic ending. "If I Fall" is possibly the best song on the album. It's a mid-tempo song, faster than the ballads on the record yet not fast enough to fit in with any of the anthems. I love how the smooth intro goes straight into isolated guitar, thundering drums, tasteful piano, and then incredible vocals. The ringing, clean guitars throughout the background of the verses are extremely well-done and add to the passionate vocal work. The chorus is sensational, the harmonies are some of the best ever done in rock, I'm grinning from ear to ear, the song has definitely done its job. I can "feel" it, and love how this song makes me feel, it will be listened to many more times in my life. Fans of Journey will definitely eat this song up. The guitars are melodic yet piercing, it's everything the genre stands for, was that even a "Who's Crying Now" motif I heard thrown in? The outro is several minutes long, but it's very effective and a great ending to what I see as a very good album. As I listen to the AMAZING guitar work, I wonder how the solos can get any better... and somehow, they do. It all fits well together and is a very mature, dense, impressionable piece of work.

W.E.T.'s debut album was moody, direct, well-paced, mature, mostly up-tempo and well-produced. A handful of the songs truly made me "feel" while the others delivered melodic rock with a seasoned feel. There wasn't much that felt "cheesy" or "forced" or "formulaic" about this record; those are the typical criticisms of the genre as a whole. The instrumentalists are very talented and Soto has some of the best vocal work of his entire 25 year career, one can argue he gets better with age. The album did have one song that truly helped elevate it into greatness, and that was the beautiful "If I Fall." While W.E.T.'s work isn't incredibly deep or innovative, it's great rock and roll and worth every cent you pay to help support a good band, if you buy this record (which I kindly suggest you do).

Highly recommended to fans of any melodic rock, old or new, especially Work of Art, Eclipse, Talisman, Jeff Scott Soto, Journey, Whitesnake, Survivor, Pride of Lions, Boston, and Sammy Hager-era Van Halen.

Great album, nothing groundbreaking, deep instrumentals under melodic sing-along lyrics, one of the best albums in years within the genre and perhaps one of the best since the 80s.

FINAL GRADE: B+



W.E.T.

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