

ARTS

The Boss goes acoustic

Nebraska
Bruce Springsteen
CBS Records

by Mark Roppel

For all of you Springsteen fanatics out there weaned on "Born to Run" and "Hungry Heart", *Nebraska* is going to come as a shock: that's right my little droogies, the Boss has gone acoustic. The E Street Band is nowhere to be heard on this album, just Bruce with his guitar and harmonica — sort of like a watered down version of the late great John Lennon's "Plastic Ono Band".

I do not mean to suggest that Springsteen has taken a radical new departure in his music, he is still writing about cars and girls, but compared to *The River*, *Nebraska* is decidedly downbeat.

"Open All Night", the only song on the album which could be considered "upbeat", is a musical and lyrical clone of "Ramrod", as for the remaining tracks, the listener could easily be forgiven if he had difficulty distinguishing one from another. After about ten minutes of Bruce mournfully wailing away (come on, nothing is that bad!) and monotonously picking his six string, one experiences a sensation dangerously close to boredom. Occasionally Springsteen promises to break out of his self-imposed comatose state, but he never quite does, and his harmonica solos are nothing if not irritating.

Now the big question is, if the album is so bad, why did I like it? What could possibly be more ridiculous than some filthy rich rock star singing about unemployment, poverty, and jail? But somehow, Springsteen manages to convey the despair, the frustration, the humiliation, and above all the hopelessness of someone who knows their life is a dead end. I guess that is why they call him the Boss.

The title cut is the story of a man who, along with his "pretty baby" (no wonder Springsteen gets so much flak from feminists), goes on a killing spree and is now facing the electric chair.

I can't say I'm sorry for the things that we done
At least for a little while sir me and her we had us some fun.

In "My Father's House" our humble narrator returns home only to discover, "I'm sorry son but no one by that name lives here anymore". My favourite track is "Highway Patrolman", about a cop who lets his murdering brother get away.

Me and Franky laughin' and drinkin' nothin' feels better than blood on blood
Takin' turns dancin' with Maria as the band played "night of the Johnstown Flood"

I catch him when he's strayin' like any brother would
Man turns his back on his family well he just ain't no good.

How could anyone not be moved? (Hey, this is better than "Stairway to Heaven!")

At times *Nebraska* sounds like SCTV's "Farm Film Report", since no less than four of the songs on the first side contain lyrical references to people getting "blowed up good"; over half the tracks contain that ultimate American symbol of freedom, the car — driving down the highway trying to leave everything behind. Make of all this what you will (is Bruce secretly a psychopath?), but I think it is best summed up in the final song of the album, "Reason to Believe":

Struck me kind of funny
funny yea indeed
how at the end of every hard
earned day you can find
some reason to believe

Nebraska was recorded at home on a four-track tape deck, at present Springsteen is back in the studio with the E Street Band. I have never been a big fan of the E Street Band, but there is no denying that — even if only due to sheer numbers — they pack a lot of punch. Perhaps this next album will pick up where "The River" left off, but in the meantime if you are feeling low and want to feel even lower, *Nebraska* is for you.

ARTS QUIZ



by Bruno Betelnutt

1) This week's theme is verbal abuse against individuals. For starters, who called Nietzsche "an agile but unintelligent and abnormal German, possessed of the mania of grandeur"?

- a) Zola
- b) Tolstoy
- c) H.G. Wells
- d) Hitler

2) Who said, "I'd like my son to be like Par (Boone) - until he was three years old."

- a) Frank Sinatra
- b) Lenny Bruce
- c) John Lennon
- d) Marie Osmond

3) Who called Henry Fielding "a blockhead"?

- a) Samuel Johnson
- b) Goethe
- c) Byron
- d) Tom Jones

4) Who said, "Rossini would have been a great composer if his teacher had given him enough blows ad posteriora."

- a) Bach
 - b) Beethoven
 - c) Brahms
 - d) Wagner
- 5) What sinful fellow called Jesus "a parish demagogue."
- a) Shakespeare
 - b) Shelley
 - c) Shaw
 - d) Sholbrenken

6) To end on a friendlier note: which pre-WWII figure admitted Mussolini as a "bulwark against Bolshevism."

- a) Franco
- b) Malcolm Muggeridge
- c) Ezra Pound
- d) Churchill

ANSWERS: 1) B, 2) A, 3) C, 4) D, 5) D, 6) B

THE CAREER WITH THE SOLID FUTURE.

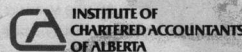
Set your sights on a challenging career with long-term security. The opportunity to be part of a dynamic profession; Monetary rewards befitting professional qualifications; And the scope to apply your inter-personal skills.

Consider becoming a Chartered Accountant.

Your University degree makes you eligible to enroll as a Chartered Accountant Student — The next step in your professional life. As a prospective Chartered Accountant you will pursue formal requirements including practical experience and on-the-job training leading to the C.A. designation.

It's a life-time of challenge.

Look into the Career with the Solid Future.



201-10080 Jasper Avenue Edmonton Alberta T5J 1V9 (403) 424-7391
Calgary 264-3420, Red Deer: Zenith 22030, Oilhills Telephone Toll Free: 1-800-222-6418

STUDENTS!
1/2 PRICE SEAT SALE
for . . .

- Paris • Nuremberg
- Munich • Venice
- Plymouth • California

Departure through the magic of
EDMONTON OPERA'S
20th anniversary season

<i>La Traviata</i> <small>sponsored by Imperial Oil Limited</small>	Paris, France Nov. 30, 1982 7 p.m.
<i>The Tales of Hoffmann</i>	Nuremberg, Munich & Venice Feb. 1, 1983 7 p.m.
<i>I Puritani</i>	Plymouth, England March 29, 1983 7 p.m.
<i>The Girl of the Golden West</i>	California March 17, 1983 7 p.m.

• Regular cast
• Full orchestra

DON'T MISS THE MAGIC!
Irving Guttman **Call 422-7200 now**
Artistic Director For subscriptions and information on family rates and other regular performances

EDMONTON OPERA