

Eza Furman Transangelic Exodus – Album Review

If I were a biased person, I could start this review stating that *Transangelic Exodus* is such an accomplished album it makes you wonder if Ezra Furman hasn't fallen to the earth from a higher plain. The review would end there and everyone would wonder why a Journalist would make such a sweeping statement. However, that is exactly the story of *Transangelic Exodus*, Furman's seventh studio album and very first concept album.

If Ezra Furman was ever going to write a concept album, it was never going to be anything other than fantastical and so it's no surprise that on *Transangelic Exodus* Furman tells the story of his love affair with an angel and their decision to flee into the unknown together for fear of persecution because that love is illegal. When Furman returned with new music and a new band name, *Ezra Furman and the Visions*, it was certainly not a quiet return.

The video for the first single, *Driving Down to LA*, features Furman looking furtive in a car being driven into the night by a glitter clad angel, all the while being chased by neo-Nazis. The video sets the tone of *Transangelic Exodus* with its dark and twisted overtones, at the end of the video Furman gets shot, crimson blood soaking into the feathers of his angelic amour.

There is an ever increasing sense of urgency contained within this album, 'don't tell my mum, don't tell my dad' pleads Furman. 'I'm driving down to LA with my baby'. *Driving Down to LA* starts innocently enough, with a calming beat track, before building to a screaming, desperate chorus of white noise. One thing can be said for Ezra Furman, ever since his debut, *Banging Down the Doors* (2007) he has been the king of restyling, reworking and reinvention. From the acoustic, DIY folk of his albums as *Ezra Furman and the Harpoons* to the Chuck Berry and Jonathan Richman stylings of *Day of the Dog* (2013), he is pushing, expanding and reforming himself like Day-Glo putty. *Transangelic Exodus* feels a departure even from that.

On songs such as *Suck the Blood from my Wound* Furman borrows from Shakespeare and opens the album spewing the famous line, 'a plague on both your houses'. *Transangelic Exodus*, although a fictional concept album, also feels deeply personal. Haunting cello watches over the proceedings of *God Lifts up the Lowly* and the lines possess at once a poetic fragility along with the requirement to pass comment on the here and now. 'My angel has wings of tin foil and cigarettes found in the street. My angel's got eyes like a housing project'. Lines like these

showcase Furman's skill as a lyricist, as a listener you are transported to a world devoid of hope, the narrator pinning it onto this other worldly beacon. *No Place* is full of techno beats reminiscent of Patrick Wolf's *Vulture*. It's clear that these are story songs, with murky trumpets.

A stand out of the entire album is *Love You So Bad*, with its joyous charging rhythm and the extremely relatable line, 'you still send me the occasional email, I got a dumb job working in retail, miss you baby so bad' followed by a wah-wah chorus.

Transangelic Exodus contains deeply personal songs too such as *Maraschino Red Dress, \$8.99 at Good Will*. The guitar lines are frantic, the lyrics nervously concealing the shame of a double life. The listener is in that Good Will store with Furman, standing at the counter, the dress in sweaty hands as Furman confesses, 'looking over my shoulder, I am hideous and no one can ever know. The darkest of road trips comes to a close, with *I Lost my Innocence*. 'I lost my innocence to a boy named Vincent'. 'I am semi-naked on his rooftop dreaming'. 'A new existence soon found me'. It feels as though the narrator has escaped the shackles and is heading into blissed out freedom; *Transangelic Exodus* certainly makes you feel that way, a decadent delight.

Transangelic Exodus is out on the 9th February 2018, via Bella Union. Ezra Furman tours the UK this May