



## In Rainbows

### Radiohead

A new Radiohead is always an event, but the furore surrounding *In Rainbows* has mainly focused on the manner of its release rather than the material it contains. Now free of their recording contract and in the unique position of being household name innovators, the band released their seventh studio album as a digital download with a twist - the customer chooses how much they pay. The album is also available as a 'discbox' containing a second CD of extra material, digital photographs and artwork and two heavyweight vinyl discs. At £40 it's a bit of a collector's item but certainly separates the fans from the casual listeners and is still decent value for money.



There's a good argument for putting the decision on the value of music in the hands of the consumer. If music doesn't mean all that much to you, pay less. If it means a lot to you, pay more. If you haven't got much money, why should you be denied access to music? Is it such a packaged commodity now that it's so separate from other forms of art? Of course, this principle only works if the more well-off music lovers dig a little deeper, but remember the theory that you only get out of life what you put in...

So, is this the future of album releases? It's certainly an interesting step in a new direction and one that will make people think a little differently about the potential for different ways of doing things in the future. The idea of being dependent on a record company for everything has been losing its pull over the last few years, the internet having brought more independent marketing opportunities for musicians, but that doesn't mean they don't have anything to offer - after all, it's all very well swimming in a sea of My Space bands but getting heard by a wider audience takes a bit more of a push. Radiohead got that push a long time ago and are now free to experiment, not just musically, but with the way they operate the business side of being a band.

With this sort of discussion raging across the press, it's just as well that *In Rainbows* is a superb album. The intro to '15 Step' could be from Thom Yorke's 2006 release *Eraser* and the song is a good bridge between Thom Yorke the solo artist and Radiohead the band, with each musician joining in separately, the parts layering up to create a chaotic blend. 'Bodysnatchers' is one of the most straightforward band songs, with Yorke's impassioned "I've no idea what I'm talking about / I'm trapped in this body and can't get out" chorus surrounded by crazed squalls of guitar and some really cool noises. 'Jigsaw Falling Into Place' is another, with rising guitar lines and a menacing bite to the vocals.

It's the off kilter stuff that's the most meaty, with the downbeat 'Nude' and 'All I Need' providing a delicately dark contrast to the fantastic shufflings of 'Weird Fishes/Arpeggi' and 'Reckoner' and their central guitar hooks. 'Faust Arp' brings lush string parts and pretty acoustic guitar together under quietly sung repetitive vocal parts, 'House Of Cards' parodies pop lyrics with a mournfully intoned 'I don't wanna be your friend / I just wanna be your lover' over a funky groove and 'Videotape' is a beautiful ending to the album, a doleful piano piece with a moving vocal.

No, this album is not the new *OK Computer*. Neither is it *The Bends*. It is *In Rainbows*, and it is excellent.



#### Track Listing

1. 15 Step
2. Bodysnatchers
3. Nude
4. Weird Fishes/Arpeggi
5. All I Need
6. Faust Arp
7. Reckoner

8. House Of Cards
9. Jigsaw Falling Into Place
10. Videotape

*Try this if you like:* Jeff Buckley, Miles Davis, Squarepusher, Muse

*Laura Kidd*

