

IMPOSSIBLE MAN



TODD HEARON

ALBUM REVIEW



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UNITED STATES, EXETER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Todd Hearon's *IMPOSSIBLE MAN* marks the final instalment in a trilogy of albums that began with *BORDER RADIO* (2021) and continued with *YODELADY* (2023). The new album represents both a return to roots and an exploration of new sonic landscapes, blending Hearon's love for traditional Americana with contemporary indie folk influences. Produced by Don Dixon, famed for his work with R.E.M., and recorded at Mitch Easter's Fidelitorium Studio in North Carolina, *IMPOSSIBLE MAN* finds Hearon pushing his boundaries alongside an impressive lineup of musicians including Peter Holsapple, Rob Ladd, and Sam Wilson.

The album's standout quality is its ability to straddle multiple genres. Hearon seamlessly weaves between folk, alt-country, and classic rock while drawing influence from indie greats like The Velvet Underground and Townes Van Zandt. This creates an expansive sonic palette, allowing each song to stand as a unique moment within a cohesive whole. What drives *IMPOSSIBLE MAN* forward is its lyrical depth and carefully crafted narratives, where personal reflection meets universal themes.

The opening track, "Looking Glass," sets the tone with a deep dive into the complexities of loving a narcissist. It's a slow-burning folk-rock piece that blends acoustic strums with shimmering organs, all tied together by Hearon's rich, resonant vocals. The metaphor of the "looking glass" suggests a person

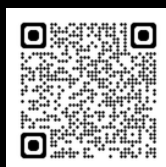
trapped in their own reflection—whether through a mirror or an iPhone screen—and longing for connection beyond the self. The production here, like much of the album, is lush and layered, echoing the "trippy psychedelic aesthetics" mentioned in earlier reviews, yet still rooted in Americana traditions.

One of the album's most striking moments is "Guillotine," a song that confronts the fleeting nature of life and relationships. Inspired by the idea that for a brief 15 seconds after decapitation, the head may remain conscious, the song asks: What do we see in those final moments? It's a fascinating metaphor for severed relationships and the strange clarity that comes with emotional distance. Musically, it's one of the heavier tracks on the album, driven by Rob Ladd's percussion and Sam Wilson's electric guitar. The tension builds, erupting in a cathartic release that feels both raw and philosophical.

The emotional and musical depth of *IMPOSSIBLE MAN* is further highlighted by standout contributions from the ensemble of musicians. Holsapple's versatile musicianship adds texture, with his piano, Mellotron, and accordion seamlessly threading through the songs. Sam Wilson's pedal steel and lap steel guitar work give tracks like "Guillotine" and "Paper Flowers" a rich, atmospheric quality, while Don Dixon's bass and background vocals root the album in a solid foundation of Americana tradition.



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REVIEWED BY TAMARA JENNA

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