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Reviews

St. Paul & The Broken Bones

Young Sick Camellia

RECORDS LLC



Paul Janeway grew up in a religious home. Secular music was not allowed in the house, but the Sam Cooke and Otis

Redding albums that got the green light informed his Sunday morning performances in front of the church choir. That combination of sacred and secular spirituality is what makes the vocals Janeway contributes to this group so compelling. **The Broken Bones** are a potent backing band, but Janeway's larger than life personality dominates every track. "GottBad" uses a swinging, James Brown-like funk beat and staccato horn accents to take on religious hypocrisy and pending ecological disasters, but most of these songs focus on the grief of love gone wrong. Janeway's crying falsetto on "Apollo" is supported by **Al Gamble's** gospel-flavored piano. The lyric equates the emptiness of space with the silence that signifies the end of a relationship. With its stuttering horns and dramatic rhythmic accents, "LivWithoutU" has the aura of an R&B single from the '60s. Every time Janeway sings, "I can't live without you," he adds a heart-gripping shriek of despair to his vocal line. The set closes with "Bruised Fruit," a deliberation on the pain that ensnares you at the end of a love affair. It opens with some slow, solemn notes from Gamble's acoustic piano and a somber wash of violins and cellos to set up Janeway's tremulous singing. His vocal improvisations slide up and down the scale, pleading for the return of the happy days that he knows are long gone. When he cries, "You did nothing right. You did nothing wrong," he absolves his lover of blame, making the end of the affair even more heartbreaking. *J. Poet*