"THE WAY I AM:" LUKE COMBS RELEASES THE LONGEST ALBUM OF HIS CAREER

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Country superstar Luke Combs released "The Way I Am" on Friday, March 20. It's the largest album he's ever made, filled with 22 songs of rich and energetic music and vocals.

As someone who's never listened to Combs, I didn't know what to expect from the album. But after listening to it, Combs became one of my favorite country artists.

The album begins with "Back in the Saddle," a powerful tune which has an energetic opening that captured my interest. Comprised of bustling guitar and catchy vocals, the song describes returning to the saddle after being away for a while. The music video reveals that the saddle represents a race car, which zooms around a racetrack as Combs sings the song.

The second song, "My Kinda Saturday Night," continues the lively vibe brought by "Back in the Saddle." Containing groovy vocals that blend flawlessly with the music, the song depicts elements that fulfill the typical Saturday night that Combs would want, with some including drugs and relaxing outside on the porch.

The next two songs, "Days Like These" and "15 Minutes" provide laid-back guitar music with emotional vocals. "Days Like These" portrays the desires of the singer: a blue sky, a bright sun, green grass and someone to be with. Meanwhile, "15 Minutes" illustrates a scenario where a prisoner writes to his mother asking how she and her family are doing. At the same time, he shares that he's getting by and living on.

"Alcohol of Fame" is the first song that mentions beer, a common substance in country music lyrics. Beginning with a rock-like intro, the song is about drinking your sorrows away while dealing with difficulties such as breakups.

In "Daytona 499," uplifting music with sweeping vocals take over. Combs describes reminiscing on a relationship and thinking about how it could've been better.

"The Way I Am" is one of my favorite songs from the album. Compared to the previous songs, the song is very emotional. Full of piano melodies and heart-tugging vocals, the song describes someone staying with their lover, even through said lover's mental health challenges.

"Wish Upon a Whiskey" is another song about drinking. It doesn't provide much emotion; it just talks about drinking whiskey to feel better when experiencing pain.

"Soon as I Get Home" is more on the uplifting side. Comprised of hopeful guitar music and vocals, the song portrays someone coming home to their lover and making up for their disappearance.

"Rethink Some Things" and "Giving Her Away" talk about change. "Rethink Some Things" renders relationship complications and how they lead to changes in how one sees the relationship. "Giving Her Away" narrates the moment when a father gives his daughter away to her new husband. The song is very heart-tugging, creating an experience that every father of a married woman can relate to.

"Seeing Someone," "Sleepless in a Hotel" and "I Ain't No Cowboy" describe complications of love. With emotional guitar music, "Seeing Someone" depicts reminiscing about a past lover after moving on from her. "Sleepless in a Hotel" describes someone dreaming of their lover while they're staying at a hotel far away from home. And "I Ain't No Cowboy" provides laid-black guitar music along with beautiful vocals that portray the desire to mend a complicated romantic relationship.

"Ever Mine" is another song that stands out, featuring country singer Alison Krauss. It's a message from a father to a daughter describing all the memories of the two. However, I don't like that Krauss doesn't have her own line in the song. Her voice only appears in the chorus, where it's barely heard since it blends with Combs's voice.

"Can't Tell Me I'm Wrong," "Miss You Here," "Tell 'Em About Tonight" and "Be By You" are four spry songs that sound like rock tunes. They're all about romance and relationships issues.

"The Me Part of You" breaks the romance streak by centering on the coming of age. With energetic and inspiring vocals, the song portrays new experiences and chances a child will endure as they age.

"Rich Man" is another one of my favorite songs from the album. Containing relaxing guitar music, the song depicts a crucial lesson about money: that it doesn't go with you when you die. It tells listeners that family and happiness are the true elements that make you rich.

The final song, "A Man Was Born," closes the album with enthusiastic music and vocals that describe the obstacles and complications that one might face, which can alter their personality.

Even as someone who doesn't regularly listen to country music, this album was amazing to listen to. My only critique is that Krauss deserved more on her featured spot in "Ever Mine." Rather than burying her voice with Combs's voice, Combs could've given her a moment to shine. But other than that, I absolutely loved listening to the album.

Rating: 4.5/5



Luke Combs, an American country singer, on the cover of his album "The Way I Am." The album was released on Friday, March 20. PHOTO COURTESY OF @LUKECOMBS ON INSTAGRAM.