

John Mayer's Last Train Home– September 15th, 2021

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I first heard John Mayer's new song Last Train Home about a month ago. I was excited by it and thought immediately that it was his best song since 2003. That's eighteen years! What happened with John Mayer? I read once in a Playboy interview with him that he was an obsessive dude who collected fine watches, was somewhat mentored by Eric Clapton, and that he is/was a massive womanizer. The womanizer part we'll get to more, in a bit.

When John Mayer first burst on the scene, I was excited by the vitality in his playing. My friends and I would get the tabs for songs like Neon and No Such Thing and hone our playing until we could get his guitar work down. He had a refreshing brand of pop that emphasized "adulthood", something which I now loathe. At the time, it was fun. For an impressionable teen, doubly so. I yearned to be an adult and on my own, as most teens did back then. John was clearly an intelligent dude and quick with the verbal quips. I liked that about him and so I rooted for him. I went to a show of his in July of 2004 with a girlfriend. I plugged my ears for the entirety of

Maroon 5's set, which greatly upset the girlfriend's younger sister. She pouted! Stay mad! I remember watching the show and being disappointed that John didn't have the bombast on stage that his songs had. I didn't understand at the time that whatever is conveyed in the lyrics of the songs isn't necessarily conveyed on stage by the artist. Most artists just go up there, play the songs, say few words between the songs, and show off a bit to the crowd. John did all of that but for me, it wasn't meaningful enough. I was trying to learn about ferocity, something the flashes in his early work showed me.

The next year, John Mayer veered off into blues and I completely lost interest in him. In my opinion, he never recovered. The exuberance of No Such Thing, Neon, Bigger Than My Body, and New Deep was wiped out by his crooning streak. He fully became a crooning blues man who clearly just wrote songs to get women. I loathed him for it. I wanted to hear the guy who proved his success to his high school classmates that thought less of him. But Your Body Is A Wonderland and Daughters were the bigger hits for him and cemented something ugly in him.

Not long after I lost interest in him, John became a tabloid fixture. He was bagging pop bimbos. By his own admission, he was massively hooked on Internet pornography for a number of years. He developed this lecherous thing in his personality that he covered up with tattoos and his youthful charm. I thought he was revolting. I resented him for veering away from the rudiments of masculinity and self-knowledge in his early songs and into the ghetto of blues and womanizing. I lost track of him after a while, checking in only when he released the Queen Of California single (admittedly it's very well written) and when he put out the forgettable Paradise Valley album because the cover picture was wonderfully done (shot in Montana).

I don't think John Mayer ever got to become who he was set to become. I think he got sidetracked by his own indulgences, to an extreme degree, and just never developed the imagination to challenge the meaning of what he was doing. He was smart enough to not be in The Machine but let it use him as compensation for using women forever.

I got queued back into John Mayer when checking out his stuff out of boredom almost exactly two years ago he let slip for a brief moment a shot of his studio on his ranch outside of Bozeman

in the lyric video for Carry Me Away. I liked that he seemed to be attempting something a bit more grand and orchestral toward the end of the song and made a mental note to check in on him in a year or two. He released forgettable fair in the next year but this summer was different, with the full release of his Sob Rock album.

Last Train Home isn't a spectacular song. It's a good song. And John Mayer has been averse to "good" for a long time. Simping is evil. Simp songs are an artistic expression of evil. If you look at his insane music video for Still Feel Like Your Man, you can see his evil in full form: a seducer, a tradition and family destroyer. It's ugly. It sets up other young men for horrific failure.



Devoting 20's of thousands of dollars to a song with the line, "I still got your shampoo in my shower" isn't exactly cool, folks. He just wants to show his peepee to 9/10 road girls.

Last Train Home isn't a huge departure from form for John Mayer. The lyrics are clearly yet again about copulation. But there's something different in them. There's an apocalyptic vibe to them, with reference to "the last train home and I surrender." It kind of seems like John Mayer is looking for his last girlfriend to snuggle up with on his ranch before the world completely goes to Hell and so he put in extra effort in this song ("I'm not a fallen angel, I just fell behind. I'm out of luck and I'm out of time"). The song is better than anything he's put out in 18 years because it has a driving vitality to it that he's completely eschewed for most of his career. This reminds me of Vince Gill, who turned into a huge simp once he met Amy Grant and totally wasted his career writing crooner fair instead of letting it rip and fully embracing his talents.

Last Train Home is different in that, wrapped up in his homage to 80's acts, like perhaps Toto and Steve Winwood, is an adherence to form and even tradition. He has to include a driving, anthemic melody in the instrumental breaks. Pop music is so far gone from anything that's remotely American that to include this piece in a song is almost "folk" in its quality. I don't think John intended it this way but who knows.

Another piece that is nice about the song is that there is some emphasis on the band. Clearly he's brought in the most top dollar, top flight musicians from the 80's to moonlight on the music video and probably on the recording. It shows. The song rips. He lets himself play the guitar in service of the song instead of in service to his penis and you can tell.

The song really crescendos when the little hussy lady starts harmonizing. I forget her name. She's apparently pretty big in "country" music. Now, I'm not exactly excited that the lady got the "prime real estate" of the song. It really is embarrassing that a middle-aged man is showing off a whorishly dressed roastie with a mild pig nose in his music video, yet it's triumphant cause he KNOWS this is a spectacular hook. He KNOWS he "nailed it" with this song. He knows he's a total gunslinger in the video. He's not simping so much as he is embodying that early glory he once had. A bit of honesty slipped out from under the madness of years and years of ugly simping and made the electric connection to his homage to former glory (the 80's). You have to have a bit of that old glory in you to do it. This is why we semi-venerate people who can sing the National Anthem with great skill. It says something about them. In that regard, I am very happy for John that he could pull this song off. He does the same thing a wee little bit with some of the Dire Straits stuff in his other new song, Wild Blue, but Mark Knopfler always was a weirdo oddball who really only had vitality in his fingers. Last Train Home is connected to someone in John's mind who's a lot more bombastic, fleshed out, and heroic. Good to see he has that in him, after all these years of use and abuse.

John's getting great feedback on this song and millions of plays. Everyone with any sense left is yearning for something a little more authentic. To come out with a ripper like this, in times like these, is an inspiring spectacle. Living a long time in Montana has done him good.