

All Back to Vinyl – Phoebe Bridgers

Punisher quickly became the vinyl soundtrack for many indie fans during the pandemic.

At last, the album has been brought to the live arena and it didn't disappoint. Phoebe Bridgers opened a Hyde Park show for the Rolling Stones earlier this year performing one of the most memorable summer afternoon slots of 2022. Punisher is a work of beauty from the album art and booklet which was celebrated at the recent Manchester Apollo show with aplomb.



The 28-year-old Californian played a BC Rich Warlock guitar, the kind of brutal and jagged axe you might imagine Eddie Munson (Stranger Things) shredding. Bridgers has fun with the metal aesthetic much like her ex-boyfriend and early mentor Ryan Adams. In Manchester, she refers to Adams after opening with Motion Sickness. While she wrote the song about him and spoke of Adams in the context of her songwriting his name encouraged a chorus of loud boos. The Jacksonville-born singer-songwriter was accused of emotional abuse in 2019 by various sources. In many ways, Bridgers has picked up the baton from her ex becoming an indie/rock/folk icon during the pandemic.

Songs such as the country-tinged gem Graceland Too have quickly put her in a league of her own. A lilting voice influenced by the likes of the late Elliot Smith and arresting arrangements carry these songs from the stage and deep into

the heart. During a driving version of Kyoto, it's clear, that this is an artist and performer at the top of her game. The euphoria continues to spread during numbers such as Chinese Satellite which suggests the ambience of the Cocteau Twins. It's a privilege to see someone so tuned into what they are doing.

Thankfully there are moments to pause and catch your breath, especially during the haunting Halloween. The audience adulation is a sight to behold and there are several Stranger Things extras sporting 80s mullets, moustaches and fashions from the decade that continues to be celebrated and berated in equal measure for its fashion, politics and music. For many, a walk in the park compared to the last few years. In these dark times, you can feel the sense of catharsis in the room, especially during I Know The End.

An incredible performance that has the audience going wild, they will remember this for years to come.

