

Hi bron ▾

Friday, February 3, 2023 | Today's Paper | Mind Games

All sections

HOME

THE NATION

WORLD

BUSINESS

COMMENTARY

SPORT

ARTS

All

Search

HOME / ARTS / REVIEW



Save

Five stars for Forster's songs wrapped in love and family

The story behind Robert Forster's eighth solo album is already assuming classic proportions, and the Go-Betweens co-founder has outdone himself with a masterly set of songs.

By ANDREW MCMILLEN



Brisbane singer-songwriter and Go-Betweens co-founder Robert Forster, whose eighth solo album 'The Candle and The Flame' is a five-star effort composed of songs wrapped in love and family. Picture: Stephen Booth

From **Review** February 3, 2023
9 MINUTE READ • 1

Album reviews for week of February 3, 2023:

POP/ROCK

The Candle and the Flame

Robert Forster

EMI Music

★★★★★

Hanging by a thread, we discover how much we want to live, and how much we are loved — two lessons that can

come

too late, but here they are, as straight, pure and tasty as sunshine after rain. The story behind Robert Forster's eighth solo album is already assuming classic proportions: with many of its songs



READ NEXT



Clinique Almost Lipstick - Black Honey	\$41
-30% ELEVEN Australia Smooth Trio	\$56.90
Medik8 Night Ritual Vitamin A Age-Defying Retinol Cream 50ml	\$100
Medik8 Gentle Cleanse 150ml	\$51
Medik8 Daily R: C	\$1



AFL

Injured Stringer forced to wind back pre-season training

JAY CLARK, JON RALPH AND REBECCA WILLIAMS

drafted, recording plans for the former Go-Betweens co-founder, 65, were knocked sideways when his wife Karin Baumler was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Urgent chemotherapy followed; outside, a pandemic raged. Under such terminal clouds you'd expect a brittle or melancholy work, all vulnerability and shadow philosophy. First single *She's A Fighter* signalled something very different: an aggressively melodic song that sounded like an art-rock Celtic war-cry, laced with Baumler's tense xylophone strokes, threatening electric lead and

smashed shopping trolley percussion from son Louis Forster (ex-The Goon Sax) and his sister Loretta contributing pulsing bass, with dad Robert on equally hard-driving acoustic guitar chanting out a minimalist two-line lyric: "She's a fighter / Fighting for good."

Sly as a fox, Foster follows with the slinky, loving *Tender Years*, built around a witty storybook metaphor where "her beauty has not withered / from her entrance in chapter one" and spiced by typically arch asides to the listener that "love scenes are at night". In *I Don't Do Drugs, I Do Time*, Forster can "make it stop and rewind / to

correct mistakes of mine", a comical concept with flashes of deeper nostalgia. There's also a playful rebellion here and elsewhere that echoes *The Freewheelin'* Bob Dylan; a shrugging off of weight on the line between romantic adventure and folksy sparseness. *It's Only Poison* sounds as if written during Baumler's ultimately successful treatment, but it's an earlier work, a singalong dispensation encouraging someone to escape their toxic fate. Final track *When I Was A Young Man* says its brotherly thanks to David Bowie, Lou Reed, David Byrne and Tom Verlaine, making only gentle reference to their first names, its biographical sparks of debt and love mirrored in a recording that is live-in-a-room with a musical family and a few close friends in fine and shining form.

Mark Mordue

Robert Forster - She's A Fighter



JAZZ

Sense



Tim McNamara

ANDREW MCMILLEN, MUSIC WRITER

Andrew McMillen is an award-winning journalist and author based in Brisbane. Since January 2018, he has worked as national music writer at The Australian. Previously, his feature writing has been published in The N... [Read more](#)



Share this article



READ NEXT



AFL



AFL



NRL

Track watch: Young Crow flying, new role for fringe forward?

A young Crow is training strongly and consistent senior footy could await this year. Plus, another fringe Crow is being trialled in a new position.

SIMEON THOMAS-WILSON

KFC SuperCoach: How to solve the big ruck dilemma

Set and forget the ruck, right? Not in KFC SuperCoach this year, says The Phantom. Our expert rates the best premium options in the big man department.

THE PHANTOM

Market Watch: Sharks sign youngster to cover potential crisis

The Sharks have made a move to cover any potential fullback crisis by signing an Italian international. See the latest transfer news.

PAUL CRAWLEY



BASKETBALL

WNBL star calls for change after Heal's shock team switch

Shyla Heal's switch from Sydney to Townsville has sparked concern over a WNBL rule that differs from almost every other major league. One star says it's time to change.

MICHAEL RANDALL AND MEGAN HUSTWAITE



AFL

Revealed: Dees' plan to strike back for Jackson raid

Melbourne is already plotting its revenge on Fremantle for luring Luke Jackson west, setting its sights on one of the Dockers' prized top-10 picks before season 2023 has even started.

JON RALPH



BASKETBALL

United, Perth or Phoenix: Whose NBL finals dream is doomed?

With one round left in NBL23, it all comes down to this. One of Melbourne United, SEM Phoenix and Perth will miss the top six — or two, if Adelaide can pull off a miracle.

PREDICTIONS

MICHAEL RANDALL

SPONSORED CONTENT

The billion dollar investment we need