



Rock royalty 搖滾家族

Mechanical Bull, the sixth studio album from American rockers Kings of Leon, is another jewel on the crown for the Followill boys, writes Dorothy So

Dorothy So 為我們詳細介紹美國搖滾樂隊 Kings of Leon 的最新得意之作——第六張錄音室專輯《Mechanical Bull》

When Kings of Leon released their debut album, *Youth & Young Manhood*, in 2003, they were one of the many bands involved in the garage-rock revival of the early 2000s. In the sea of skinny jeans, the Tennessee-based Followill brothers – along with cousin Matthew on lead guitar – set themselves apart with their Southern rasp, boundless energy and irreverent lyrics to become one of the coolest acts on the indie circuit.

A decade later and the band has earned mainstream credibility, ascending to headline major festivals, with numerous sold-out stadium shows to their name. And if their new studio release, *Mechanical Bull*, is anything to go by, the boys have no intention of slowing down.

While the album has the same rapid, raw drive that fuelled the band's earlier records, as demonstrated by the meaty guitar riffs and a solo on *Don't Matter*, the main difference is in the writing, with lyrics given a more introspective focus. And in the case of *Comeback Story*, the soaring crescendo backed by orchestral strings typifies the album's more complex and layered sound, a result of the band's years of experience. After all, the relaxed, funky undertones of *Family Tree* and the slow-burning grandeur of *Beautiful War* might have eluded the four Followill boys at the start of their careers when they were still in their teens and early 20s.

Now, a little older and wiser, Kings of Leon adds further depth to its frenetic energy, and *Mechanical Bull* is all the better for it – a triumphant return that signals the group's continuing reign in modern rock music.



Long live the kings: the four Followill boys sound better than ever

四位 Followill 小伙子的音樂日見成熟

在 2000年代初，車房搖滾復興，Kings of Leon 乘勢在2003年推出首張專輯《Youth & Young Manhood》，憑著充滿美國南部特色的粗獷聲音、無窮無盡的精力，以及古怪的歌詞，成功在一眾流行樂隊之中脫穎而出，在獨立樂隊中打響名堂。

十年過去，這支由出身美國田納西州的Followill三兄弟與擔任主音結他手的堂兄弟Matthew Followill組成的樂隊，早已打入主流市場，不止成為各大音樂節的表演常客，樂隊演唱會亦座無虛席。最新的錄音室專輯《Mechanical Bull》更明白表示，這支四人樂隊絕無停下來之意。

新專輯依然保留了樂隊出道初期的大碟風格，節奏明快、自然質樸，大量即興結他伴奏和獨奏的〈Don't Matter〉便是好例子，但歌詞卻有別以往，多了內省和反思。另外，在弦樂伴奏下聲音漸強的〈Comeback Story〉則顯示，樂隊經過多年浸淫後，大碟的歌曲變得更層次豐富、複雜細緻。畢竟，像悠閒而古怪的〈Family Tree〉和慢熱而恢宏的〈Beautiful War〉這樣的歌曲，在他們還是十來二十歲剛出道的黃毛小子時是沒辦法駕馭的。

如今，四位小伙子已長大，也成熟了不少，作品除了依然活力充沛，還添上了一份深度。《Mechanical Bull》各方面都有出色表現，樂隊毋疑會繼續在現代搖滾樂壇佔一席位。



Photo: Kings of Leon: Imaginechina