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Editorial Reviews

Though Kris Kristofferson has long seemed ageless, the approach of his 70th birthday plainly has the songwriter looking back, taking stock and coming to terms with his legacy and his mortality. The result is his most consistently compelling release in decades, as well as his most stripped-to-the-bone intimate. The spare production by bassist Don Was captures Kristofferson in all his rough-edged, plain-spoken, and big-hearted glory, with occasional support from guitarist (and longtime Kristofferson compatriot) Stephen Bruton and drummer Jim Keltner putting the focus on songs that combine the poetic grace of Kristofferson's early classics with a conviction that has grown stronger with the passing years. "Wild Americans" offers a roll call of outspoken heroes--from American Indian activist John Trudell to country maverick Steve Earle--while "In the News" lambastes the very concept of a holy war. Yet it's the spiritual side of Kristofferson that really touches the soul, from a father's wonder at the "Holy Creation" of his children's birth to the bittersweet benediction of "Thank You for a Life." With the title cut, "The Last Thing to Go," "The Show Goes On," and "Final Attraction," he takes a look back at the life of a troubadour and decides that, for all the bumps, this road has been one of incomparable rewards. The listener shares the riches. --*Don McLeese*