

THE B-SIDE



Music, of all kinds, has always been an unshakeable force in bringing people together. In a world that too often feels disorienting – especially when we realize how independently we embark on each of our journeys – we look for things that ground us. Often, we fumble, searching for concrete anchors that bring us back to raw, unfiltered feeling in the day-to-day of subdued emotion. And, often, we exist quietly, looking for ways to physically synthesize what we're feeling.

In all this uncertainty, I've found that there are few things more exciting than finding someone who shares the same music as you, or finding a friend who can open up your eyes – and ears – to a whole new genre of sound. There are few things that make me as happy as knowing that, when you listen to something with someone else, you're being moved in the same way by the same thing.

That's what music does for me. And that's what The B-Side has done too.

As U.C. Berkeley's only online and print music magazine, we've created a small haven of sonic respite in a world that so often feels too large. In creating this community, we learned how to open our minds to discovery, trying out artists and sounds we weren't sure we would like. In creating this community, we grew as artists ourselves. We picked up cameras to shoot our first shows and spoke with musicians we looked up to on the phone. We pushed what we felt comfortable defining as artistry and showed the world.

In making this magazine, we learned how to manifest the way music makes us feel into a real, concrete creation – the second issue of The B-Side.

As Editor-in-Chief this year, I have never been so proud to see such a beautiful team grow so much in such a short amount of time. I have no doubt that The B-Side will go on to create many more beautiful memories and experiences after I leave. I know that it – like music – will continue bringing people together. It will remain a brilliantly genuine – and sometimes flawed – synthesis of how we are or are not feeling.

It will be a welcome respite to everyone who's looked for themselves in quiet.

So, thank you for being a part of The B-Side community. And thank you for reading.

With love,

Eda
Editor-in-Chief 2016-2017

Which Migos are you?

Matt Sater, page 4

Cue the Violins: Trump's emo boy band to release masochistic debut, SAD!

Natalie Silver, page 5

Live at Fury and Primal Rite

Sam Jameson, page 9

The many forms of Lana Del Rey's unconditional "Love"

John Lawson, page 11

Overheard at Berkeley: A human playlist

Desiree Diaz, page 14

Songs for literally everything: A playlist

The B-Side staff, page 15

Namaste Shawty on freedom, community, and women empowerment

Vivian Chen, page 17

What Black artistry looks like in 2017

Shelby Mayes, page 22

Greatest Ever? A Drizzy Drake retrospective

Adil Siddiqee, page 24

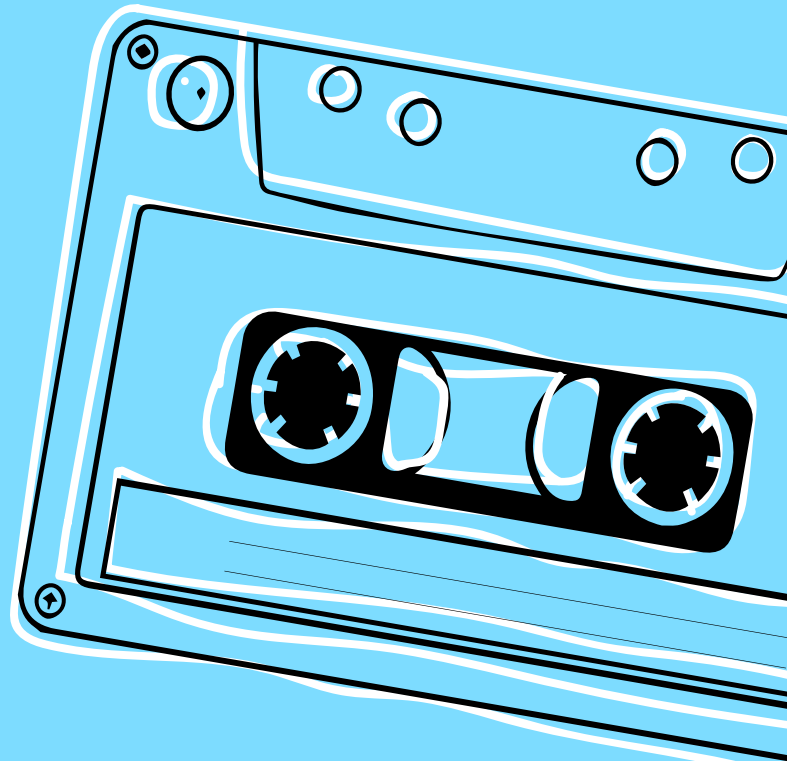
Unseen moments at SXSW

Ally Mason, page 28

Going to California

Mateo Savala, page 32

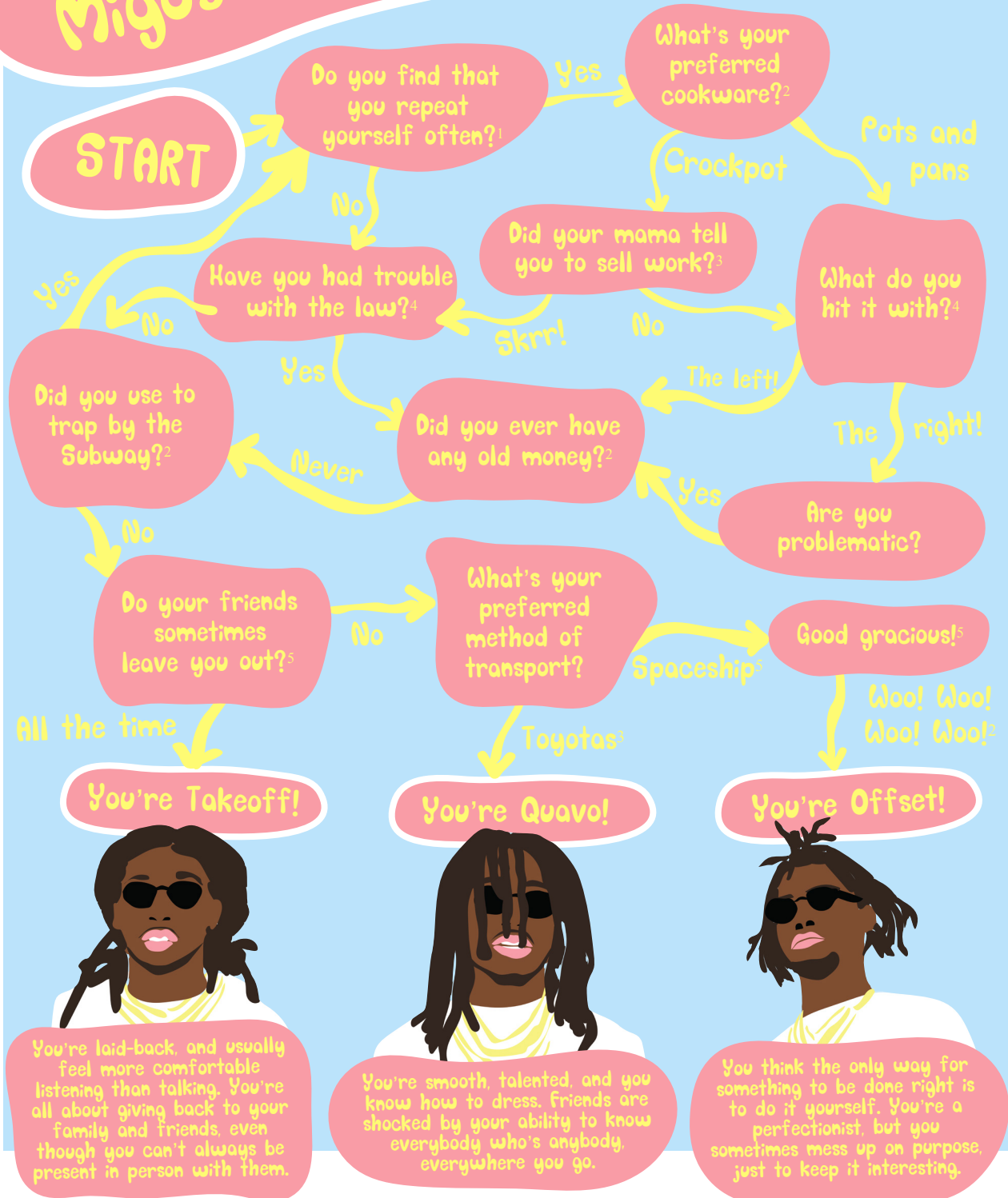
Staff list, page 33





Which of the Migos are you?

A quiz designed by Matthew Sater w/ illustrations by Farida Radwan



You're Takeoff!



You're laid-back, and usually feel more comfortable listening than talking. You're all about giving back to your family and friends, even though you can't always be present in person with them.

You're Quavo!



You're smooth, talented, and you know how to dress. Friends are shocked by your ability to know everybody who's anybody, everywhere you go.

You're Offset!



You think the only way for something to be done right is to do it yourself. You're a perfectionist, but you sometimes mess up on purpose, just to keep it interesting.

1) "Versace" 2) "Bad and Boujee" 3) "T-Shirt" 4) "Fight Night" 5) "Slide"

CUE THE VIOLINS:

by Natalie Silver
design by Camilia Kacimi

TRUMPS EMO BOYBAND TO RELEASE
MASOCHISTIC DEBUT ALBUM "SAD!"



On February 12, Donald J. Trump, blubbering rocker who is recognized by less than half of the American population as “their president” and his boy band of puppets — together known as the “Sad Hombres” — dropped a single titled “Emo Trump,” an angsty power ballad introducing the band to the public ... and the public to Trump’s apparent artistic side.

This single is the first track of the band’s LP, *Sad!* — a whopping 18 track debut album scheduled to release on April 20, instigating what Breitbart News has predicted to be a 2000s emo rock revival.

Whining through the pain of introspection and delving into the deeper existential questions of universal fairness, metaphysical suffering, and the Taoist principle of Dynamic Balance — which the Hombres apply to vulnerability and power — the Sad Hombres deliver an intersectional plea for understanding their victimization through subtle autotune and silent tears. *Sad!* takes the listener on a radical odyssey of pain and despair, somehow seeming to serve as a prophetic microcosm of Trump’s upcoming term.

Mr. Trump himself sat down with *The B-Side* for an interview for the upcoming album, though we did have to pinky swear that the publication was “real.”

“One thing, I don’t know why,” Trump mumbled, looking down at his trembling hands lighting a stogie. “It doesn’t even matter how hard you try.”

He took a drag and peered up at me through a newly-bleached toupee to see if I caught the obvious reference to the 2000 electro punk smash by American nu-metal band, Linkin Park, who he cited as “some of his idols.”

“This album, *Sad!*, is just a chance for the American people, who I love very much, to finally understand me,” the rocker said. He then sang a lick from the album’s second track, “White Engst”: “Like a snowflake from the sky / I cry, I cry, IIIIII CRYYYYYY.”

Trump, who conducted the interview exclusively in his passive voice, verb-noun-subject-verb sentence structure and tagged every one of his responses with a mumbled “You wouldn’t even get it”; “It’s postmodern, anyways”; or the occasional “Build a wall...around my heart” refused to answer as to whether the misspelling of the album’s second track was purposeful.

Other notable tracks include “Self Love,” which is a critical ode to domestic terrorism; “Celebrity Apprent-asshole,” which Trump dedicates to Arnold Schwarzenegger; “My Fight,” an angry three-chords-and-the-truth rocker with interspersed with random words in German; and “Not My Daughter,” a sappy love ballad which fittingly repurposes the petty #notmypresident hashtag and social movement.

The Sad Hombres take pride in their musical diversity and in their limitless creativity. That said, certain tracks feel almost a little too experimental.

If you think Yoko ruined the Beatles, or if you didn’t love the Donna years of the Grateful Dead, you miiiiight want to skip the last song on Side A of *Sad!*, which features Melania Trump on vocals in a pop-y song to the beat of a drum machine titled “They Go Low.”

Sad! also comes with a bonus pressing of cover songs, which Trump says reflects more of his classic rock and 90s grunge roots.

Standouts include Abbey Road classic, “Golden Slumbers,” which is believed to be a tribute to his experience at the Moscow hotel; Green Day’s “Whatsername,” which is about the 12 women who came forward alleging sexual assault charges against Trump after the Access Hollywood tape was leaked (Note: Green Day has since pursued legal action regarding the President’s apparent unlawful use of the punk group’s patented music, demanded its removal from *Sad!*, and have requested that Trump both resign and “suck a cock.”); and “Saturday Night Live’s Alright for Fighting,” a whiny twist off an Elton John classic which stands out in its aggressive lyrics, in which he calls Kate McKinnon a “real bitch” and substitutes the original line “Get a little action in” with “Little Alex Baldwin.” And no, he was not aware that the actor’s name is, in fact, “Alec.”

Other covers available on *Sad!*’s bonus disc, which is only available to the first 10,000 purchasers, are the Sad Hombres’ takes on Soundgarden’s “Fell On Black Days,” the double-entendre title referring to the Obama administration; “Wish You Were Here,” which, rumor has, is about his penis; and Temple of the Dog’s power ballad, “Call Me a Dog,” in which the emo President seems to reinvent the introspective analysis of a troubled relationship into what the Hombres call a “Michelle Obama confessional.”

One of the most emotional tracks on the record is titled "Ritalin," which is about the drug Trump is addicted to. The *B-Side* gently asked Trump about his drug problem, and about how he sees himself acclimating to a notoriously dangerous rock and roll lifestyle.

"You know, the rock and roll lifestyle is pretty temptatious," Trump said about drugs, or as he calls them, "contraband."

"You look at Kurt Cobain – a horrible man who used heroin. He, if you didn't know, di-ed. It's just sad," Trump commented while motioning with this finger the path of an invisible tear falling. "2Pac, a black man, literally smoked crack cocaine. Di-ed. Sad."

Ummm.....?

Besides drug use, the Sad Hombres have fallen into a cliché template of rock and roll behavior and misfortune. The group is currently on drummer number four.

The rapid replacement of drummers, however, is not due to typical reasons like substance abuse, overdose, or general inability to show up; the Sad Hombres have been struck with some rather well, sad, luck. The first drummer is currently under investigation for colluding with Russia, the second (and his then-boyfriend Milo Yiannopoulos) are in recovery from experimental "conversion lobotomies", and the third mysteriously went missing almost immediately after the ever-crooked media leaked a scandalous shot of him eating at a local diner with Bruce Springsteen in January. The fourth drummer, according to the President, is "tremendous," though he is expected to be deported within the year.

Nonetheless, the President, who now exclusively wears Hot Topic and paints teardrops on his face in black eyeliner, is confident about the upcoming album's potential.

THE SAD HOMBRES

A Side

1. Emo Trump
2. White Engst
3. All Lives Matter (Except For My Own)
4. My Fight (in E minor)
5. My Heart, Your Decision
6. They Go Low (vocals by Melania Trump)

B Side

1. KKKellyanne
2. Billy's Bush (with the reprise "And Bush's Willy")
3. Ritalin
4. Teargas for Feargas
5. Not My Daughter
6. The American Scream (feat. Sean Spicer)

C Side

1. 9th month abortion (feat. Fetus)
2. Ignordstrom
3. The Oval Crucifix
4. Great Relationships
5. Tremendous Failure
6. Celebrity Apprent-asshole

D Side

1. Bowling Green Massacre
2. The Popular Vote
3. Self Love
4. The Woman's Card
5. Turban Turmoil
6. Rex, Drugs & Rock n' Roll



"It's a platinum record, it's going to be a real hit," he cried. "We're going to make billions, and billions we will make, and the good American people are going to be very very proud of me."

Perhaps the most exciting thing to come out of the surprising emergence of the Sad Hombres and the drop of their debut album, *Sad!*, is that there will always be a band willing to open for presidential appearances. Especially following the "celebrity-free" inauguration this past January, it is essential that the Trump administration secure a superstar artist to incite celebration of a new era and galvanize a new kind of unproductive, masturbatory angst within the American population.

So yes, it is predicted that the Sad Hombres will play at every future State of the Union address and United Nations speech, as well as every future press conference and presidential appearance on a national stage. And, if all goes well, they'll play at Trump's impeachment ceremony and the 2020 inauguration of Bernie Sanders – which, by the way, would be the ultimate masochistic "Fuck You" to both himself and the ideology that he has propagated ... an epic act of self-loathing uncannily fitting for the genre that he has embraced as his own.

Literally. So. Emo.

But you probably don't even *fucking* get it.



Make America Grst Again

BONUS DISK: COVERS

1. Saturday Night Live's Alright For Fighting (Elton John cover)
2. Don't Blink Twice, It's Alright (Bob Dylan cover, sung as a duet with Melania)
3. Sad, Sad, Sad (Rolling Stones cover)
4. In My Country Where Is Problem (Borat cover)
5. Can't Buy Me Love (Beatles cover, allegedly about how Melania will not have sex with him in the White House)
6. Wish You Were Here (Pink Floyd cover)
7. Golden Slumbers (Beatles cover)
8. Little USA (cover of "Little USA" by the Rolling Stones)
9. Violarme (cover of Nirvana's "Rape Me," but in Spanish)
10. Loser (Beck cover, dedicated to Hillary Clinton)
11. Whatsername (Green Day cover)
12. Mother (Pink Floyd cover, sung by Mike Pence to his wife)
13. Fell On Black Days (Soundgarden cover)
14. Call Me A Dog (Temple of the Dog cover)



YAD
DUO

BASTARD

PESTILENT
CLUTCH

PESTILENT
CLUTCH

PESTILENT
CLUTCH

PESTILENT
CLUTCH

PESTILENT
CLUTCH

PESTILENT
CLUTCH

Marshall



T
A
R

ADVANCED
PERSPECTIVE

Jacobson

Tilefent

DECEMBER

SEPT

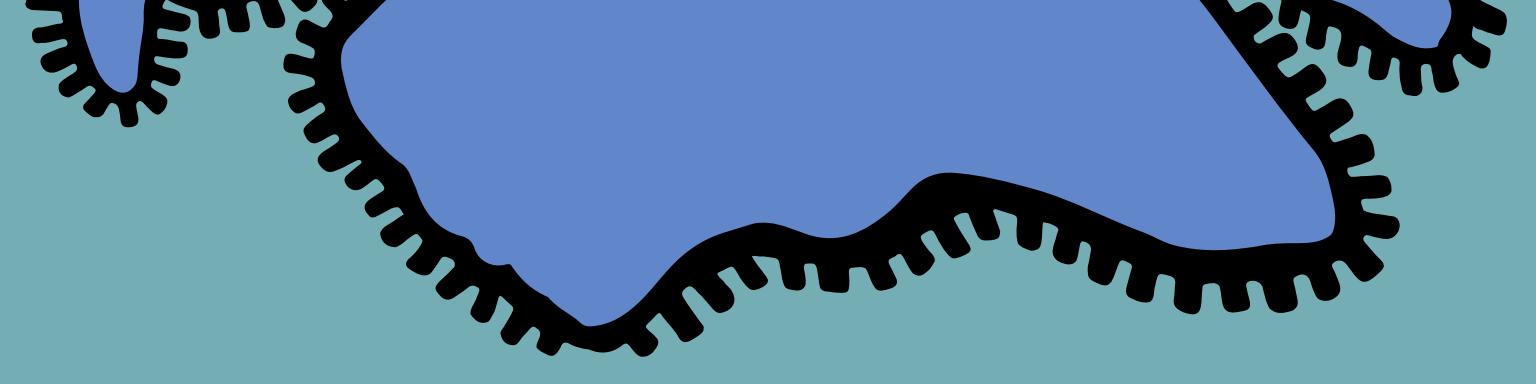
RAVE

[Handwritten signature]

The Many Forms of **Lana Del Rey's** Unconditional "Love"

By **John Lawson**
Design by **Camilia Kacimi**



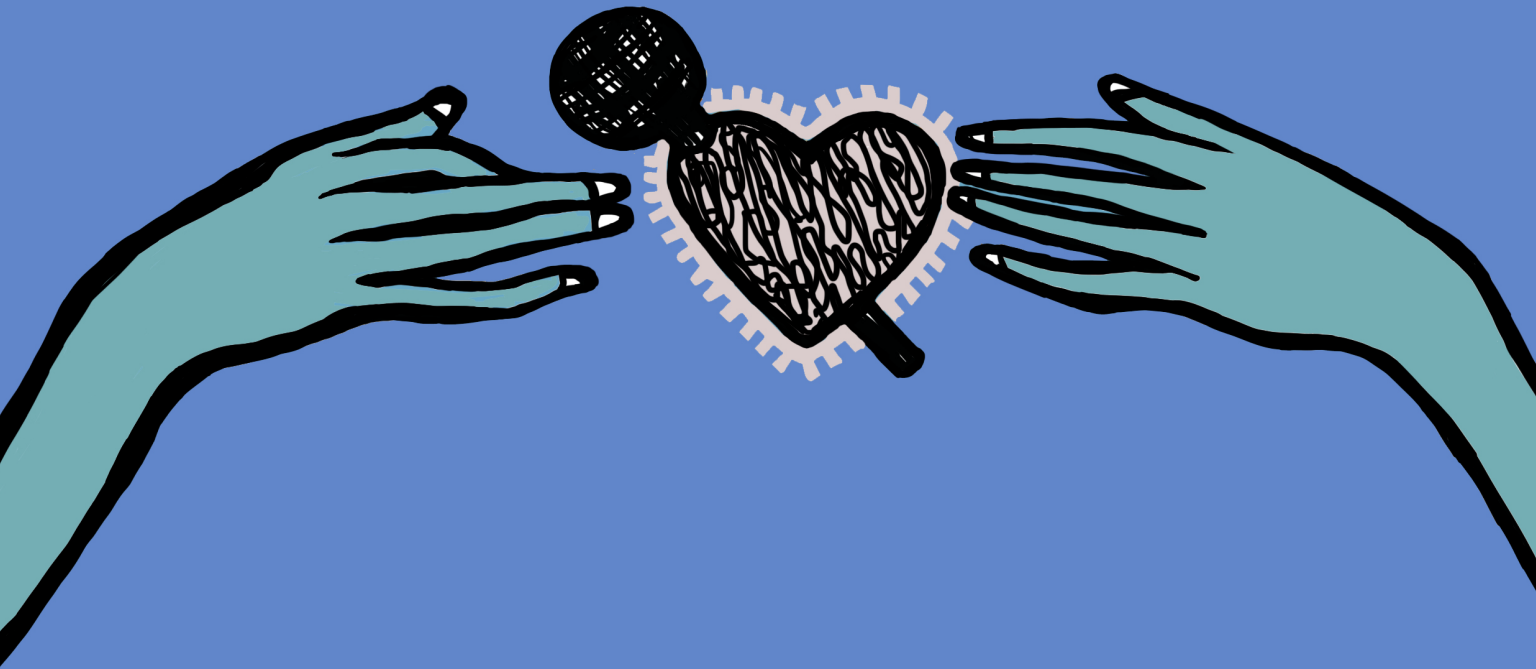


One month after Lana Del Rey released “Love” off her upcoming album *Lust For Life*, she performed the single for the first time at 2017’s SXSW music festival in Austin, Texas. Her set featured none of the cringe-worthy falsettos and vocal tics that marred her notorious SNL debut in January of 2012. Wearing a draping white dress with her hair down, she seemed at home and even-keeled, performing her new song along with iconic titles like “Ride” (*Born to Die*, 2012). The departure from the grandiosity of her early appearances was welcomed; it seemed that, for once, both critics and the audience (begging to no avail for an encore) received the Queen of Perpetual Pout without snarl.

At first listen, the slow-burning “Love” seems another echo of the idealized Hollywood Americana that propelled Lana Del Rey to superstardom in her major-label debut, *Born to Die*. Her breathy voice radiates over a twanging bass and atmospheric synths, touching on favorite talking points like old vinyls and melancholic loneliness crooning, “Look at you kids with your vintage music.” The filter and grain of the music video recalls her early fit-for-Tumblr productions, complete with the beautiful white hipsters and cameos of Venice Beach.

But there is a sense of intimacy in “Love” that isn’t quite as drug-induced, or macabre as her anthems on *Born to Die* (remember that tatted-up hottie that groped at her neck and dragged her underwater in the music video for “Blue Jeans”?). If *Born to Die* was told behind the heart-shaped sunglasses of the young, rich, and beautiful, “Love” is told from the perspective of someone who has already been around the block. Though jaded by the limelight of fame, Lana addresses the youth in “Love” with a tender feeling of hope: “Look at you kids, you know you’re the coolest / The world is yours and you can’t refuse it.”

“Love” signals yet another aesthetic transformation for Lana Del Rey, a glimpse at the popstar without as much contrived glitter and glam. In the music video directed by Rich Lee, Lana’s signature Botox lips don’t look as swollen as they used to. Her designer one-piece and Jackie Kennedy updo has been traded for a loose sundress and daisies in her hair. No longer the lonely hot mess of upper-echelon Hollywood, she has transitioned into a celestial goddess of youth — specifically that of her young fans — overlooking their triumphs and failures affectionately with a maternal tug.



“Seen so much, you could get the blues, but / That don’t mean that you should abuse it,” she sings, issuing depression or a subtle caution against prescription drug abuse.

It’s no accident that the music video for “Love” is situated in the flower-child era of the American 1960’s. The hippy utopia of “Love” is another fetishized version of Lana’s “America,” but it’s less corny than the Don-Draper-era derivatives present in most of her oeuvre, usually consisting of sloppy references to JFK, Great Gatsby, and the Beats. “Love” is less paranoid, strained, and jealous – the object of desire isn’t for a one-night stand, a pimped-out mansion, or even her one-true love.

“That’s why this is the perfect first single, because this one is for you and I luv you,” Lana Del Rey wrote to fans in a sugarcoated Instagram caption.

As the final verse switches to the first-person (“Doesn’t matter if I’m not enough / For the future and the things to come”) we see a glimpse of something virtually absent in the rest of her work. For someone who has defined their entire career on depression and self-loathing, this is the closest Lana Del Rey has come to seeming comfortable alone. While it might be another ode to her fans, “Love” is also the first *real* love song she has ever addressed to herself.

OVERHEARD AT BERKELEY

by Desiree Diaz
and Camilia Kacimi

Yung Bae
ft. Swindail
"Here
With Me"

Daniel
Caesar
"Won't
Live Here"

Ken Oak
"What You
Want"

Of Monsters
and Men
"Love Love
Love"

Sylvan Esso
"Hey Mami"
(Big Mami
Remix)



Pablo:

Avenged Sevenfold
– "So Far Away"

Major: Architecture
Where are you from?:
Virginia
Favorite band/artist at the
moment: Eagles
Last concert: Pink Floyd
cover band

Suraj:

**Drake ft. 2 Chainz,
Young Thug** – "Sacrifices"

Major: Civil and
Environmental Engineering
Where are you from?:
London, UK
Favorite band/artist at
the moment: Drake
Last concert: NAS

Caragh:

Wrabel –
"11 Blocks"

Major: Cognitive Science
Where are you from?:
Chengdu, China
Favorite band/artist
at the moment: AJR
Last concert: Hozier

Karen:

Zedd – "Done
With Love"

Major: Ethnic Studies
Where are you from?:
San Diego
Favorite band/artist at the
moment: Frank Ocean
Last concert: Crush

Adam:

Lady Gaga
– "Fashion Of His Love"

Major: Economics
Where are you from?: Iowa
Favorite band/artist at the
moment: Melanie Martinez
Last concert: Twenty One
Pilots (from Cheapskate Hill)



HOW DO YOU FEEL

By Jordan Aronson and George Green
Design by Jackie Nam



OPTIMISTIC



i want to stay grounded

"T-Shirt Weather in the Manor" by Kano
"Ginger" by Marek Hemmann
"Here I Am" by The Juan Maclean
"Sex Drugs and on the Dole" by The Manor
"Making Breakfast" by Twin Peaks
"Spread Love" by Mick Jenkins
"All I Need" by Noname feat. Xavier Omar
"Watch Me Dance" by Tom Misch



i want to celebrate

"Hit the Road Jack" by Throttle
"Fester Skank" by Lethal Bizzle
"HUMBLE." by Kendrick Lamar
"Traum" by Cro
"T-Shirt" by Migos
"Inspector Norse" by Todd Terje
"Devolva" by Sango
"YOU'RE THE ONE" by KAYTRANADA, Syd

WHAT'S THIS FOR?

GOING OUT

bar crawl



"Dance Wiv Me" by Dizzee Rascal
"I Bet That You Look Good
on the Dancefloor" by Arctic Monkeys
"Take Me Out" by Franz Ferdinand
"All Night (feat. Knox Fortune)" by Chance The Rapper

clubbing



"You Want Me" by Tom Zanetti
"Egyptian Lover Latmun Remix" by The Golden Boy
"Function" by Justin Martin & Ardalan
"Man at Parade" by Frits Wentink

STAYING IN

house party



"Bagbak" by Vince Staples
"Come Alive" by Chromeo
"Come Down" by Anderson .Paak
"REDMERCEDES" by Amine

one man dance party



"Cutting Shapes" by Don Diablo
"September" by Earth, Wind, and Fire
"Get Stupid" by Aston Merrygold
"Some" by Steve Lacy

ABOUT THE FUTURE?



PESSIMISTIC



i want to be uplifted

"Everybody's Happy Nowadays" by The Buzzcocks
"Mama Said Knock You Out" by LL Cool J
"Do Me a Favour" by Arctic Monkeys
"If You're Crying" by IAN SWEET
"Needle and a Knife" by Tennis
"Norgaard" by The Vaccines
"Beautiful Escape" by Tom Misch
"One Day Wankelmut Remix" by Asaf Avidan



i want to wallow

"I Can't Go To Sleep" by Wu-Tang Clan
"Is This What You Wanted" by Leonard Cohen
"Day of the Lords" by Joy Division
"Nude" by Radiohead
"You Should Be Hated Here" by Carissa's Wierd
"Cranes in the Sky" by Solange
"I Wanna Be Adored" by The Stone Roses
"Call Across Rooms" by Grouper

WHAT'S THIS FOR?

I WANT TO BE ALONE

i just want to be angry



"Next Hype - Vocal" by Tempa T
"Control" by Chase and Status
"All I Need" by Radiohead
"You Will Never Be One Of Us" by Nails

i just want to cry



"I Know It's Over" by The Smiths
"Into My Arms" by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds
"Japanese Denim" by Daniel Caesar
"Jesus Christ" by Brand New

I WANT TO BE W/ OTHERS

i want to cheer up



"Ringo" by Joris Voorn
"Let's Push Things Forward" by The Streets
"The Killing Moon" by Echo and the Bunnymen
"Waves" by Electric Guest

i want to be held



"All My Tears" by Ane Brun
"Soco Amaretto Lime" by Brand New
"Stonemilker" by Bjork
"Thinkin Bout You" by Frank Ocean





NoNo

Namasté Shawty

By Vivian Chen

Photos by Fiona Duerr

Styled by Camilia Kasimi

Oakland-based DJ Namaste Shawty — known more familiarly as Nono — wastes no time in making her presence known when she walks into a room. Her wardrobe reflects the eccentricity of her mixes — take, for instance, her lightning-bolt-emblazoned, red leather jacket or her fur-covered lilac handbag — which contain anything from hip-hop to punk to clean, dance-y house.

But no matter the genre, what Nono aims to bring through her music is

positivity through movement, making a point to avoid playing anything that might achieve the opposite of that — a substantial feat in a world of misogynistic hip-hop and rap in a male-dominated industry.

In her interview with The B-Side, Nono offered words on her inspirations, how she expresses, and the importance of building a community through empowerment — and through music, of course.

What's the inspiration behind your mixes?

Dancing is one of the main things. My goal is always to inspire people to move.

What do you want to express through your music?

For me, it's about expressing freedom and feeling liberated. When I'm DJing, I kind of go into another world where nothing really matters. It's all about having fun and expressing joy through movement and dance and music. I feel liberated because I'm orchestrating a whole party.

For that hour, I feel free, I feel heard, and I feel seen. As a Woman of Color, it's often that we don't get seen or heard. When I play music, I get to experience that through performance art...and fashion too. I like to dress up when I perform. When I perform, I kinda go a little extra, you know?

Going off of that, what was the hardest part about making your way through a male-dominated industry?

I haven't really experienced any real battles yet. I feel like, dealing with bigger cities, like L.A. or New York, it is more of a fight sometimes. In the Bay, it's not like that. At least in Oakland. San Francisco can be a little bit challenging, but Oakland – I'm from here. I have a pretty strong community. I've actually gotten a lot of support from friends who DJ and promote, who are males, so I feel really blessed about that.

Do you think being a female DJ carves a narrative in an untraditional space?

Yeah, definitely. I feel like there are a lot more women artists in general, just coming up in the DJ scene. More women see other women DJing and feel inspired to do it. I think even being called a "female DJ" can be a little bit of a thing for a lot of women. It's like, why can't we just be DJs?

The whole thing is, "oh, female DJ," which is like, we can't compete with the guys? We have to have our own category or what? Just being considered a "female DJ" or "female anything" really is limiting in this patriarchal society.

What first inspired you to start mixing?

I was inspired by the scene. I never really said, "I'm gonna be a DJ." It was kind of like, I listen to a lot of music. People say I have a good ear, so I was able to DJ house parties. Just for fun, not seriously at all. And people were like, "Yo, you're actually really good, you should start DJing," and I was like alright, I'm down. I'll start DJing. I started doing little bars and friends' parties and now, tonight, I'm DJing at F8 which is a pretty poppin' club in San Francisco.



In an article with SFMOMA's Open Space, you talked a bit about your spiritual journey in connection with your radio show. Do you mind telling me more about Las Brujas Radio and its mission?

I wanted to talk about what I was experiencing in a way that wasn't super personal, but relatable. Mostly, Las Brujas focuses on conversation around femininity and what that looks like. It's me, my friend Queens D.Light from House of Malico, and another friend called Imani.

We basically just have a conversation about trauma, abuse, addiction — anything that we've experienced, that we're trying to or have overcome. Keeping it very WOC-oriented, trying to spread news that's empowering for our community versus all the negative shit the media is always trying to show us. We try to get community involvement too in a segment called "Ask Las

Brujas." We want people to ask us super personal questions that we can answer anonymously. That's almost my favorite part.

And I play music. Not a lot, but I try to choose music that is women-produced or with vocals by women, or anything that's about something empowering and beautiful. I never play mainstream music or anything that's degrading towards women. I'll play anything from hip-hop to punk music, just whatever I feel like.

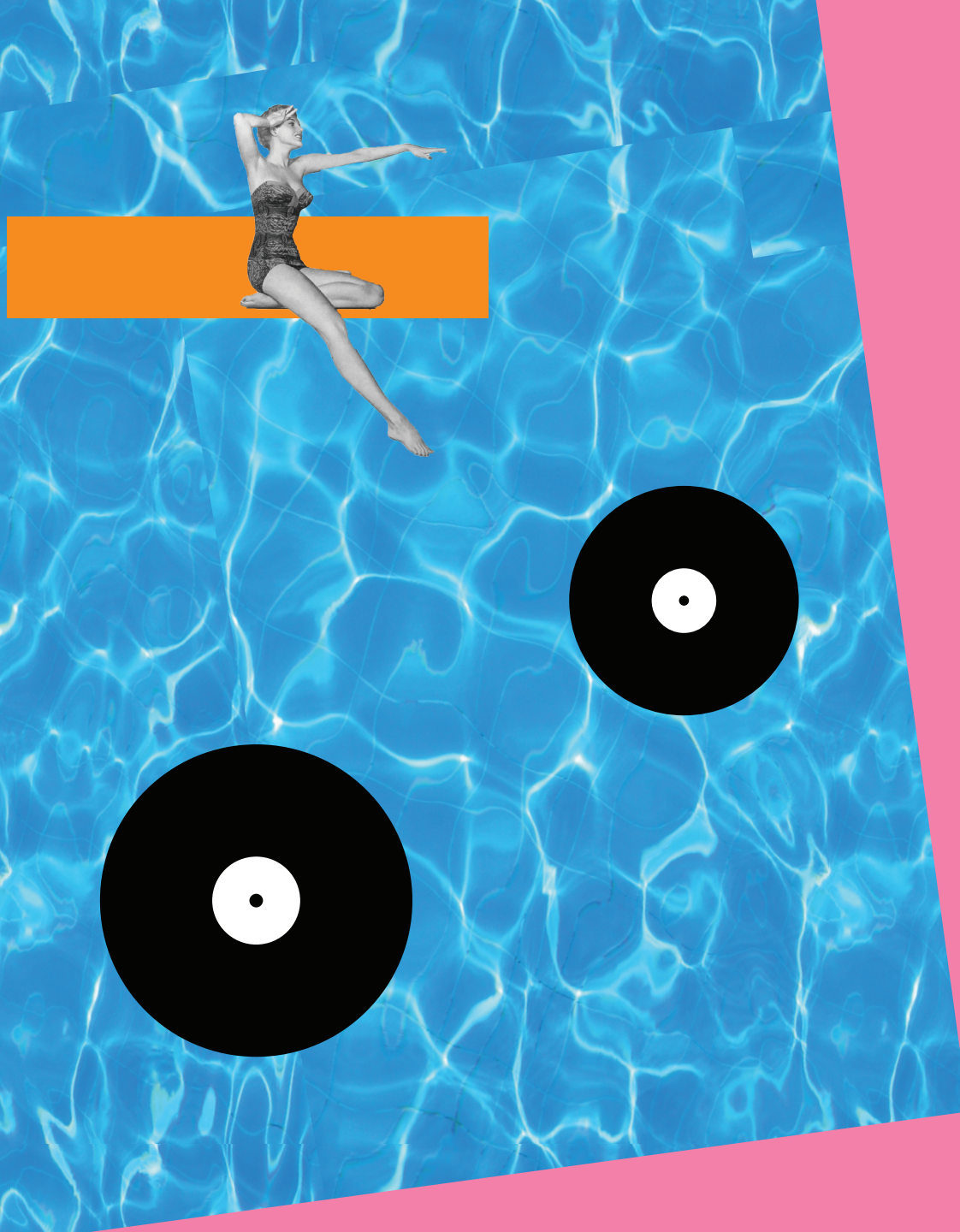
Is there anything you really want to talk about or something you want people to know?

I just — I don't know if it's corny or some shit...

Go for it.

Sometimes, I really feel like this spirit is running this show for me, the way that my DJing career has unfolded. It's happened in a very synchronized way while I know a lot of people struggle. And I wonder if it's because I'm just doing this for fun. When you're doing things for fun, you're not really thinking about the money or the fame. You're literally just doing that shit for fun. You know, you read books and shit where it's like, "Do what you love" and that shit'll pop off, and that's kind of what's going on with me. I mean, I love it. I love fucking DJing. I can be heartbroken, but as soon as I get on the decks, I'm in another world. I go into another realm and it's almost healing, to be able to do that and not give a fuck. I really don't give a fuck about anything.





@berkeleybside

BLACK ARTISTRY

By **Shelby Mayes**
Design by **Jackie Nam**

"C.S.N.E.," a song by 22-year-old Mylo Mu, opens with kaleidoscopic images and a shirt that reads Free Tupac. Heavy bass quickly accompanies the rapper, the visuals oscillating between psychedelic designs, sporadic Angela Davis audio clips seeming to date back from 1972, and the back of Mylo's baby pink shirt. Then, thirty seconds in, Mylo smiles shyly at the camera before rapping, "walk outside, and I don't know what the fuck this shit is."

The shot cuts to a close-up, filling the frame is filled by his face and a wide, confident smile. This is what Black artistry looks like in 2017.

Despite the political bleakness that has so far accompanied this year, Black art and culture have always found ways to creatively reflect the adversities of the time while highlighting the beauty that exists within the struggle. And Mylo, a Cal alumnus and rapper now based in the East Bay, is a perfect example of that, with his artistic vision that brings together hip-hop, jazz, and afro-psychedelic elements in both his sound and his visuals.

The intersection of these elements, Mylo shared in an interview with The B-Side, ultimately helps him in under-



standing his own Blackness. His use of experimental, ambient, and sometimes funky, instrumentals layered under his deep rap vocals — a style evidenced by his most recent EP, *Free Radical* (2016) — also makes perfect sense alongside his edgy and raw photography series, "Nood Book." His intentionally imperfect photography compliments his hard-hitting bars and abstract, atmospheric beats to convey his intentions of "healing and celebrating identities commonly silenced."

"A lot of my work is visually based," Mylo explained. "Photography and visuals is another space where I can explicate my image."

And the image Mylo communicates through his art is indeed radical — but

can also somewhat ironically be linked to his connection to mainstream figures in Black art and culture. Names like Jean Michel Basquiat, Madlib, John Coltrane, and Pharrell Williams were just a few of Mylo's many sources of inspiration. For him, Black artistry "is sort of like a 'cultural DNA.' They're my ancestors even if I'm not connected by blood. I feel like Basquiat, I feel like Tupac," he expressed firmly.

In regards to negative stereotypes and the impact they have on Black art and its respective communities, he expressed that "it all comes back to the Black body. And how America understands the values of them." The liberation of Black Americans is weaved into Mylo's work because he feels it should be addressed by all Black artistic visionaries.

All too often people are quick to associate rap and hip-hop with descriptors like "hood" or "ghetto" without realizing the divide it creates between Black art and Black humanity. The stigma associated with rap culture can be discouraging to young artists who simply wish to express themselves creatively through rhythm and poetry.

Mylo's vision attempts to go against these stereotypes, as the artist expressed that "foundationally, it's all about inferiority. And that's what we're combatting."

"We know what's going on," Mylo said. "As Black artists, we see what's happening, so I feel that if you don't call that out and speak about it you're part of the problem."

"photography and visuals is another space where I can explicate my image"

And while the problem and process of Black liberation Mylo discusses will not be easily solved, his insistence on freedom and clarity in all forms of artistic expression puts us one SoundCloud link closer to the solution.

20-year-old Elujay is another Oakland rapper who's working to create honest, soulful music that reflects the vibrant personality of the Bay. Elujay has been in an on-and-off relationship with music and music production for six years now. He grew up around music and had always expressed an interest in poetry, so rapping seemed like the next natural step. Although currently living in L.A., he spent the majority of his youth in Oakland — and many of his powerful lyrics are based on his own experiences as a young Black man on the East Bay.

"The most important thing people should know about me is that I want to be a good example for young musicians coming out of Oakland," Elujay remarked in an interview with The B-Side. "I want to give back more than I've taken."

With a truthful and heartwarming track like "Soul Food" on his debut release Jentriify late last year, it's clear that Elujay is delivering on his promise of giving back to the Oakland community. The song addresses the social issues of the current generation head on without any sugar coating.

"'Soul Food' was actually written around the time I got

falsely accused by an officer," Elujay recounted, explaining his process in writing the song. "The police ended up tackling me to the ground, putting me in handcuffs, and calling me a n*gger."

These instances of police brutality in America are more than just news stories you hear every so often — rather, it's a reality for most Black people in America today. Elujay's ability to take a traumatizing experience and transform it into a beautifully vivid — even joyful — song is what makes him an embodiment of Black artistry in 2017. For Elujay, Black artists are responsible for shaping the outlook of their community, the rapper expressing that many are "misled by the system, the environment, and the individuals they surround themselves with. That's why it's important for Black artists to have an influence on the youth."

"We have a responsibility to our community," he concluded passionately.

Elujay's insistence upon creating a positive image for Black youth, his music's unabashed joy, and Jentriify's overwhelming success — evidenced by his recent appearances in platforms like Noisey and MTV — show exactly what the Black artist narrative looks like in the Bay. And it's a perfect rendition of the socially conscious, thoughtful rendition of what Black artistry looks like in 2017.

"we have a responsibility to our community"

Self-expression through hip-hop is — and has always been — a reflection of the times, whether it be Elujay's vibrant, optimistic songs or Mylo's experimental and individualistic work. Elujay and Mylo are both one-of-a-kind artistic visionaries contributing to Black art and its perception in surrounding communities.

This is what Black artistry looks like in 2017. Isn't it stunning?

GREATEST EVER?

A Drizzy Drake Retrospective

By Adil Siddiquee

Illustration by John Lawson

Graphics by Jackie Nam



In the music video for "Forever," released in 2009, a 22-year-old Aubrey Drake Graham towers over the camera against a massive backdrop of pyrotechnics and flashing lights. An air horn blares overhead, and Drake sings the song's hook as it moves to the instrumental, his gaze cast downward. The young newcomer's face dissolves thrice, briefly, to introduce his guests: Kanye West, silhouetted alongside pillars of fire, sparks raining from the ceiling; Lil Wayne, surrounded by women, diamonds lining his teeth; Eminem, flanked by his crew, eyes merciless and cold.

As the chorus fades out, Drake glances downward at the three biggest rappers of his generation, the undisputed kings of the last decade, and scowls.

"Last name Ever, first name Greatest."

"Forever" followed that summer's "Best I Ever Had," which introduced the Canadian artist to the public as suburbia's latest contemporary R&B icon: a new one-hit wonder to

energize the country's middle school dances.

Writing him off as another urban-lite crooner lost in the wave of the late '00s mess of ringtone rap should have been easy. But while the likes of Sean Kingston and Hurricane Chris all drowned in their indistinct impermanence, Drake refused to do the same. Instead, he fronted "Forever" — one of the most stacked posse cuts of all time — making it clear that he was to be taken seriously. And what better way to establish yourself than have the three gods of modern rap music hand the torch over to you themselves?

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT 2009

"Forever" and "Best I Ever Had" drew international attention to the mixtape Drake released in February of 2009: the career-launching *So Far Gone*. Although the project was his third, following mixtapes *Room for Improvement* (2006) and *Comeback Season* (2007), it was the first to abandon an independent

approach in lieu of a high-profile, heavily produced record.

COMEBACK SEASON 2007

Stars with widespread appeal like Lil Wayne, Bun B, Kanye West and Just Blaze legitimized the mixtape as a project. Beatmakers from Diplo to DJ Screw drew curiosity from fans outside of traditional hip-hop. The EP reissue was the last time a Drake album would fail to peak at #1 on Billboard 200.

At 12 years old, I had nothing but disdain for *So Far Gone*. I seethed at the fact that this *Canadian* had ripped off 808's and Heartbreaks and that every girl on Myspace had "Best I Ever Had" on autoplay. In retrospect, it's a good debut mixtape — some call it one of the best. Drake, the newest kid on the block, already sounded like a veteran. Juggling confidence and vulnerability, his persona was atypical, and one of the first to embrace emotionally-charged hip-hop.

There's a weird spot in hip-hop's history that takes place somewhere between 2009 and 2011. It's a time where I'm able to recall more atrocities than classics, when jerk rap was in its death throes, and Lil Wayne released his worst albums, ever.

It was also when Young Money signed Drake.

THANK ME LATER 2010

Drake must have known how *Thank Me Later* (2010) would turn out, because no one would have thanked him right there and then. Of all the things that made *So Far Gone* decent, Drake decided that stuffing it with big names was the move to make on his debut album.

It didn't work.

I'm not sure what Birdman whispered in Drake's ear at the YMCMB headquarters, but it must have really screwed the guy up. For whatever reason, 2010

Drake decided to rap through his nose instead of his mouth. His voice is so ridiculously nasally throughout the entirety of the album that it's more thought-provoking than the actual content of his lyrics - ghostwritten or otherwise.

But if *Thank Me Later* succeeded in one aspect, it was catapulting Drake to the highest rung of the pop-rap ladder. The view must have been great from there, because Drake probably saw the album's colossal banalities and dropped them entirely.

TAKE CARE 2011

Take Care (2011) was a hard departure from the electronically driven, commercial pop style heard in previous albums. The production remained extensive and expensive, but 40 and his collaborators swapped the high-energy sound for a darker, low tempo atmosphere. There's more R&B than pop, and the rap is delivered through the mouth rather than the nasal cavity.

The tracks are better and include Drake's magnum

opus — the frustrated, self-aware "Marvin's Room," which, for many, is still Drake's best work, as well as the first to receive widespread critical acclaim. For a self-proclaimed rapper to succeed on a R&B track like "Marvin's Room" was more or less unheard of in 2011. Drake's artistic reinvention from one album to another emphasized his newfound status as a hip-hop juggernaut, all while showcasing improvements in his overall sound.

Take Care sounds like a deeply private retrospective, but succeeds in encapsulating the 21st century Western temperament through an abundance of accessible themes: heartbreak, selfishness, loneliness.

It became a millennial doctrine.

NOTHING WAS THE SAME 2013

2013's *Nothing Was The Same* Drake, however, would've drowned in a bathtub, because his supposedly deep content in the album is so, so shallow. Disregarding all

ten thousand of the writers who worked on this record, this Drake is by far the least personal, least relatable variant of the artist he's shown yet. In an interview with MTV earlier that year, Drake stated that he wanted "to sing the world's triumphs and problems on one record." Yet, listening to this album, one would suppose the warped, solipsistic world Drake lives in doesn't share the triumphs and problems of our own.

The myriad ostensible issues on this album are privileged and mundane; Drake simply cannot find a woman to love/fuck/trust, all while being cursed with millions of dollars. Have a problem with it? Kill yourself, bro — Drake "Started From The Bottom" to get here. "The Bottom" being a teenage sitcom star, I guess. I recall when I first listened to *Nothing Was The Same*, unnerved by how artificial this Drake sounded compared to the barefaced *Take Care* Drake. The thought entered my head that he was never the best actor.

I stopped taking Drake seriously after *Nothing*

Was The Same. His sound had been shed of any defining qualities; his bold, dynamic persona became rigid and uninteresting. Naturally, I was ready to dismiss *If You're Reading This It's Too Late* (2015) as soon as it dropped.

IF YOU'RE READING THIS YOU'RE TOO LATE 2015

But I couldn't. Drake may have ripped Migos' flow, he may have hopped on the trap train for profit, but I listened to the mixtape for weeks. Although his braggadocio remains standard fare, it fit here in ways that didn't on prior releases. And Drake may have the least struggle credentials out of any rapper, but he sells it here with a conviction unlike ever before.

Aside from delivering quality music, *If You're Reading This It's Too Late* accomplished another purpose: it recalled the idea that Drake was a capable, varied artist. The transition from *Thank Me Later* to *Take Care* was crucial evidence of his ability to expand

beyond a previous album's sound. So, after *Nothing Was The Same* presented a puffed-chest, lazier rendition of *Take Care*, Drake adapted. Reminiscent of the ambitious, yet candid young man from 2009, this album's Drake is a formidable, snarling, at times wounded rendition of the artist.

If only he'd kept it up.

I mean, for a while, he did. Feuding with rapper Meek Mill (known better as Nicki Minaj's ex-boyfriend), Drake dropped diss track "Back to Back." And, in a time where rap beef is about as legit as Taco Bell, the track was a sensation, even making Drake look threatening for the first time. It sounded like a reawakening — as if the self-proclaimed greatest was finally winding up to entrench himself in history.

But the universe had a different plan, and Drake released "Hotline Bling." In essence, he returned to the late-night bitterness of "Marvin's Room," but opted to sing it over the Wii Shop menu screen's soundtrack. The ball had been dropped, deflated, and cast aside.

VIEWS 2016

And then *Views* (2016) came out.

If the previous album's energy were to be weighed against that of lackluster *Views*, it would be crushed under the weight of its monotony. Keeping his R&B elements and trading hip-hop for dancehall, Drake released his most bland and uninspired work to date.

On *Views*, Drake took what made him unique, driven, and visionary — and cast it to the wind. He loaded up on Jamaican writers and producers, adopted an accent he didn't grow up with, and released twenty of essentially the same song. He sounds foreign, and not just in the accent, but in every aspect of the music.

The growth through his discography — the development of his character — was gone, replaced by a hollow, careless imitation of what he once defined himself as.

Of course, it couldn't get worse than *Views*. But the next year brought *More Life* (2017).

MORE LIFE 2017

The title is apt; *More Life* is filled with more life — producers, writers, features — than any former Drake project. Lost in a sea of randomly assorted atmospheres and instrumentals, the other elements of Drake's music faltered. The attempts to resuscitate his trap sound were lazy, and what appeared to be his efforts at standard hip-hop were pointless. His singer-songwriter tracks are where he sounds most at home, but they were frequently only mediocre — nothing less, nothing more.

A playlist meant to encapsulate a career should sound fluid and consistent despite crossing a range of styles. Instead, *More Life* is a disoriented collection of songs that vaguely suggests Drake without ever sounding distinct. It sounds like a Drake who, after achieving a spot at the top, lost the drive to impress and stand out. It sounds like a Drake content with releasing a middling array of whatever he wants,

because people will still buy it. None of *More Life* exudes greatness, and is far and away from what the greatest he proclaimed himself as in 2009 should sound like.

When I listen to *More Life*, I think back to Drake in the "Forever" music video. A rookie, standing amidst legends, with a hunger and staunch determination to rise above them. He wasn't the greatest rapper, he wasn't the greatest singer, but he sounded convincing — as if it were only a matter of time before he became either.

When I listen to old Drake — Drake on *Take Care*, or on *So Far Gone* — I wonder if that Drake is still somewhere in the back of this Drake's head, if he remembers the selfish brilliance of "Marvin's Room" — if he still remembers his mastery over both rap music and R&B.

When I listen to Drake now, I wonder if he still has any desire to be the greatest ever — because he could've been.

I wonder if he still can.



SXSW
SXSW

Photos by Ally Mason



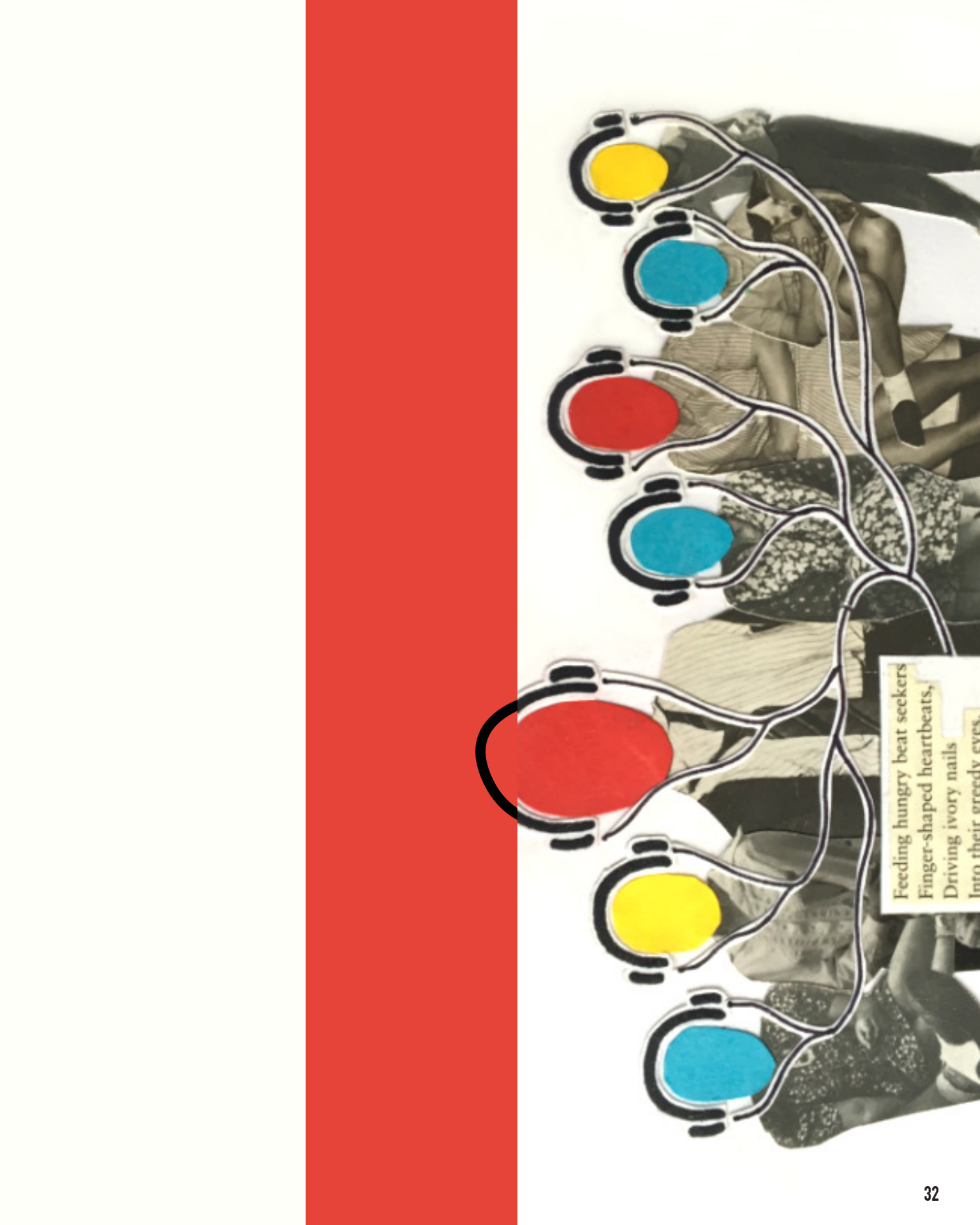
an inside look at SXSW:



SXSW
SXSW







Feeding hungry beat seekers
Finger-shaped heartbeats,
Driving ivory nails
Into their greedy eyes.



By Mateo Savala

California Lil B

Super Hyphy Keak Da Sneak

California Blink 192

Eraser No Age

Los Angeles X

California Love 2Pac ft Dr. Dre

Hotel California The Eagles

California Joni Mitchell

Electric Relaxation A Tribe Called Quest

California Nights Best coast

101 Albert Hammond Jr.

California Delta Spirit

L.A. Elliot Smith

Telegraph Ave Gambino

Champagne Coast Blood Orange

Going to California



Editorial

Eda Yu

Editor-in-chief

Meaghan Allen

Managing Editor

Emilie Dylewski

Copy Editor

Editors

Vivian Chen

Jacob Elsanadi

Leka Gopal

Logan Hansen

Matthew Sater

Writers

Jordan Aronson

Yaseen El Azzouni

Abby Blaine

Delaney Gomen

George Green

Brian Grossman

Edrees Fazel

Veronica Irwin

John Lawson

Shelby Mayes

Dylan Medlock

Brendan Redmond

Adil Siddiquee

Natalie Silver

Communications

Arnav Chaturvedi

Director of Communications

Sofia Duarte

Director of Communications

Rosie Davidowitz

Gaby Fooks

Annique Mitchell

Marketing

Myra Farooqi

Marketing Lead

Debbie Zheng

Social Media Lead

Mariah Ao

Elsie Fisher

Jessica Haro

Conner Tapley

Arthur Issagholian

Kenny Zhang

Gaby Fooks

Photo

Fiona Duerr

Photography Lead

Noah Bogner

Michelle Cho

Desiree Diaz

Kavitha George

Rebekah Gonzalez

Sam Jameson

Ally Mason

Jessica Morgan

Annie Nguyen

Mateo Savala

Design

Farida Radwan

Design Lead

Camilia Kacimi

Jackie Nam

Divya Saraf

Web

Kurush Dubash

Web Lead

Jackie Nam



THE B-SIDE



berkeleybside.com