

A NEW SOUND



THE NEW SOUND

Story by Nic Restivo

It's a cartoon world. The prawns are four pounds, the do's are only one. Wake up guys, what is going on?

The breakup of British experimental rock band black midi marked a tragic day in history, with an unexpected, indefinite hiatus being birthed into existence by the likes of frontman Geordie Greep's Instagram Live. A moment to live on

forever, his smug face is ingrained in my mind as the harbinger of destruction, portent of misfortune, and bearer of bad news. But alas, one must forgive such a charming figure, especially when he brings something as spectacularly grandiose as The New Sound to the table in such short notice.

In an interview prior

to the album's release, Greep was asked for his perfect ten album, answering *My Song* by Keith Jarrett. Recorded with a new group in Norway, Jarrett put together something entirely different from his past projects while still keeping the bits

that made his older works great to begin with. In inspiration, Greep picked up musicians around the

globe pulling together different international sessions for his own pivoting project. One aspect of this album that sets it apart from his past work is his complete creative freedom. There's a freshness present, an excitement in the music: you can tell that this really is something that built itself into an otherworldly oddity; one could even say... the sound is truly new.

The delusional mindscape is difficult to capture in a sensible manner, oftentimes approached through exaggerated expression to confer the delirium on the observer. This album takes us through the thoughts of a man who has transmogrified every aspect of his life, and although seemingly self-aware, is unable to do anything but continue on with these spiraling nutso thoughts. On the opening track "Blues", these motifs are put out on full display. Even through the disillusioned mentality we see in its essence a recognition of someone who's got nothing good going on, something that might even be relatable to the average person—but maybe not, maybe I'm just a confused entity at heart and putting my true colors on exhibit. Lines like "And now you are one with yourself/You are finally proud/Admit that you've tried to cry and can't/Admit to yourself no one else cares" contain a sentiment that feels genuine and concerningly understandable, even if not necessarily true, as if brief thoughts are drifting through the mind.

In maintaining this grandly delirious persona throughout the album, Greep is able to display the cartoonish nature of an utter and absolute loser. In a way that nearly evokes a sympathetic response from the listener, the beauty of this album comes from our ability to acknowledge the absurdity of it all and still find glimpses of relatability peeking out from behind the romantically bitter lyricism and ridiculous delivery. One can only dream, that's all you've got left, but what's there when you blow it all away? You sleepwalk through life, there's nothing to tie you down, a one-way ticket to failure is all there is. Maybe being self-aware isn't enough anymore? Maybe, just maybe, it might be better to really try to change. But what would I know; I'm as confused as anyone else.

All lyrical sentiment aside, there also has to be an acknowledgment of the absolutely masterful instrumental performances on display here. Spiraling sequences snowballing into absolute insanity, cartoonishly grandiose lamentations on the fronts of all life, cathartic summits that resonate with the soul—each and every song has a unique style and charm which makes it both distinctive yet cohesive within the context of the entire album. The Brazilian influence present on this album is evident and beautifully handled. Traces of entire genres, like salsa, and the influence of greats like Milton Nascimento peek through clear enough to notice, but they are so excellently integrated that one can only applaud their incorporation.

This album holds a special place in my heart. Tumultuous times call for tumultuous measures, and this work has really channeled a newfound life into me. It's an inspired hope that maybe it's all not so bad. This might sound silly, but it's the truth. Who would have thought a man with an unidentifiable accent would pierce my

poor little heart? All jokes aside, this album can be interpreted in a number of ways, from cartoonishly corny, to irredeemably theatrical, to just plain nonsense. These are the worst ways people have described it to me, but I can't help but smile because it doesn't matter—*The New Sound* is nearly flawless in my eyes. Clearly, I'm biased, yet it is undeniable that Greep has brought together something unique, special, and innovative beyond measures of comparison, truly giving birth to a completely new sound.

Edited by
Alex Oder

Layout by
Camden Pao

ALBUM REVIEW