Daily
Life

Harry Styles' 'Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally' is growing on me

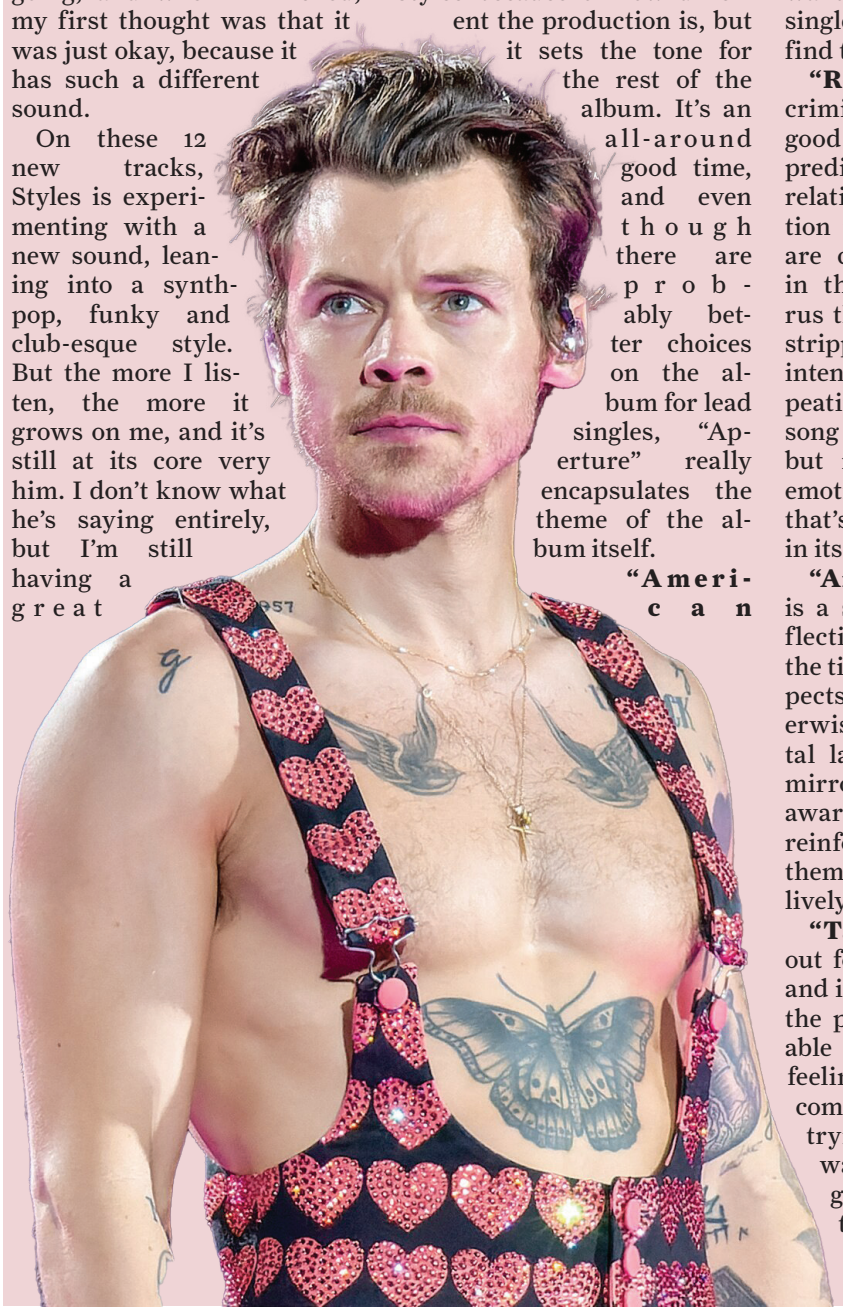
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After four years and many HS4 at midnight rumors, Harry Styles is back with "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally," or "KATTDO."

On my first listen, I had no idea where the album was going, and when I finished, my first thought was that it was just okay, because it has such a different sound.

On these 12 new tracks, Styles is experimenting with a new sound, leaning into a synth-pop, funky and club-esque style. But the more I listen, the more it grows on me, and it's still at its core very him. I don't know what he's saying entirely, but I'm still having a great time. Some of the funniest responses to the album online are people questioning where the disco is, and I have to laugh because I didn't realize people were expecting the second coming of ABBA.

The first track and first single, **"Aperture,"** wasn't what many fans were anticipating going into a new project by Styles because of how different the production is, but it sets the tone for the rest of the album. It's an all-around good time, and even though there are probably better choices on the album for lead singles, "Aperture" really encapsulates the theme of the album itself.



"American Girls" is suspected to be the next single, and after the surprise music video drop on release day, that's looking to be true. It's not as intense with its production, which allows Styles' vocals to really come through. The song itself is about that loneliness you feel when all your friends are in happy relationships, and you want to be okay with being single, but there's a yearning to find that someone special.

"Ready, Steady, Go!" is criminally short but such a good time. It is about the unpredictable rush of starting a relationship, and the production mirrors that. The verses are calm with a lovely bass in the background; the chorus then slows down and gets stripped back, and the outro intensifies and speeds up, repeating "ready, steady, go." The song isn't a lyrical masterpiece, but replicating the different emotions of a relationship that's moving quickly is a feat in itself.

"Are You Listening Yet?" is a song centered on self-reflection, with Styles posing the title question to address aspects of himself he might otherwise avoid. The instrumental layers create tension that mirrors the struggle between awareness and taking action, reinforcing the introspective theme while maintaining a lively feel.

"Taste Back" was a standout for me on my first listen, and it stayed as a favorite from the project. It's another relatable song about the complex feeling of having someone come back into your life and trying to figure out if you want to lean into the nostalgia of it all or leave them in the past. It's not as intense production-wise, which I think helps set the mood for the song. I love the repetition of the lyrics "Did you get your taste back? / Or do you just need a little love?"

"The Waiting Game" stans, please come to the front because I'm here to give the song its flowers. I love this song so much, it's easily in my top three. The production is reminiscent of "Sunflower Vol. 6" off "Fine Line" and it's more easygoing than some of the other songs on the album. It's about a person who doesn't want to take responsibility in their relationships and how "playing the waiting game" and waiting for things to change while not doing anything won't result in things actually getting better.

Now, when we all saw the track list for "KATTDO," track seven intrigued everyone, as it's called **"Season 2 Weight Loss."** Fans could only imagine what the song would be about, and surprisingly, it's about fame and being in the public eye, which Styles is no stranger to. It's a very raw song, reflecting on being a figure that so many people love, and how to continue to live up to their expectations. The production also feels almost overwhelming; I think to make the listener feel the anxiety Styles does.

"Coming Up Roses" is the only song on the album that Styles wrote solo, and it's a true testament to his writing ability. The song is gorgeous as he steps away from the synth and incorporates an orchestra instead. It's about trying to fix a relationship while you're also understanding your own wants and worries. Someone needs to call the producers of "Bridgerton" or Shonda Rhimes immediately because I have a song for them.

"Pop" is the cool older sister of "Cinema" from "Harry's House." It's another fun one that's simply talking about being excited to be with someone.

"Dance No More" and "Paint By Numbers" are definitely my least favorites from the album. I'll be honest, I don't entirely understand what "Dance No More" is about. All I know is that he's yelling at me to respect my mother and that DJs don't dance anymore. **"Paint By Numbers"** sounds like an early 2000s song, and it's just not my style.

"Carla's Song" is the perfect closing track to the album and it's great. It's a celebration of the beauty of life and a reminder that the whole is out there for us. It was inspiring for Styles because it reinforced his love for being an artist and making music that touches so many people. The production makes it feel very cinematic, and it'd be perfect to lay over the end of a coming-of-age movie.

"Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally" isn't going to be for everyone, but I really love it. It's such a fun project full of absolute bangers and a lot of reflection and growth from Styles. As the temperatures rise and I'm finally able to roll the windows down, the album will be going triple platinum in my car.

RATING: 4/5

Indie artists unite on charity album 'HELP (2)'

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After 17 years of musical absence, War Child came through with "HELP (2)," a charity album equally as ambitious as their first, on Friday, March 6.

Dozens of collaborators across a predominately indie spectrum come together amongst 23 tracks, produced by James Ford and recorded at London's Abbey Road Studios. Original songs and a handful of covers make up the track list, and according to the War Child website, all the album's proceeds go towards War Child U.K.

War Child, an international non-profit organization that supports children impacted by armed conflict, assembled an arsenal of musicians in 1995 for the charity album "Help." Featuring stars like Paul McCartney, Oasis and Radiohead, the project raised money for War Child and was followed by four more charity record installments by 2009.

Arctic Monkeys, one of the biggest names on the project, start the project with the aptly-titled "Opening Night." Released as the album's lead single, the indie rock introduction sports warm harmonies that only get more layered as it progresses, preparing listeners for the spectacle that is to come. While relatively catchy, its presentation gets eclipsed by the following "Flags," a rhythmically rich collaboration between Blur frontman Damon Albarn, Fontaines D.C. frontman Grian Chatten and poet Kae Tempest, along with a dazzling children's choir.

U.K. art rock band Black Country, New Road presents a narrative of a troubled Hollywood actor on "Strangers," with vocals shared between female band members Georgia Ellery, May Kershaw and Tyler Hyde. The band jumps between lush rock sections and calmer folk segments driven by incessant mandolin and banjo in a satisfying manner consistent with their recent output.

The band The Last Dinner Party works with a similar whimsy on the subsequent "Let's Do It Again!" which details a relationship that keeps ending and beginning again. Frontwoman Abigail Morris' powerhouse vocals steal the show, and the track's orchestral finale is one of the most dramatic on the entire album.

American indie band Big Thief adds to the fun with "Relive, Redie," an acoustic arrangement with haunting lyrics and an uncanny spaciness that recalls the work on their most recent album, "Double Infinity."

Cameron Winter, frontman of Geese and renowned solo artist, contributed his first release of solo studio material since December 2024 with "Warning." Winter ditches his signatory piano, instead opting for pulsating, building strings to accompany his wailing spoken word musings. As the track builds, backing recordings of his own voice drag behind the main delivery, urgency expanding in an anxiety-inducing manner to make for one of Winter's most confusing and beautifully overwhelming compositions yet.

While the lyrical content varies wildly across the album, some artists take more direct commentary on children experiencing conflict or political agitation in general. The back-to-back pairing of Young Fathers' hip-hop tinged "Don't Fight the Young" and Pulp's art rock jam "Begging for Change" is the most focused moment of discontent, something that would be nice to see more of within the project.

There's no shortage of enjoyable covers found on the album as well. Beth Gibbons, lead vocalist for the U.K. band Portishead, channels the comforting atmosphere of the Velvet Underground and Nico's "Sunday Morning" with a minimalist folk approach. Echoing steel guitars drift below the acoustic guitar centerpiece, evoking a consoling dreamy feel.

Depeche Mode transforms "Universal Soldier," originally a calm folk song by Buffy Sainte-Marie, into an electronically dominant powerhouse, while beabadoobee offers her take on Elliott Smith's classic "Say Yes," an intimate encounter where her tender vocals capture the original in all its melancholy.

Irish post-punk act Fontaines D.C. strays from their typical abrasiveness to cover the late Sinéad O'Connor's "Black Boys on Mopeds," beginning the song in acoustic fashion and piling on a light mellotron haze and cinematic strings to round out the performance.

Olivia Rodrigo makes a surprising appearance to close the record with a cover of The Magnetic Fields' biggest hit, "The Book of Love." Rodrigo maintains the acoustic feel of the original, letting her expressive vocals make this version feel her own. With the soothing sound and beautiful lyrics about love, there couldn't be a better way to conclude the album.

The sheer array of artists and abundance of quality on "HELP (2)" is staggering, and even more impressive is the cohesion between it all. The sequencing presents thematically and sonically similar tracks alongside each other, but not in a way that feels like reductive grouping. "HELP (2)" is an impressive accomplishment, one that will be hard to surpass if War Child ever tries to release a third installment.

RATING: 3.75/5



The album logo for 'Help(2)' a charity compilation album created by the organisation War Child. It was made to raise funds for work involving helping children through wars across the globe.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPOTIFY