Between Two Worlds

DOMINIC FIKE'S HOW TO QUIT SMOKING



Dominic Fike is featured in his new album cover. "How to Quit Smoking" was released on Friday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPOTIFY

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On Friday, Dominic Fike released his new album "How to Quit Smoking." He brings back his fusion of sun-drenched guitar, indie and conversational R&B for a 15-song project containing singles such as "White Keys" and "Pangea." Throughout the album, his upbeat instrumentals clash with the ideas hidden in his abstract lyrics, creating a listening experience that is not only deeply nostalgic but thoroughly thought-provoking.

The album's title meets its opening track, "Wallflower," right where it stands. Fike introduces the album's central tension between wanting personal change and fearing the loss of meaningful relationships. He criticizes someone for their passivity while expressing how much he needs their support to change. He masks his vulnerability with insults and accusations, while wondering, "If I could die and come forth, would you let me?" The song establishes the opening theme: The difficulty of changing when so much of your identity depends on the people around you.

"Small Town" and "PANGEA" continue exploring the album's recurring ideas of relationships and emotional dependency. In "Small Town," Fike reflects on a past relationship, remembering conversations in New Orleans. He uses the metaphor of being unraveled like a thread to show his emotional dependence despite wanting to move on. "Pangea" introduces a brighter energy that feels very carefree. Underneath this aloof song lies the uncertainty about intimacy and the stability of a relationship.

The next section of the album explores nostalgia and intimacy, with "White Keys" standing out as one of its most recognizable tracks and one of my personal favorites. It brings a bittersweet atmosphere, reflecting the warmth of past relationships while admitting they could never remain the same. He captures the conflicting emotions of appreciating the past while coming to terms with its fleeting nature.

The album's later songs shift away from romantic relationships and toward personal growth and maturity. "Doomsday" captures the difficulty of letting go of our bad habits. The song has an ethereal yet chaotic vibe that mirrors the disorienting experience of falling into these habits, as days begin to blur together and time loses meaning. This shift suggests that change also extends to the relationships we have with ourselves.

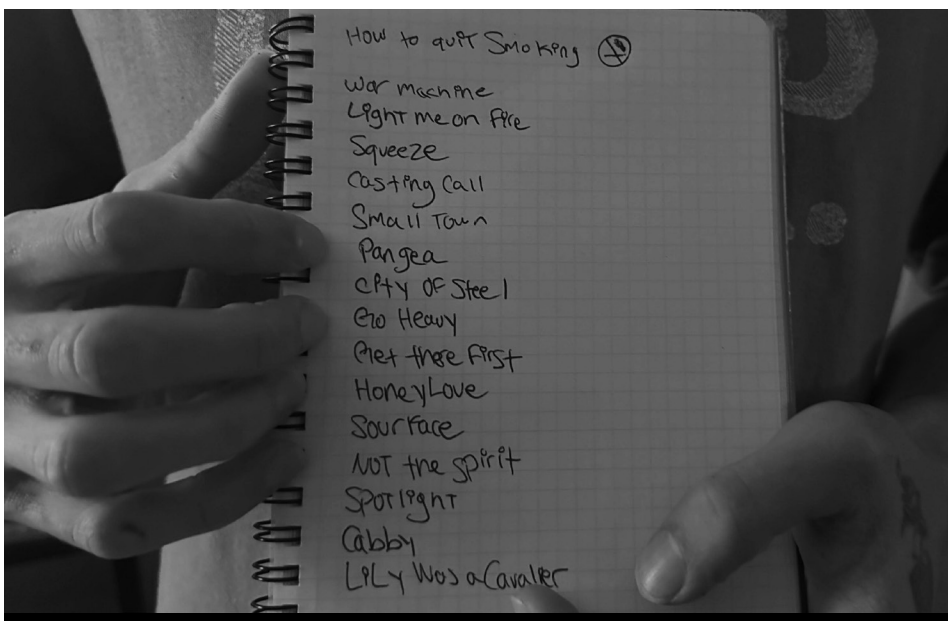
He ends with "Spotlight / Inner Child," which features an abrupt interruption as Fike begins speaking over a nostalgic track. He admits that he is trying to quit smoking, recognizing it as one of the last vices he has yet to leave behind.

At 30, with a child of his own, he tells us that he is growing up and his priorities are changing. Unlike the rest of Fike's album, this last track is not shrouded by cryptic metaphors and irony. It is a remarkably honest note that beautifully concludes the album's exploration of change, dependency and maturity.

The album features an extensive guest list that does not disappoint. They perfectly complement the vibe Fike sets out to create. The production similarly balances moments of lightheartedness and vulnerability, creating moments that are both engaging and emotionally complex. Dominic Fike provides yet another album that allows us to live across two worlds.

Either we choose to immerse ourselves in bliss, listening to his nostalgic tunes, or we look beyond and find pieces of our own experiences in his lyrics. To me, that is the album's greatest strength: The ability to mean something different depending on how we listen to it.

4/5



15 songs are featured on Dominic Fike's new album, "How to Quit Smoking." This is Fike's fourth studio album.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @DOMINICFIKE ON INSTAGRAM

Queens of Stone Age frontman Josh Homme embraces imperfection on new album 'Perfecth' 'Perfecth'

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Queens of the Stone AQueens of Stone Age frontman Josh Homme embraces imperfection on new album 'Perfecth'

Queens of the Stone Age released its ninth studio album "Perfecth" last Friday, and frontman Josh Homme says he is embracing imperfection in his songwriting after having a difficult year.

This year, Homme struggled with health issues, a cancer diagnosis and divorce, and said he took writing this album to reflect how imperfect life can be.

"I've been anything but perfect. And I've had moments where even performing and doing this job has confused me, frightened me, angered me. But it's always, at the end of the day, been at the forefront of how I've unstuck myself, how I've sort of freed myself from some of the darker moments in my life," Homme said in an interview with NPR.

At first glance, the album seems silly and unserious, with a song titled "Where the Goth Girls at?" which was a shocking title to a lot of fans at first. However, with the exclusion of songs where Queens of the Stone Age made fun and humorous choices, the album has a lot of moments with deeper meaning.

The song is ridiculous on the surface but actually dives into themes of death and mortality, which makes for a particularly interesting creative choice.

The song "Insignificant Other" has a groove and bouncy guitar reminiscent of The Rolling Stones, and tackles themes of love and breakup. The song feels intimate and personal, with lines like "We both let go. I'm so broken, left unspoken for."

Additionally, "From the Cliff" is an acoustic track with a beautiful melody and lyrics that are also about love. The song has a unique chord progression and stands out on the album as a slower, stripped-down track with layered melodies and an eerie Mellotron hum.

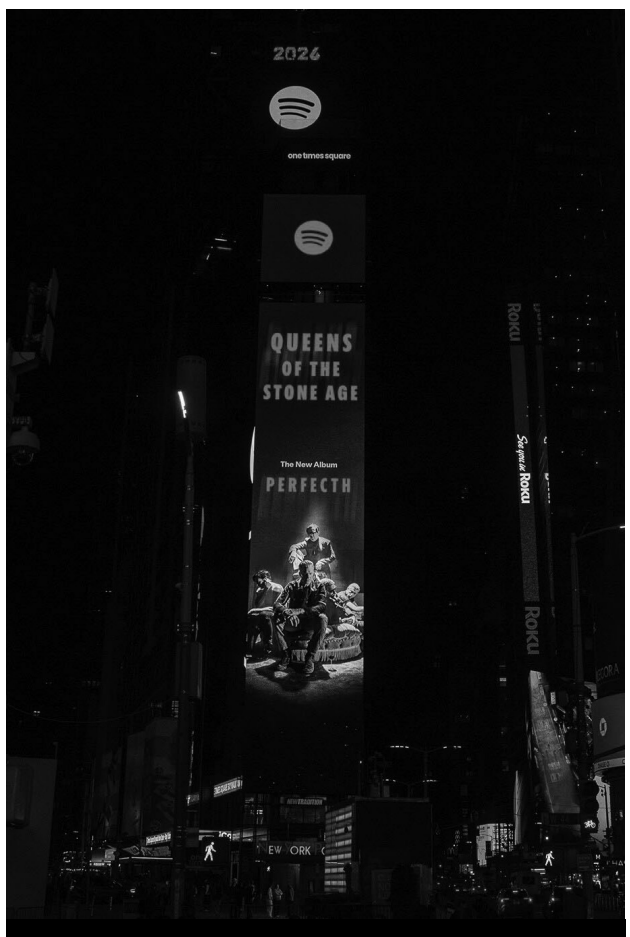
The album is a little whiplash-inducing, as it does switch heavily from goofy pop-rock songs with ridiculous lyrics to tasteful and intentionally meaningful ones. However, this arguably keeps it entertaining and enticing, because you don't know what to expect next. Homme's idea of imperfection for the album really seeps through when you're hearing so many different types of sounds and ideas on one album.

For example, the song "Sunday" is jumpy and electric with David Bowie-adjacent vocals, while "Phantom Limb" is more atmospheric and falls back on a lot of the band's classic songwriting styles.

The final song on the album, "Run Away from the Mob," feels restless and leaves the album on an enigmatic note, but this is usual for the band's overall sound. The song lets the tension of the album build up at the end to a closing guitar solo and layered vocal coda.

The album overall is not as heavy as some of Queens of the Stone Age's previous music, so it is something new for fans to listen to, while possibly attracting new audiences. As lyrically intimate and sonically interesting as the album is, it definitely doesn't live up to some of the band's classics such as "Songs for the Deaf" and "Era Vulgaris."

Rating of 2.5/5 for this album



"Perfecth" is featured on a billboard in Times Square, New York. The billboard feature promoted the release of their ninth album on Friday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @QUEENSOFTHESTONEAGE ON INSTAGRAM

SUBOG Weekly Events:

October 19th - November 8th

November 4th – GTA VI Trivia @ 7:00 pm in the Student Union Theatre

November 5th – Coffee House @ 4:30 pm at the Benton Museum

November 6th – Jersey Day @ 6:00 pm in SU 325

November 7th - Harvest Fest @ 12:00 pm on the Student Union Mall

November 8th - Amazing Race @ 11:00 am across campus

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu events!