Life

MILEY'S 'BASS PERSUADES' MARKS A BRAND-NEW ERA

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It's hard to believe how Miley Cyrus has changed. When she was a teenager, she played Hannah Montana and sang teen pop hits like "Party in the USA." Then she dramatically changed her style, writing mature romance tunes while backing out of Disney. Now, she's ditched her last name, joining the single moniker club.

While Miley's stage name is different, her music still shines. When I listened to "Bass Persuades," I thought, wow, this is amazing. Of all the Miley albums I've listened to, this is one of my all-time favorites.

The opener, "Bass Persuades," starts the album on a strong note. While electric chords and futuristic melodies fill listeners' ears, Miley sings about teenagers not partying as much as they did a few decades ago. The lyric "the kids don't wanna dance" demonstrate this.

To strengthen Miley's argument, Miley composed a music video that switches between a club and a city street. In the scenes, Miley and her friends dance the night away, portraying what life used to be like for teenagers.

The second song, "Different Religion," shifts the subject from partying to religion. The beginning is dark and suspenseful. Miley's low, bold voice makes it sound like a god is talking to someone from the sky. The suspenseful mood eventually changes to futuristic pop as Miley declares that she wants to change her religion. In the chorus, Miley's voice sometimes sounds echoey, blending in smoothly with the music.

"Let's Get Married" is one of the album's best tunes. Not only is the music brilliant, but the music video is stellar. Beginning with uplifting rock music, the tune instantly captures your attention. The rock vibes remain constant as Miley sings about her happy romantic relationship and suggesting that she and her lover, as the title suggests, get married.

What makes the music video unique is that it's in black and white, making it look like a television show from the 1950s. The video features two main aspects: Miley being in a bath and Miley spending time with her lover. Things she does with him include being in bed with him and having drinks with him and a few friends. The music video also features other couples, including same-sex ones.

"Orbit" takes us to a new world. While the previous songs were energetic, "Orbit" is more laid-back, featuring somber piano harmonies that make us feel like we're floating. The floating sensation is a key element of the lyrics, which discuss loneliness and wanting to surround a lover whenever they're around.

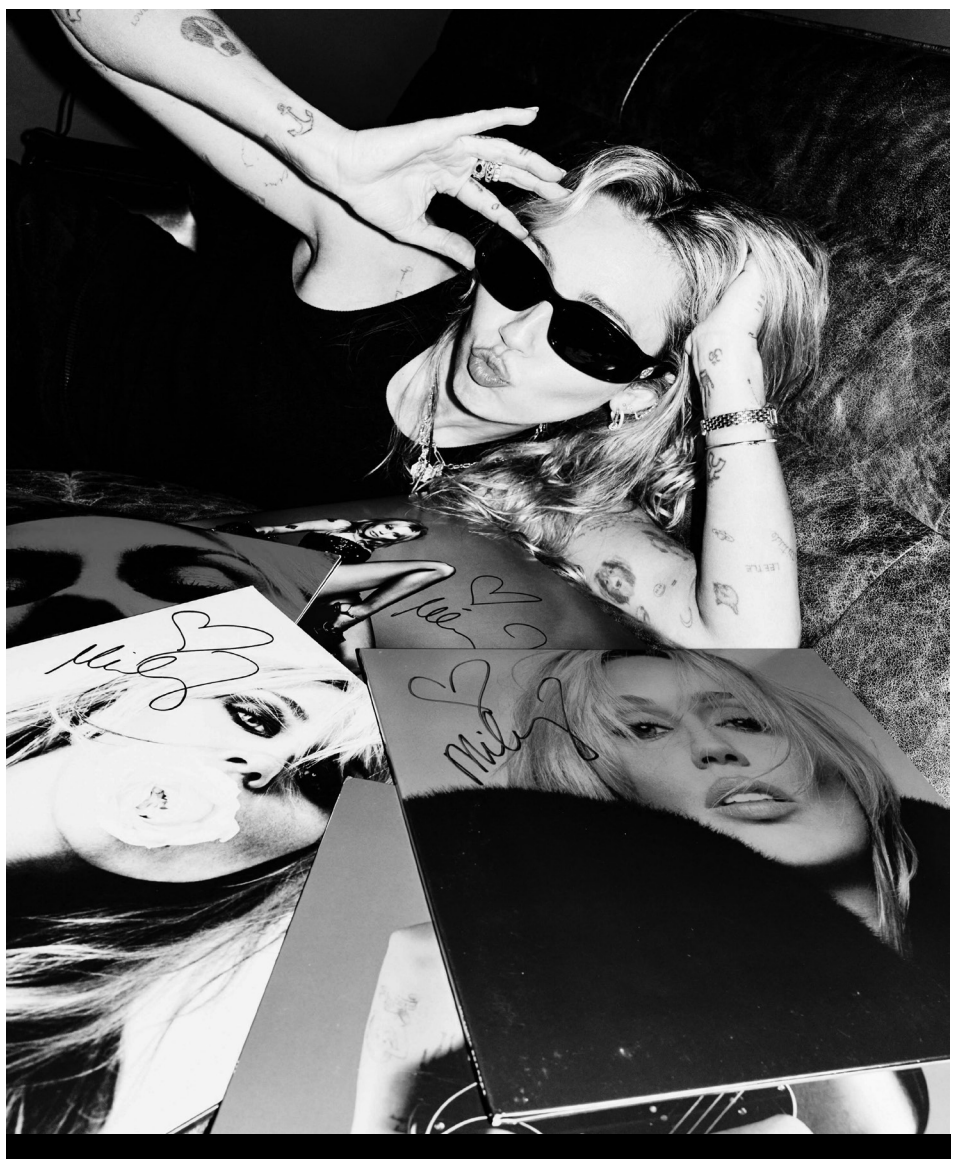
The sorrowful mood continues in "Aftermath," which revolves around a failed relationship. For the first 38 seconds, the tempo is slow while Miley's vocals sound distant. Eventually, the tempo picks up while disco melodies take over.

"REDLIGHTS" is one of my favorite songs. What I love the most is its animating club beats. A memorable lyric is "And baby, you're the reason / I'll turn my face up toward the light."

After "REDLIGHTS" is "Neon Signs," a very seductive tune. The opening features ringtones, which end in a voicemail. Miley's reaction to the voicemail is an alluring sigh, indicating that you're in for a ride. While the sighs linger for a chunk of the tune, Miley sings about romance and late-night company.

"Innocent Ways" brings back "Bass Persuades'" suspenseful and futuristic vibes. The tempo remains swift and groovy, keeping you awake.

"Snow" is like "Aftermath." It's very chill and not much happens in the tune. A few significant lines are "I gave you my hand / You pull me against your chest / I know I've seen everything" and "It's written in your wide eyes, forever skies / Together, we both fall like snow."



Miley Cyrus poses with signed vinyl records of her new album "Bass Persuades." The album was released on Sept. 18.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MILEY ON FACEBOOK

The final song, "Bass Persuades Remix," is an alternate version of "Bass Persuades." There's not much to comment on other than the fact that the song sounds groovier, and the vocals sound like the original version.

Overall, I love this album. The mixture of electric, pop and soft rock songs makes the album an intriguing work. The only thing I didn't appreciate was that there were only ten songs. The album was so stellar that I wish there was more of it. I also wish Miley ended the album on a better note. While the "Bass Persuades" remix was great, it would have been nice to see a different song there.

Rating: 4/5

BECK REVERTS TO DREAMY FOLK ON 'RIDE LONESOME'

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When a historically celebrated artist like Beck, who's been releasing music for over 30 years, finds it within themselves to create a new album, there's always a question of whether their craftsmanship remains. The concern is especially relevant for someone like Beck, who has a history of genre-bending, with his greatest hits ranging from alternative rock to folk to synth-pop.

While his electronic-based album "Hyperspace," released in 2019, may have scratched some heads, Beck's latest project, "Ride Lonesome," marks a return to form of sorts for the American songwriter. Any trace of experimental synths has been swept clean, replaced by showy string arrangements and smooth slide guitar.

With its Friday, Sept. 18 release, "Ride Lonesome" comes 12 years after Beck's "Morning Phase," and 24 years after his "Sea Change," both of which explore the exact same sound. But unlike his earlier releases, which established a sense of melancholy tinged with optimism, Beck comes across as hopelessly worn out and somber.

The title-track opener sets the gloomy scene, with Beck immediately mourning how "Yesterday, paper roses, they forgot to bloom." The subtle trailing of electric guitar notes through the soft rock tune, emphasize the pining feelings conjured by Beck's words. It's a slow start, but not a bad one, with the atmosphere being just dreamy enough to keep the listener's attention.

Things stay much the same on "Run Away," which exists within a similar soundscape of lovelorn despair. Beck calls for a lover, or perhaps a desired answer, to stop running away. The backing vocals, which were present on the opener, have a more tangible role in the track, but don't rank among the best sorrowful swells present on the album.

By the time the fourth track "Failed Words" comes around, with dense resonant piano that matches Beck's reverberating vocals, the album's shortcomings begin to show. Beck's slow, consistent delivery doesn't add texture to the wall of rolling string sound, but rather, his voice tends to merge with the mix. The writing falls a bit flat, too, with the choruses shuffling through the phrases: "All my nights in vain /All my days in vain /All my words in vain."

It's much the same elsewhere, too. The seventh track, "For Your Love," begins with a gorgeous deluge of descending strings, but shallow tales of how "Time waits for no one / Days carry on / A turn in the river / Where love has gone," prevent the track from hitting the emotional heights that it could.

But even amidst the similar style Beck operates in, there are moments when tracks claw free from loaded structures. "It Ends Right Here" starts with some simple strumming, but Beck's higher register eventually aligns with swells in the slide guitar, truly selling the experience. A rare appearance of electric guitar feedback undercuts the slow-burning serenity toward the end, providing a rare moment of instrumental texture.

"Falling Through My Hands" sees Beck at his most vivid, lyrically and instrumentally, across the record. The repeated call of "you're falling through my hands this time" carries real weight with his delivery, while occasional fingerpicked guitar breakdowns prevent any festering monotony.

Things end interestingly enough with "Beyond the Light," another predictable slow burner. But the steady ebb and flow of reverberating vocals, dense strings, backing vocals and slide guitar make it a compelling experience that repackages the album's instrumental strengths.

All in all, Beck's latest endeavor is far from subpar. But the lack of variation in pacing makes it harder to connect with, and some tracks can go in one ear and out the other. Still, if you happen to listen while moody or feeling down, there's a good chance the array of songs will really hit.

Rating: 3/5

SUBOG Weekly Events:

September 27th - October 4th

Homecoming Parade – 9.27 @ 1:30 PM along Hillside Road
Homecoming Carnival – 9.27 @ 2 PM at Founders Green
Homecoming Pageant – 9.28 @ 6 PM in the Student Union Theater
SUBOG x USG Voter Registration – 10.1 @ 11 AM at the SU Mall
Coffee House – 10.1 @ 4:30 PM at the Benton
Homecoming Lip Sync – 10.1 @ 7 PM in the Jorgensen Theater
Fan Fest Friday – 10.2 @ 1 PM at the SU Mall

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu



Beck poses for the album photoshoot of "Ride Lonesome." This album is the latest of Beck's many renowned works.

PHOTO BY MIKAI KARL, COURTESY OF BECK ON FACEBOOK