

REVIEW

Big Thief’s Double Infinity: You’re not incomprehensible

// BY ESMERALDA VASQUEZ-FERNANDEZ

The Venice breeze gently crept in from the open window as I laid on the white linen sheets. The first few seconds of Big Thief’s “Incomprehensible” hit me in the back of the head like a tuning fork. The song transported me into a dream-like state, like glitter was falling all over me, putting the rest of the world out of focus. I could feel my iPhone’s speaker vibrating, synchronizing with my heartbeat while I fought to keep my eyes open. The song transports you into a meditative state. It quickly became the theme song of my European summer.

“Incomprehensible” was the first song released from Big Thief’s new album, “Double Infinity.” Released as a single, it quickly

became the album’s most popular song. “Double Infinity” reads like a story of self-discovery as you fall in love with yourself and someone else. The key romance depicted in the album revolves around that self-love. The album asks listeners to accept their authentic selves and to accept what they cannot control.

The album is named after the song “Double Infinity,” which encapsulates its duality. It balances discovering aspects of yourself that have “been lost” with “what lies waitin’.” The album captures the mourning of your youth but celebrates growing and evolving with age.

the past.”

Throughout the album there is a thematic structure that reiterates rebellion against having to explain yourself. In “Happy with You,” the band directly poses the question being asked in every song with the lyrics, “Why do I need to explain myself?” Big Thief argues at the start of the album to let people be “incomprehensible.”

Although the album consists of nine songs — which is 11 songs fewer than the band’s previous album, “Dragon New Warm Mountain I Believe in You” — it builds an even more consistent sound and story than its predecessor. The song that stands out the most is “Grandmother,” naturally the only one with a feature. Laraaji, the featured artist, brings transcendent vocals to the piece. He lures the listener into a meditative soundscape.

Adrianne Lenker and Laraaji both end the song with higher-pitched vocals that blend together to fully depict the meditative aura of the song. It makes you feel like you’re dancing around a campfire during a full-moon drum circle in the best way possible. Upon listening to “Happy with You,” I immediately felt an urge to joyfully move my body around my room. The strums of guitar that play behind the repetition of the lines “poison shame,” “happy with you” and “why do I need to explain myself” elevate the mood of the song. It feels like happily and shamelessly dancing with anyone. It could be your first love or someone you probably shouldn’t be dancing with or even a relative. The song is beautifully composed and doesn’t

confine itself to a certain realm of love. Generational family love is one of the themes the album explores through song titles like “Grandmother” and other references to parental figures.

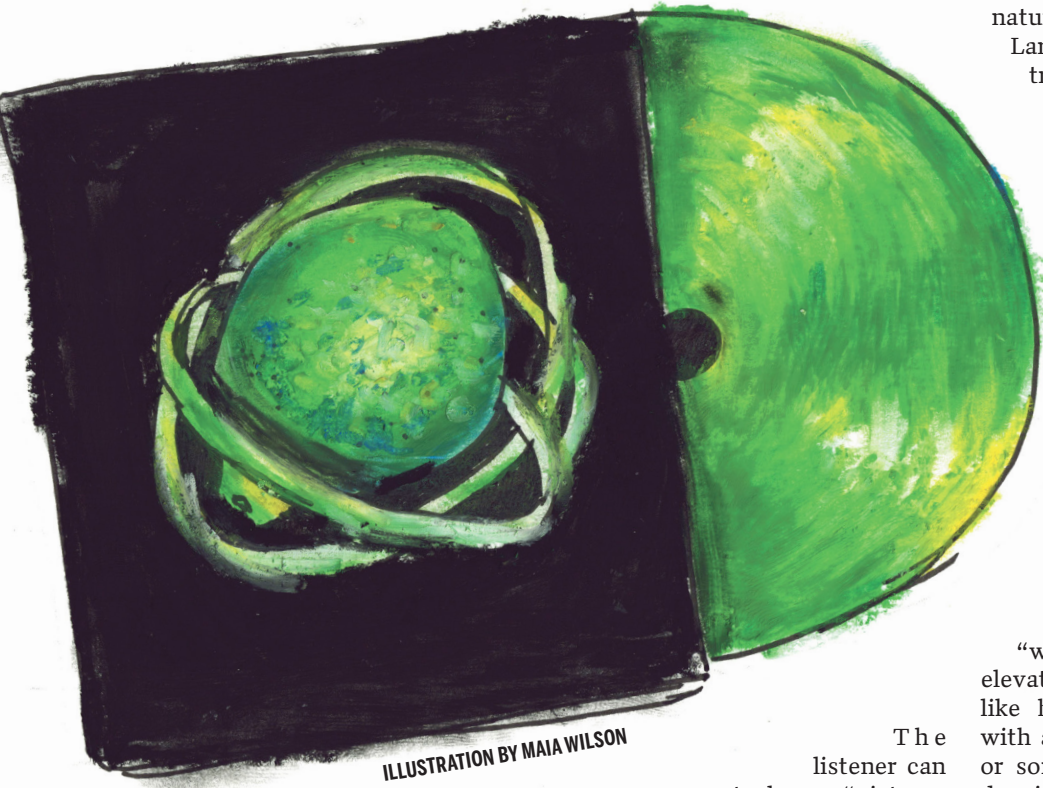
“Double Infinity” is perfect for all seasons of life. Big Thief balances the natural joys and griefs of life with each

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song, making it hard to label them into a binary of sad or happy songs. This strengthens their focus on life’s duality, or a “double” way of looking at life. Depending on how one feels, the same song can elicit different emotions that are internally trapped and begging to be addressed. Because of this, it has earned the title of my favorite Big Thief album.

Lenker, Buck Meek and James Krivchenia have once again created an unforgettable album that celebrates the human experience. Although the album is only around 42 minutes long, the listener doesn’t feel robbed of an experience because of its formatting and consistent themes. Along with the release of “Double Infinity,” Big Thief announced their “Somersault Slide 360 Tour,” which is beyond exciting because the album is well-deserving of being played live. If the universal human experience sounds in any way relatable to you, listen to the album. If you love it as much as I do — and buy a general admission ticket — you can catch me in the pit.

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The listener can truly see “pictures of another from the future or

CULTURE

Midterm Marathon

A summer flashback as summer “bears” down on us.

// BY ANNA PAPAKIRK

The last few weeks for me have been summed up by training, cramps, back pain, caffeine and carb loading.

You probably think I’m running a marathon — I wish! That would be much easier. Alas, I am preparing for something far more grueling, extremely taxing on the body and the mind: Yale’s midterm season.

Training? That’s hours spent training my brain to memorize anything and everything. Cramps? Hand cramps from writing copious amounts of notes and practice exams. Back pain? I’m hunched over my computer more than eight hours a day. Caffeine? Self-explanatory. Carb loading? This one has nothing to do with midterms in particular, but I just love bread and anything adjacent, so that’s what I’ve been eating, per usual.

Having four semesters of midterms under my belt, I’ve learned the excruciating truth: midterms at Yale are a marathon, not a sprint. Midterms pile up, one after another, never allowing you to catch a break. After running 13.1 miles, feeling so accomplished, there’s still 13.1 to go. A midterm in the middle of September and one in the last week of classes? Yes, that checks out. It is a series of constant gasps for air. Unlike midterms, finals are a sprint. A week-long 100 meter dash, where the gold medal at the finish line is winter break.

If you are thinking to yourself, “What do you mean midterms? I have none! I don’t have to sit down for a single exam!”

I’m afraid you have been deceived by the “Triple P Threat”: papers, projects and presentations. These assignments sneak up on you and can be even worse than sit-down exams. They demand a level of perfection that’s difficult to attain. You think you have it under control, then it’s 11:51 p.m., and you just submitted a paper with only eight minutes to spare.

Two weeks ago, I stayed up super late on Friday and Saturday. Not because I was in the backyard of a frat until the wee hours of the morning, but rather because I was writing the two papers and memo I had due on Sunday night. Once the final paper was submitted, I thought I’d feel a weight lifted off my shoulders — a sigh of relief. Yet, I had a midterm on Wednesday that I needed to study for — a sigh of a different sort.

I’m someone who has always enjoyed school. I love taking interesting courses and learning new things. Yet tests and essays always complicated that relationship. Trying to learn random facts just to regurgitate them on an exam and then forget them later or cranking out a paper on a topic I’m not passionate about challenges the enjoyment of school.

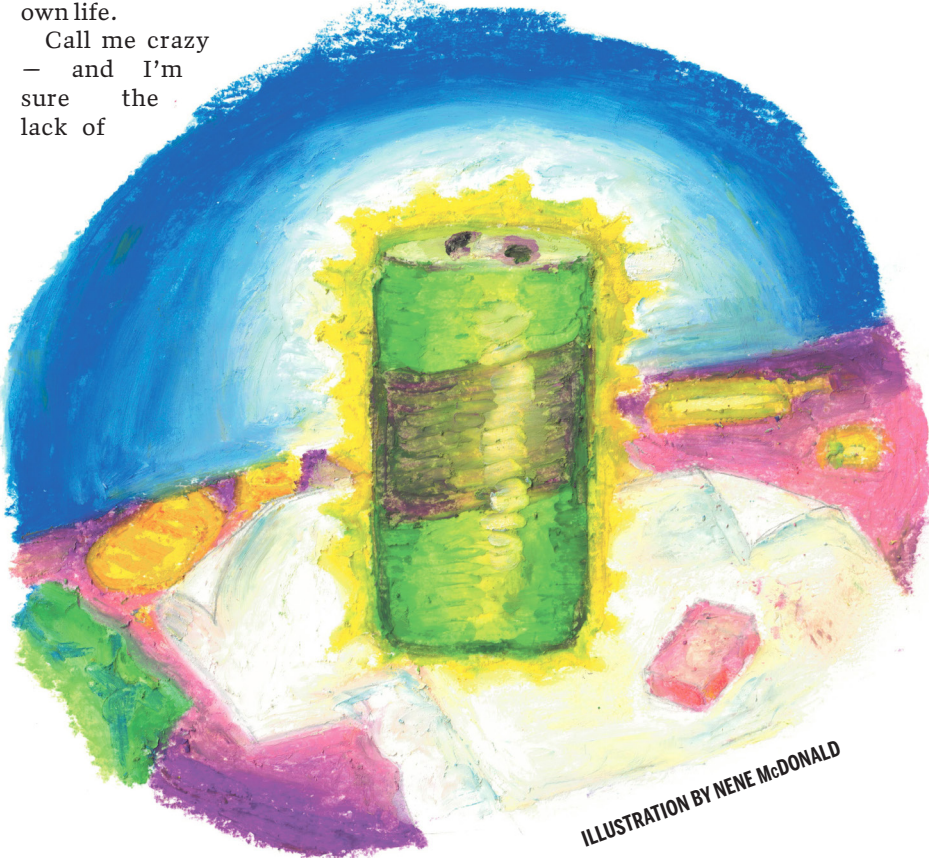
Nevertheless, something interesting happened to me this midterm season. Besides the time crunch and stress, I was enjoying the process. I feel weird writing that out, but I was genuinely so interested in the topics of my papers that writing them felt — dare I say — not that

bad? And the midterm I was studying for that Wednesday? The material fascinated me. I did not feel like I was just writing to write; I was invested in the topic and inspired as I wrote. And I wasn’t just studying to study; I was internalizing the material and thinking about how it applied to my own life.

Call me crazy — and I’m sure the lack of

sleep is making me a little crazy — but after crossing the finish line of the midterm marathon, I think I’m ready to run a real one!

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WEEKEND RECOMMENDS:
DETOXING FROM CAFFEINE