

# MUSIC

## Don't Panic - *Pretty. Odd.* is pretty good

*Panic at the Disco finally released their sophomore album. And don't think that we forgot the exclamation point.. read more to find out why it's gone..*

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Above: Panic at the Disco releases their second album.

tempting. That's the only word that can describe the new Panic At The Disco album. And don't look twice, there was no exclamation in their band name and it wasn't a typo. In an attempt to "mature," the 20-year-old Brendan Urie and his emo posse have dropped not only the punctuation from their name but their techno-dance-emo style that was found on many Myspace pages. However, listening to the album is like putting a puzzle together with the fan on "high." All the pieces seem to be present, just in a bizarre, incoherent order. Fittingly, Panic At The Disco apologizes to the audience with the first track on their first album in two years, *Pretty. Odd.* The album, released months after schedule, began as the band took a six-month hiatus to Mount Charleston, Nev. after a grueling tour schedule. "Oh, how it's been so

long/We're so sorry we've been gone/We were busy writing songs for you." Diving into the album, I didn't know where to begin. Knowing the cliché trends of Panic, I went right to the track "Folkin' Around," figuring the talk about the new revamped sound and the word "folk" in the title. To the untrained ear, this track sounds like an original bluegrass track, but with Urie still chiming his false vibrato emoetry, the song has one word for a description. Counterfeit. The album has all the makings to be a very successful album: advanced instrumentation, decent lyrics, hype and prodigious youthful talent. But factor in the Partridge Family Nehru jackets, forced vocals, Beatles copyright infringements and the hype being 17 year-old girls, the grandeur is lost. Speaking of Beatles connec-

tions, *Pretty. Odd.* was recorded at Abbey Road Recording studio in London, England. Coincidence? The album hits a high note on the track "Behind the Sea." In a song that sounds similar to early Shins recordings, Ryan Ross takes over the lead vocals in what I consider, the best Panic track ever. "Toast the fine folks casting silver crumbs/To us from the dock/Jinxed things ringing as they leak/Through tiny cracks in the boardwalk." Not only has the song writing matured, but also the singing has come a long way. Ross should seriously consider taking over the mic or starting a side-project. Another song worthy of repeating is their speakeasy-esque "I Have Friends in Holy Places," which sound like a cross between the Prohibition

Era jazz scene and an amusement park carousel. The distorted song, featuring a ukulele (or possibly a mandolin. Who's to tell?), is a nice, mellow departure from their hyper dance music from 2005's *A Fever You Can't Sweat Out.* The only throwback to their first release happens to be the album's first release. "Nine in the Afternoon" still has remnants of the last album. It's one of those weird, transition songs that still echoes of past Panic. *Pretty. Odd.* actually turned out to be pretty good. As for one of the most anticipated albums of 2008, it doesn't reach the predictions. However, it's a promising album that I really want to like. I guess maybe it will take a few more listens for these post-teens to dance their way back to my iPod.

## One man's view on our interpretations of the art known as music

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There are infinite perspectives on the subject of music. How do we know who's right? Is anyone right? The answer is no.

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"An art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color." So I ripped my lead off of a dictionary; call it uncreative but I'm going to call it essential. Anyway, that's the definition of music according to the knowledgeable dictionary.com. Is it good? Well define good, because when we're dealing with music good can be bad and bad can be magnificent. I'm labeling that as the essence of the article and we're only at the beginning folks so let my words lead the way through a musical journey of realness. Often I hear conversations among friends, colleagues or people I have never seen in my life. That's right - I listen to your conversations, and it's not because I'm creepy (or am I?), I just possess a yearn to understand communication in its entirety, but most importantly I want to know everything about music. When I say that I want to know everything about music, I am not, in any way, referring to acquiring the

- I could literally go on forever, but that would just bore those of you who cannot relate to the aforementioned artists. That's why it's impossible to define good music. To you, the reader, you may classify Van Halen as good music and you are 100 percent correct. I personally cannot attest to that statement because in my mind, I believe that Van Halen is garbage, just as you may think the same towards my Sinatra driven views. It's where one human differs from the other. It may be due to the culture you were raised in or you could be considered a music expert by many and could validate the astounding work of Halen to me for an hour, but you're still wrong. And it's because I'm telling you that you're wrong. Not because I'm smarter than you or because I'm a better musician than you, but because I simply do not possess the same taste as you, and that goes both ways. You can tell me I'm wrong too, there's nothing wrong with that and that's the beauty of music. In no way do I condone modern

### Weekly Musical Trivia for the Behrend Beacon

Which jazz trumpeter was famous for his horn, which was bent upwards?

- A. Louis Armstrong
- B. Miles Davis
- C. Chet Baker
- D. Dizzy Gillespie

Answer to last week's question: A. Perry Farrell

## Recent song reviews:

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### Katy Perry - *Ur So Gay*

Yes, yes, yes, since we have a page entirely devoted to music, why not talk about the songs? Here's a selection of songs you may have heard on the radio, on MTV or not at all. This is a review of popular and indie songs that's been getting the press by the internet and radio stations alike. So let's begin, shall we?

This song begins peacefully with an acoustic guitar playing in the background over pounding drums. A sharp whistle kicks in as Katy Perry soothing croons, "I hope you hang yourself with your H&M scarf." She continues by still gracefully singing, "You're so indie rock, it's almost an art/You need a SPF 45 just to stay alive," just as the chorus comes up. "You're so gay and you don't even like boys," are the memorable words in the chorus. It's not as if Perry is trying to change the meaning of the word, but she sings of her male acquaintance that's "so sad, maybe you should probably buy a Happy Meal" and someone who would rather "MySpace" instead of having a conversation with her. "Ur So Gay" is far from being offensive as she does have beautiful vocals to guide the track in its right directions (Maybe not including the exception where she arbitrarily yells "PENIS" at the end of the song). I honestly would not be shocked if the song were to be play on Star 104 a couple of months from now, maybe with a few changes and edits though, possibly changing the title to "Ur So Dumb" for the song to be politically correct.

### Lil' Wayne f/ Static Major - *Lollipop*

### Dizzee Rascal f/ UGK - *Where's Da G's*

Off of 2007's "Maths + English," UK grime rapper Dizzee Rascal collaborates and gets th'owed with the original rulers of the Southern U.S. rap UGK, the Underground Kingz. Each of the rappers talk down on studio gangsters who claim they are real, but never "robbed or shanked" anyone. Dizzee's heavy accent may be clearly evident, but it isn't hard to understand as UGK member Bun B challenges any fakers who claim they are "gangstas." "Let me see the neighborhood you control," tested Bun. The song's highlight, however, may be the third verse when the late UGK member Pimp C shows out his swaggering personality and macks the song down like no other. Some may consider this song as unfortunate as C's death prevented his appearance on the music video being seen on MTV. Nonetheless, this song is climbing on the charts as it could be the last anyone would see Sweet Jones possibly at his prime.

Producer Jim Jonsin recently revealed this song was originally for R&B pop group Danity Kane. Then Lil' Wayne and former Playa member/songwriter Stephen "Static Major" Garrett heard the track and they loved it. So the track is now theirs and

Lil' Wayne and Static made the dark track seductive

### Fall Out Boy / John Mayer - *Beat It*

Hold up. If you have read the song title and assumed it would be a Micheal Jackson remake, then you would be absolutely CORRECT! DING DING DING! Give this reader a prize, Johnny! Out of a trillion Michael Jackson covers already heard around the world, this one may be the most recent. Well, not really, due to the fact Michael's 25th Anniversary edition of *Thriller* contains some of his remakes by Kanye West, will.i.am, and Akon as bonus tracks. Instead of the song appearing as *Thriller's* bonus track, FOB's version of "Beat It" would appear on their "Live in Phoenix" set as a special treat for the fans. The throbbing drums in the beginning are just as rocking and loud as the original version. Guitarist/vocalist Patrick Stump then plays a riff that is highly familiar to Jackson's fans or anyone who have heard music in the past twenty years. For those who accused Stump's vocal as not-so-great, he actually stepped it up really well on this song. Dozens may be surprised hearing John Mayer shredding on the guitar solo formerly done by stringed-instrument legend Eddie Van Halen. Overall, while this song doesn't hold a candle to Michael Jackson's version (Seriously, what song does?), Fall Out Boy still displayed a fantastic remake here. This song may even excel a few expectations of Fall Out Boy's capability as becoming one of this decade's supreme rock groups by 2010.

## It is impossible to define good music.

knowledge of every band in the world, every genre, or defining what good music is, and that's because it's impossible. I myself have listened to hundreds of bands throughout almost every genre of music, while the person sitting behind me in this lab may have listened to another thousand bands that I do not care for; that's because music is subjective and not one person shares the exact same feelings about each and every musical group. In addition to the hundreds of bands that have graced my ears, with one of the truest forms of art throughout history, I have personally known plenty of groups that never made it big enough to release an album through a major or even a successful independent label. The point I'm slowly driving towards is that the amount of music that has been created in our world exceeds any possibility of grasping music in its entirety. One day you may think you're an elitist of music and the next day an underground band that has been in existence for 10 years may play out of a jukebox in a bar in a complete state of randomness and your elitist thoughts and dreams are drowned in your lager.

pop radio, but if you like it, then listen to it. It's your own damn loss and it's not my problem so I don't care. I don't know why I just wrote that but it's staying. An art of sound in time that expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color. There, I made you read it again and you had no way of resisting because it came out of nowhere - I'm a huge jerk. I'm sorry, but I needed for you to read it again. Music can reflect society, but society cannot reflect music. Music is music: it's not what the big name record companies blow it up to be. I don't care about the realities of modern music companies because they're garbage and it's not an accurate depiction of what music was created to be. Music in the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s (not to mention music from earlier centuries) - society didn't have to deal with the bullshit because the music was much more real back then. It was real artists conveying real meaning to real people. Pop music now is just an excuse for money - that's pretty much it (with a few minor exceptions that I won't get into at the moment because the article is already way too long).

There is no way of listening to all the music in the world. We attend college or educate students (for the profs) at one small Penn State campus in one state. That's just one college in one small city in one state in one country on one continent in one world in one universe (I think). That means that every local band that helps define your life means nothing on a larger scale. Sure, to you it means everything on an intrapersonal level, but to an African culture that is too far away for my communication based brain to measure, it means nothing. Again I'm rambling, but I swear there's a cause - I just haven't figured it out yet. I said earlier that it's impossible to define good music. To me, in my own crazy state of mind, I can define good music. Again it's intrapersonal. To me good music is Elliott Smith, Frank Sinatra, Thelonious Monk, Conor Oberst, etc.

So please don't tell me that Conor Oberst is a whining drunken fool and provide a follow-up response that consists of stating the brilliance of Metallica because it's a hopeless cause. It ultimately means nothing to me because I don't relate. If rap is your coffee at an AA meeting then so be it. If heavy metal is what you eat for every meal of the day then good for you. If jazz is the only respectable form of music in your mind then that's just fine. But don't tell me what good music and live the rest of your life thinking that you're right, because to me, you're wrong. Each individual is granted their own opinion if subjectivity lies in the field. So take advantage of it because it's one of the finest individual virtues that exist. Thanks and keep reading.