

Paul Barnes
1/12/17
Dr. Taylor

Don't Surf THE INTERNET...Listen To Them

Psychedelic Hotdog. Does this sound like a band you would listen to? Depending on your musical background you might be intrigued, turned away or simply laugh it off because of it's ridiculousness. Personally, I think it's a very cool and funny name and I would listen to them...if they were real. It's simply something my friend made up in high school and we would ask people if they "listened to them" for our own amusement. You know, teenage boy humor. Anyway, The Internet is actually the name of a band and I think this name is very cool as well. Some may call it unoriginal- which I can actually understand but, I do not agree with it. When one names a band, a certain connotation is associated with the name. Black Veil Brides, The Free Nationals and Parliament Funkadelic all have ear catching names and connotations that go with them. But the name The Internet leaves one wondering. What do they look like? What do they *sound* like? With this name there is total ambiguity and one might think of the actual internet which contains literally everything one could imagine. This is actually why I like the name...because you have no idea what to expect.

I first discovered The Internet through a behind the scenes/vlog for the rap group Odd Future. Their lead singer Syd Tha Kid - who now just goes by Syd- was featured in the video along with another member of the band named Matt Martians. I knew she was the DJ for the group's live shows and related to a member of the group however, I had no idea she had her own separate musical endeavour. I actually learned that the band existed via the YouTube comments section which mentioned how the band sounded nothing like the music that Odd Future created.. I decided to check them out and once I did I realized I had truly been missing out! The first music video I found was for their song "Fastlane" which is on their first album titled *Purple*

Paul Barnes

1/12/17

Dr. Taylor

Naked Ladies and from this I quickly noticed that this music video had a story (which is something I've always found interesting). It involved Syd and another woman driving around robbing places however, once the police arrived they parted ways and Syd headed towards a carnival and the video ends here. After finishing it, I once again went to the comments section which took me to the next step on my journey of history - which took me to the video for their song "Cocaine", also on their first album. Immediately, I noticed this video BEGAN where the video for "Fastlane" ended with Syd arriving at the carnival. How cool is that? Sadly, their other videos did not continue the story nor did they create a new one. However, the music video for their song "Girl" which features KAYTRANADA which is on their third album titled *Ego Death*, has a very effective trance-like, atmospheric visuals despite the somewhat "low budget" look to it which fits the feel/vibe of the song. Another visually pleasing music video of theirs is for their song "Don't Cha" off their second album *Feel Good* which brought them much deserved popularity. The video is shot in black and white entirely and features the band performing on a white background. While simple it still has a very clean and pleasing look to it and is personally my favorite video by them. Despite this surge in popularity, The Internet has not won any major awards. However, they have been nominated for both a Grammy and a BET award both stemming from the success of their third album. However this album did debut at #9 on the Billboard Top 10 R&B chart. As a longtime supporter, this made me extremely happy to see them finally the recognition they deserved. Even though they did not win it did not matter. They were still noticed. I was glad that I discovered them and had the pleasure of hearing both their second and third albums upon their initial releases.

Paul Barnes

1/12/17

Dr. Taylor

Now you may be wondering after all of this reading: What kind of music do they do???

And to answer this I say: It honestly depends on what song you hear by them. Diversity is a key element of a truly talented artist and fusing together influences from a mix of genres is practically guaranteed to produce something wonderful when done correctly. But to sum them up I'd say they are a R&B jazz band.

Their first album *Purple Naked Ladies* was filled with synthesizers, studio effects, and airy vocals from Syd. However, some live instrumentation was included but it was not exactly the focus of the project. Perhaps this was because at this time the band literally only consisted of Syd and Matt Martians - with Matt in charge of all instrumentation. I'd say this debut would be classified as experimental R&B/Jazz with some hip hop here and there. The topics include love and all of its aspects as well as some positive motivation. The opening track "Violet Nude Women" (a synonym of the album's title as you might notice) consists of a synthesizer accompanied by a guitar and a drum pattern. Syd provides vocalization on the track however she seems to be "behind" the instrumentation- in the background instead of the foreground. This opening track immediately creates a mood of psychedelic space-like relaxation which continues into the next track "She Dgaf" which features a rather repetitive hook. This is our introduction to Syd's singing style which is rather subdued-almost as if she's shy about singing. The tempo doesn't exactly pick up either yet the steady rhythm still provides something one might clap along with. Now we come to an experimental portion of the album on the track titled "Ode to a Dream" which features Kilo Kish and Coco O. Here we see Syd only providing vocals for the hook when Kilo provides some rap-like verses. The tempo on this track is 1 -2, sounding like something of New York hip hop boom bap sound of the 90's. This drum pattern is accompanied

Paul Barnes

1/12/17

Dr. Taylor

by a synthesizer which plays a melody similar to the “alien music” of the 80s. If this wasn’t enough at about the 2:00 minute mark all these things drop out and are replaced by a backmasked loop of the beat with another loop of a pitched down Syd singing and on top of that we hear some vocals of Coco.O singing the same thing in normal pitch. Whew! While it may sound noisy to some, it definitely helps create the dreamstate the song’s title alluded to. Another standout track would be “Gurl” which features Pyramid Vritra rapping over some drum patterns that sound unsyncopated with some interesting synth sounds and what sounds like water drops too. But, things get really interesting when as the song comes to a close this drum patterns slows down and Pyramid’s vocals slow down with it and end up pitched all the way down to a deep “slow mo voice” once the song ends. Overall, I say this project had a very psychedelic feel to it. When I first heard it, the various elements stuck out to me as I had never heard anything like it before. When I listen to it I feel as though I am floating through space honestly. The cover art continues this theme featuring a deep blue background with pinkish purplish accents.

When the band announced that their sophomore album *Feel Good* was coming I knew I was going to love it. However, upon hearing the first single from it “Dontcha” I was actually shocked! This was because this track sounded NOTHING like the sound of their previous album. There was no spacey feel but there was...a groove. The bass pattern caused this feel and helped make the song feel very danceable. I also noticed that this track had live drums as opposed to digital ones that provided an ABABAA count. There was also a piano which provided a very melodic smooth melody in the background and a guitar too! It definitely sounded like the duo of Syd and Matt had actually become a full band and upon seeing the video I saw that I was right. The new members included Patrick Paige II, Christopher A. Smith, Jameel Bruner and Steve

Paul Barnes

1/12/17

Dr. Taylor

Lacy who joined in 2015. As I listened I wondered if the rest of the album would sound like this...and I was right! Upon hearing it all the way through it seemed like they had gone in a completely different direction. The psychedelic vibe was gone and live instrumentation was a huge focus. Syd also had a much more confident sound to her voice. I would classify this album as soul/R&B. A clear standout for me on this project would have to be the 8:14 track "Pupil/The Patience" which changes tempos about three times practically sounding like 3 songs in one track. Part one features a fast paced drum pattern accompanied by keyboard with some reverb and a backing guitar and synth, part two is strong drum pattern backed by some synth like keyboards and a subtle bass while part three wraps everything up with a fast paced drum accompanied bell like sounds and synths. When listening to this I always pick out various instruments and focus on how they sound. The combination of them working together really creates something awesome. Another standout "Sunset" which features Yuna Zaraai sounds like the complete opposite of the title to me. Syd sings "Cause as long as the sun is rising/We can get up, and brighten/Somebody's day/By shinin' bright as the rays/ Inside my soul" These things happen when the sun rises not when it sets! And, the gentle keyboard in this track mimics the feeling of sun rays touching one's skin upon the sun rising. While the overall rhythm of all the tracks on this project are fast they are a few slowed down "smooth R&B" which are appropriately much more minimal in terms of instrumentation. One comes from the track "Shadow Dance" which feature a slow drum pattern and soft keys. Syd's vocals are also more intimate and sultry here providing a "nightclub" esque vibe to the song. However, she belts out her emotion in the closing moments as she sings "Tell me that you love me babe/Tell me that you love me girl" which changes to "Do you really love me baby?/Do you really love me girl?" Overall, Feel Good

Paul Barnes

1/12/17

Dr. Taylor

shows how The Internet has grown and matured both in terms of songwriting and their overall sound. When I listen to it, I always wish I knew how to play at least one musical instrument just so I could recreate the wonderful sounds I was hearing. And, when I hear it I do actually “feel good” as the music provides for a very blissful and happy experience.

I am very fortunate to have discovered The Internet’s music. Whether I’m listening to their motivational song “Runnin” or enjoying the house music like groove on “Of It” the feeling associated with the music is always ways pleasant. It’s also great to see live performances of the band and see how the song sounds even better live due to either improvisations or solos. While they may not be well known, more and more people are discovering them every day. The fact they have stayed true to themselves is commendable as they have not “sold out” either. With Syd and Matt both dropping solo albums this year and another album from the band coming soon as well it looks like this will truly be their year.