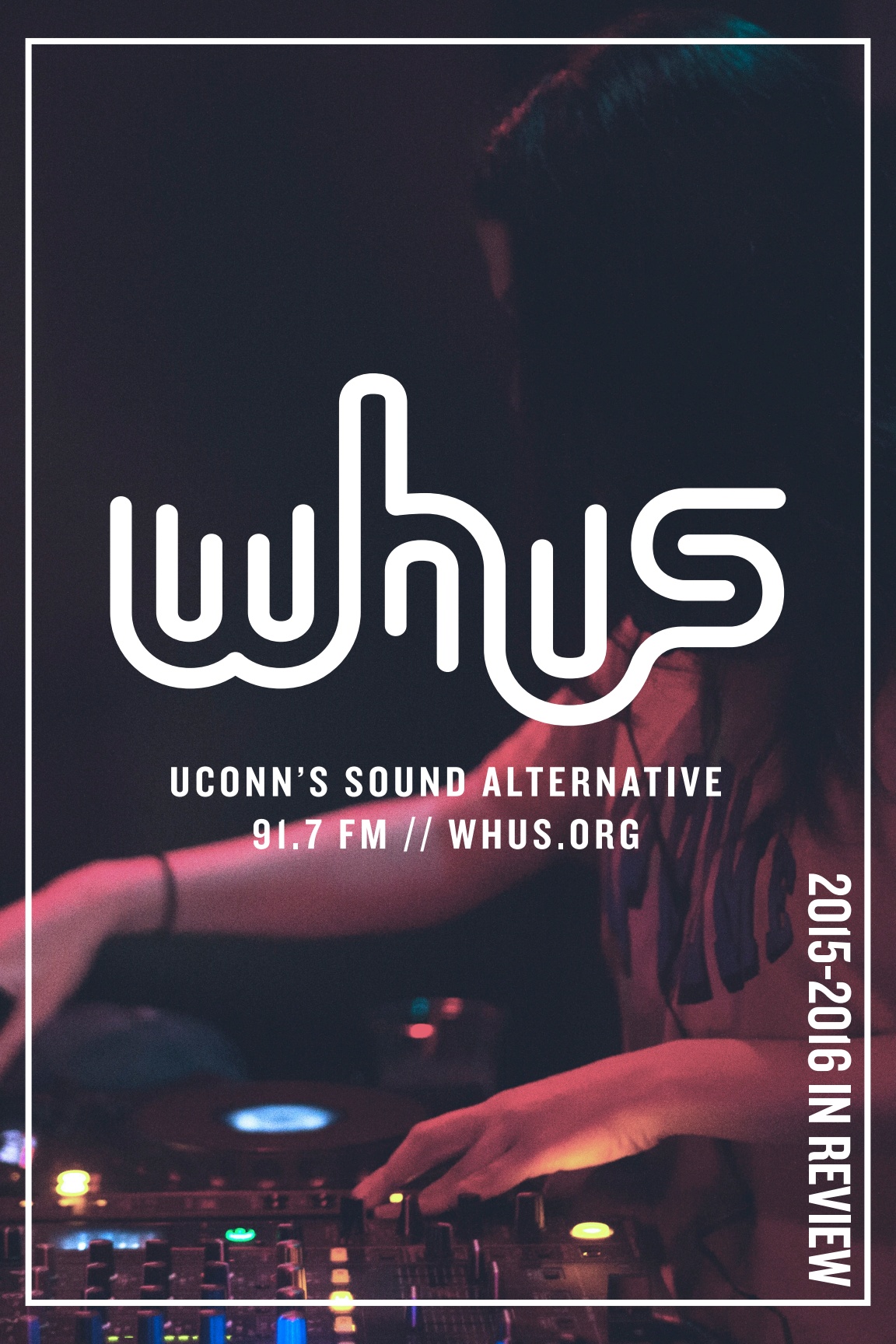

WHUS

UCONN'S SOUND ALTERNATIVE

91.7 FM // WHUS.ORG

2015-2016 IN REVIEW

This magazine was created to highlight the efforts of WHUS Radio in showcasing the very best of music and art culture in Storrs and the surrounding area. With concerts, reviews, special features, and more, each piece plays a part in representing what WHUS is all about - developing a community of creative individuals who care.

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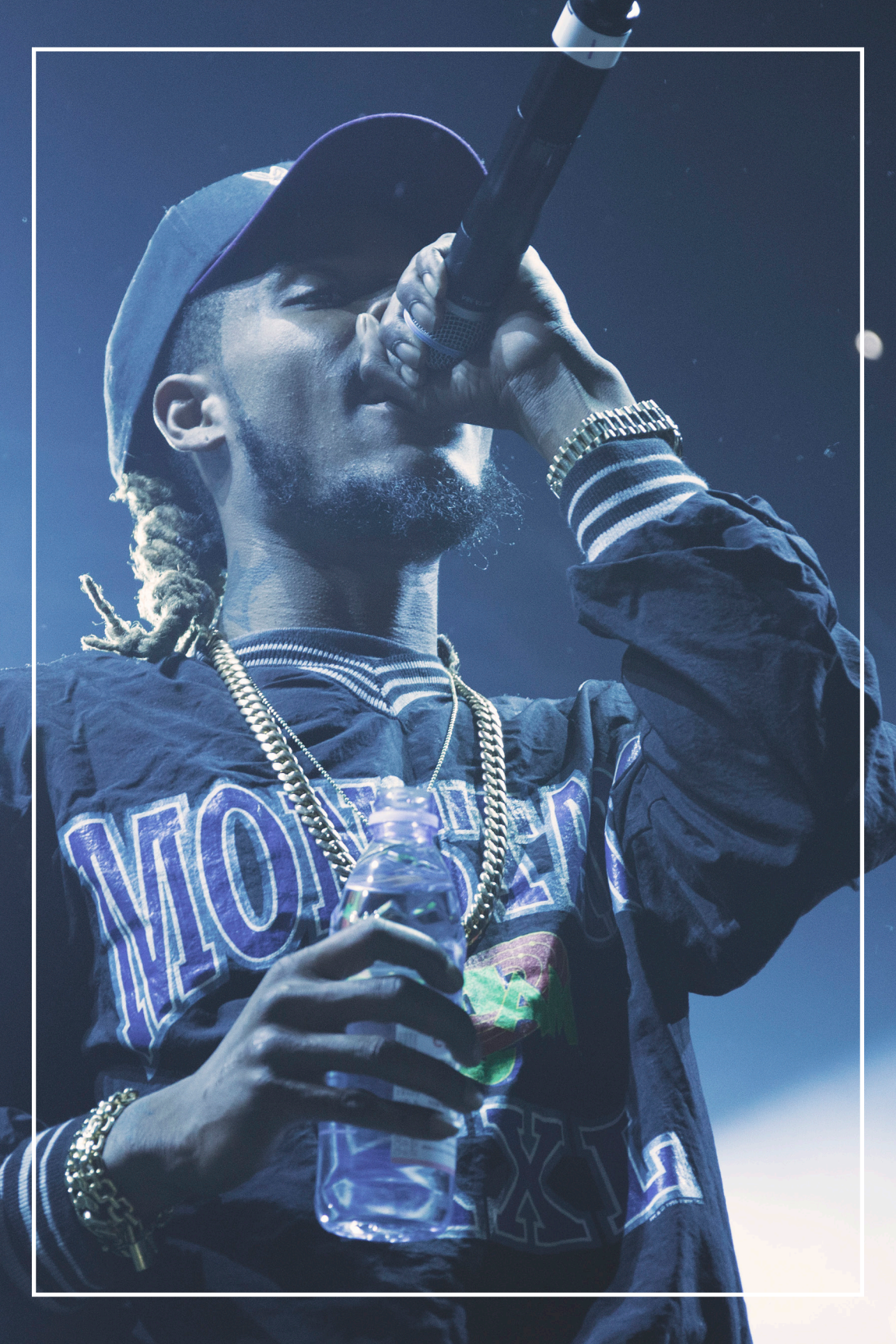
FETTY WAP

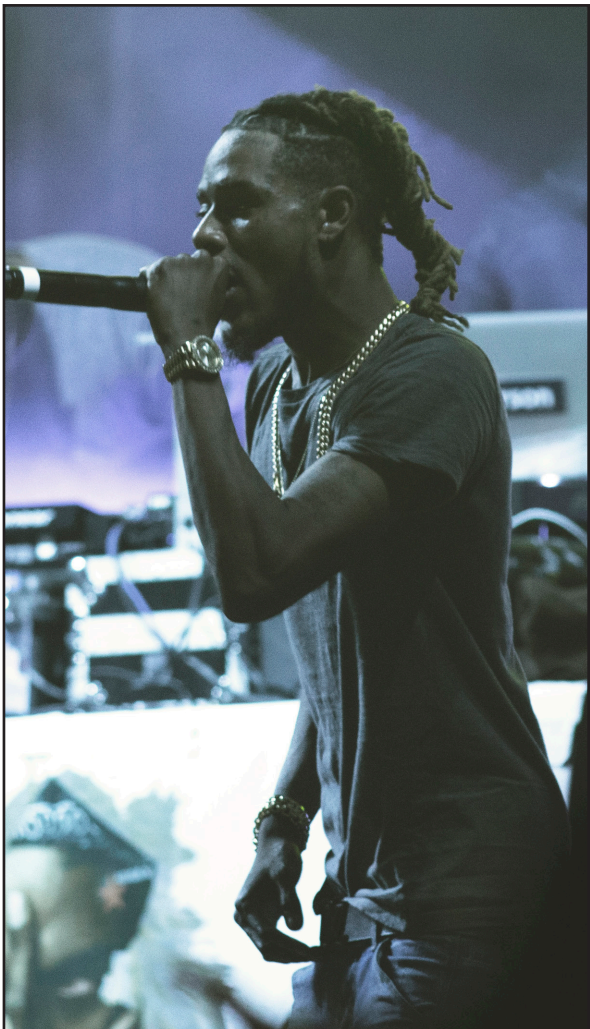
04.14.16 // Gampel Pavilion



UCONN SPRING CONCERT: FETTY WAP

04.14.16 // GAMPEL PAVILION

UConn's Student Union Board of Governors (or SUBOG to most) carried on their Spring Concert tradition by bringing hip-hop superstar Fetty Wap to Storrs. Students and their guests were ready to party as they rushed into Gampel Pavilion, expecting a great show that was surely delivered by the artist. Bringing along a tight crew of DJs, collaborators, and friends, Fetty Wap and the RGF Productions posse undoubtably enjoyed the show just as much as attendees did. Opener Cozz (pictured below, left), a Dreamville Records affiliate, set up the crowd proper for Fetty Wap's electrifying set. Hip-hop hits like 'Again', 'Trap Queen', and '679' rung out through Gampel Pavilion and had everyone on their feet.



BRANDON STANTON

04.23.16 // JORGENSEN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Wrapping up Spring Weekend 2016 was an intimate and inspirational lecture from the creator and photographer behind Humans of New York, Brandon Stanton. Over the past six years, Stanton has built his online platform into a serious force to be reckoned with, captivating the hearts of millions across the world with his subtle photography and powerful, emotional, and instantly recognizable conversations with strangers.

The core of his message was to focus on what one can control. Stanton spent two years of his life focused on his job, his money, and not much else. The HONY project was spawned from this lack of control that he himself was experiencing, and he hasn't looked back since. Stanton held himself as an advocate for curiosity and creativity, also recounting tales of times where he felt ups, downs, and everything in between.

In reflection of his photography and interview style, Stanton claimed that it has "gone past being an interview" and that in their current state, they much more closely represent a therapy session for both the speaker and the listener.

Stanton has traveled across the globe with this message, and everyone in attendance was thankful to get a piece of his message right here in Connecticut.

Thank you to SUBOG and Spring Weekend for putting this event together.

Yuck, Saintseneca, and Little Scream

04.14.16 // The Space (Hamden, CT)

The Space in Hamden is the farthest thing from a huge music hall. Instead, it offers a more cozy atmosphere imparting a sense of intimacy. It almost feels like your best friend's basement, with Christmas lights hanging from the low ceiling and mysteriously procured decor. Case and point – they had a golden opera mask on display in a tube of PVC pipe because, why not? All of this helped craft a relaxed and warm atmosphere for Yuck, Saintseneca, and Little Scream on Thursday, April 14.

The night started with Montreal based folk-pop outfit, Little Scream, taking the stage. The band was a ragtag group, fronted by the lead singer Laurel Sprengelmeyer, clad in a bedazzled jacket and sporting messy hair. I wasn't sure what to expect but was pleasantly surprised by their folky brand of indie pop complete with jangly guitar riffs and bouncy melodies. Though it seemed like the majority of the crowd wasn't familiar with them, this didn't discourage the band. They performed a tenacious set, Sprengelmeyer providing the most energy faithfully backed by her introverted band. She seemed ecstatic just to be playing music at all, and of course, to be delivering her passionate, crooning vocals to an attentive crowd.

After a quick set change, the Ohio based quartet Saintseneca began their set. When I saw Saintseneca over the summer they gave off this "too cool" vibe (which isn't rare for a hipster band) but this time, the energy was markedly different. The frontman, and only remaining original member, Zac Little, delivered his typically reserved stage banter with a relaxed air. Despite the fact that they had recently gone through a lineup change, their sound was tight, with confident guitar lines, and well-adjusted dynamics. They started with gentle harmonies that eventually crescendoed to get the entire crowd swaying. This shift from soft to loud is a trademark of Saintseneca's music which worked well in The Space and certainly pulled out faithful, lyric-savvy fans.

Yuck stood in stark contrast by quickly changing the energy with their hit single "Get Away" from their self-titled album. The audience decreased to a decidedly dedicated group of lyric-loving fans. Their brand of effervescent fuzz-pop give a 1993 feel; it's Pavement and Dinosaur Jr in 2016. Granted half the crowd wasn't even born until the late 90s, so how could they know? But still, Yuck's noisy tunes pleased this crowd. The London-based band had a diverse stage dynamic with their friendly lead Max Bloom, the immeasurably chill bassist Mariko Doi, the confident lead guitar Ed Hayes, and the unflappable drummer Jonny Rogoff. They played songs both new and old, including songs off of their new album "Stranger Things" which came out earlier this year. After a 45 minute set, they concluded, leaving the crowd satisfied and ultimately thankful that the band had made the trek to Connecticut all the way from England.

SAINTSENECA

LITTLE SCREAM

MIXPAK x TRYNA FUNCTION:

THE LARGE FLORENTINO HOOD CELEBRITYY MA NGUZU UNIIQUE JUBILEE

03.26.16 // SUNNYVALE BROOKLYN

Pioneer

REVIEW:

MIXPAK x TRYNA FUNCTION presents:
The Large // Florentino // Hood Celebrityy
MA Nguzu // Uniique // Jubilee

03.26.16 | Sunnyvale Brooklyn

A night of dancehall, jersey club, and all-around good vibes - Brooklyn-based record label Mixpak threw it down with a stacked lineup. Label boss The Large kicked off the night with some easy-flowing dancehall, blending the likes of Mavado, Popcaan, and Vybz Kartel into one another. Club DJ/producer Florentino was up next, bringing his signature sound characterized by massive kick drums and reggaeton-influenced melodies to the crowd at Sunnyvale.

The party truly lifted when MA Nguzu stepped up to plate, on mixing duties for Brooklyn dancehall artist Hood Celebrityy (a late addition after hip-hop artist Young L unfortunately had to drop off of the bill). Dance circles and the like erupted as the performance brought a raw, physical energy into the mix. MA Nguzu continued on post-performance for her own DJ set, providing an even heavier dancehall and grime set. For those unfamiliar, check out MA Nguzu's other projects, such as Nguzunguzu with NA Nguzu and Future Brown with Fatima Al Qadiri, NA Nguzu, and J-Cush.

Another late addition, jersey club DJ/producer Uniique brought her own taste into the party, slamming the system with signature jersey club patterns and remixes. Closing the late night was Mixpak affiliate Jubilee (pictured, left), whose chemistry with Uniique showed as both DJs seemed to be vibing off of each other. Jubilee's bubbling and seamless mixing brought the party right to its end around 4am. All of the DJs from the evening have been traveling the country and the world showcasing their sound, and it was a pleasure to have them all in the same space for this evening.

BEHIND THE MIC:
MARY BANAS

We have a lot of DJs at WHUS Radio. Mary Banas is a great one. In the past she's worked with our New Spins team - that's a weekday program showcasing the best of what's flowing in to the station from artists across the globe, whether they're at the top of their charts or just at the cusp of breaking out to the masses.

Our very own Kailey Townsend sat down with Mary to talk about her history with WHUS and what makes her tick.

KT: *How did you get involved with WHUS?*

MB: I took the course over a summer to become a WHUS DJ, I think maybe after I had been teaching at UConn for one year. I actually started at the radio station because, as a teacher, you have to command the classroom for sometimes three hours, so you're talking or controlling the room in that way, and I felt like I needed to work on my improv skills. The thing about the radio station that's really interesting and nice is that it's a complete control, where you have to always just make something up because it's live and there's no going back.

I was also really impressed with the community of students here because they're super dedicated to what they're doing, and are interested in a lot of different types of culture. New Spins has also definitely been a way for me to very easily be exposed to new music.

KT: *If you could be stuck in one year's music scene, what year would it be?*

MB: Oh, yes. It's gonna be 2004. The peak of Bright Eyes. The Flaming Lips, Cursive. I was really into Saddle Creek.

KT: If your show was a food, what would it be or what would it taste like?

MB: My show is New Spins, so it would definitely be some kind of hip snack - you know how they have like, Doritos that taste like the Taco Bell taco, or the Taco Bell taco with Doritos wrapped around it or whatever. Because it's very contemporary, and it's really fresh but you know it's not going to last - since we only play music from the last three months or so. It would definitely be a snack food, a contemporary remix snack food. Have you seen those green tea Oreos?

ALBUM REVIEW //

PORCHES - POOL

From the very first moments of Pool, Aaron Maine's fourth full length under the moniker Porches, you get the immediate sense that you are in for something very different from Maine. Pool is a step in a new direction for Porches, far removed from the acoustic-driven bedroom pop of albums like Scrap and Love Songs Revisited or the fuzzed-out pop tunes of Je T'aime. And yet, Pool does not feel entirely foreign; Maine has always had an affinity for drum machines, and 2013's Slow Dance in the Cosmos had a number of tracks driven by warm synth lines rather than bouncy guitar licks.

It feels as if there is a bit of self-actualization going on with this album, a sense of comfort and confidence in the songwriting. You can tell that this is truly the music Maine wants to be making, and although the songwriting itself may be more confident there is still a sense of intimacy and vulnerability in the lyricism and the soft crooning vocals winding their way over the grooves.

It is this characteristic croon that still remains the centerpiece of the songs on Pool. Although the instrumentation and grooves are incredibly engaging, the songs truly revolve around Maine's vocal delivery. He carefully dissects the emotions he feels, rather than simply stating that he is feeling them. Although the feelings he is dissecting may be subtle and complex, his delivery is very plain-spoken. He touches upon his body, feeling safe and comfortable, being alone, trying to be there for others, and (in true Morrissey fashion) tries to talk himself into leaving the house to go out and have some fun for at least one night.

EP REVIEW //

MSSINGNO - FONES

Released this February on XL Recordings, London-born electronic producer Mssingno's EP 'Fones' is one to be remembered. Coming in at four tracks, each brings something fresh to the table, while carrying a strong sound that has become associated with the artist's work.

The aforementioned signature sound is one that borrows from influences in the R&B, grime, hip-hop, and industrial scenes. Heavy usage of vocal samples, both recognizable and not (his past work outside of this EP has taken from Brandy, Rihanna, R. Kelly, and more) hover inches above grimey basslines and hip-hop percussives.

On specific tracks, some standouts include opening track 'Dead', which involves a skittering and borderline intimidating drum track beneath a haunting vocal bit. The sample vocals are borrowed again for closing track 'Scope', however that one brings a slightly more playful undertone, showcasing an interesting juxtaposition that highlights the producer's versatility in creating mood and atmosphere in his music.

The two in-between tracks, title track 'Fones' and 'Inta', both act as smooth and segmented R&B cuts, offering a nice mixture of vocal influence and that distinct Mssingno sound. Touching on ends of every musical spectrum, this EP does a fine job in creating a space that is at once a twisted music box from your parents' basement and a playful nod to R&B culture and the continual progression of grime sound.

ALBUM REVIEW //

LUCIUS - GOOD GRIEF

Lucius is a five-piece group consisting of Jess Wolfe, Holly Laessig, Dan Molad, Peter Lalish, and Andrew Burri. Holly and Jess originally met in Berklee School of Music, after which they moved to Brooklyn and formed Lucius in 2005. The band has released two full albums, Wildewoman and Good Grief. Varying in styles from indie rock to dance pop, the group's sound consistently relies on strikingly in-sync harmonies which don't turn off-tune for a moment, even live.

Good Grief brings an alien-like twist to Lucius's previous rustic vibe. At a first glance, the album describes a journey-like perspective on a couple's relationship, sung in the second person, as the speaker falls in love ("Something About You"), loses touch with her individuality ("My Heart Got Caught On Your Sleeve"), dramatically fights ("Gone Insane") and reunites with her lover ("Truce"). However, the essence of the album lies in a deeper, philosophical place.

Reality and conflict are the fundamental themes of the album, highlighted by a central message of light-heartedness. Lucius describes the emotions that come with losing your touch with reality, as well as the inner-turmoil which accompanies loss and hope. The song order follows a timeline of a doomed relationship and the emotional reconstruction that follows. "Madness", the opening number of Good Grief, begins the album with a questioning of both the haste of time and reality, a key-change part-way through the song insinuates that perhaps there is more than a possibility that the speaker will "drive herself to madness".

With "Something About You", the album sails along into a very pop and dance heavy tune. Harmonies basically missing from the piece, the song describes blind trust, illustrating the new-love concept of becoming one. This tune brings back the early comparison of Lucius to ABBA, with a cliche pop ballad that ups in tempo at the chorus. The next song immediately turns it around and describes a multitude of difficulties in the relationship, however, "What We Have (To Change)" still explains that the speaker feels love and wants to find a solution. Both the clever title and the elongated ending illustrate that the speaker focuses on the good, and still, despite all, refuses to let go.

"My Heart Got Caught On Your Sleeve" expresses a new level of the previous song, where there is virtually no energy left to keep going, as the relationship is dwindling away, however the speaker cannot let go, since her emotions (her heart) remain attached to her lover. The song slows down and leaves a raw violin, piano and vocal trio before gaining volume again. This leads into the following piece, where the speaker denounces any hopes for peace, and actually desires for conflict, despite things finally going right. The last thirty seconds of pure rain wittily displays that when we "wish for rain", we get just that.

The pivotal point of the album is "Gone Insane". When I first listened through the album, pre-occupied by work, I only truly stopped to listen when the album hit this song, which is entirely intentional. This tone-shift is what "Madness" had foreshadowed-- a complete loss of touch with reality and reason. At that point, Lucius loses the 'relationship' gimmick: that's not what the album is about.

"Gone Insane" musically illustrates exactly how one can lose their mind. The lyrics focus on a second person, who accuses the speaker of going insane, with which the speaker scoffingly agrees. Holly and Jess reportedly actually fought before recording the song, hitting the intimate, steamy vocals and improvised disunity on their first try. The song twists the ideology of the album from a disconnect between a person and grief, to an understanding of approach-- the remainder of the album builds on a much more positive outlook, perhaps alluding to the title, Good Grief.

A whispered "Truce" carries the album forward, along with the light-hearted "Almighty Gosh" and "Born Again Teen". Though catchy, the meanings of the songs aren't lost: when you step back, there is a whole world of freedom you can discover. But it's not that nothing matters, just that not everything should be taken so seriously. "Better Look Back" questions the reality of any conclusion: "This whole thing's gonna keep us in a daze/ Never quite figure it out, the questions remain". With its rock-esc vibe, "Better Look Back" tops off the duo it follows with the important message: are we really sure that what we think is real and important are truly real and important?

Finally, we hear the familiar tune of 'it gets better' with the soulful "Dusty Trails". Following suite the beautiful "Two of Us On the Run" from Lucius's previous album, "Dusty Trails" is slow but provides hopeful build-up, with a delicate a capella moment and a tender message-- through tough times, we can still find happiness. As an ending to Good Grief, it may seem out of place, but "Dusty Trails" points to greater reward than money or comfort. Within the album, the goal isn't a perfect relationship, but rather, it's the journey of self-exploration and a greater understanding of the world, and that's exactly what our speaker achieves: through the "dusty trails" of a broken heart, she finds philosophical freedom-- "a golden road".

ALBUM REVIEW //

HOMESHAKE - MIDNIGHT SNACK

I first heard of HOMESHAKE after watching our favorite indie poster-boy Mac DeMarco give them a shout out during a 2014 Salad Days Q & A. At the time, I didn't realize that the band was in fact the solo effort of Peter Sagar, Mac's longtime lead guitarist for live performances. Once I figured out this affiliation, I was instantly intrigued and downloaded In The Shower, Sagar's first LP which was released last August.

Musically, the album is somewhat reminiscent of early Mac DeMarco recordings, but has its own very distinct flavor. While Mac's sound is defined by warbly lead guitar parts and his prominent croon, Sagar's style is much more subtle. His songs are intricately structured with warped vocal samples, jazzy guitar chords and mellow synths sprinkled over light drum beats, while his voice rarely breaks from a timid falsetto. All these elements make for great, catchy tracks and an overall very chill listening experience.

This same subtlety and mellowness carries into HOMESHAKE's newest release Midnight Snack, an album that manages to be even more chill than In The Shower. Sagar proved his keyboard prowess in brief moments throughout In The Shower, but here we see his love for synth take over. The album is chock-full-of interesting loops and keyboard sounds that drive the songs with a twinkling electronic flavor. Most of the album's percussion is heard in the form of gentle drum machine beats, which give the songs a crispness unseen in Sagar's previous work. The entire album has a very warm R&B feel, with the beats and keyboards providing the body of most of the tracks, though there are bits of echoey guitar and analog drums here and there.

One of Midnight Snack's highlights is "Heat" – the second track after an introduction of pitch-bent vocals and strange effects. The song is irresistibly catchy, with Sagar singing about the coldness of his homeland, Montreal, with a sparse vocal melody that sounds instantly familiar. The track pretty much sets the tone for the whole album: relaxed, mid-tempo, and subtly groovy with drum machine beats, clean basslines and slight synth chords.

Another great track is the single "Give It To Me," which sees Pete playing with pitch-bending and a shimmering synth loop. There's some really nice sounding guitar lines thrown in and his lyrics on love are delivered in a sweet, high-pitched harmony. The simplicity and great use of melody makes it one of my favorites on the album.

Other notable tracks are "Midnight Snack" – a sauntering, beachy gem featuring a pretty blend of guitars and synths that complement each other perfectly, and "Love Is Only A Feeling" – a sleepy, somber number defined by lazy, echoey strums and a nice ride cymbal rhythm. Also worth checking out is "Under The Sheets," which features some female vocals after the chorus which are oddly similar to "Always Be My Baby" by Mariah Carey. Seriously, listen to the two back-to-back, it's the same part. Of course, the whole album is definitely worth a listen through, especially if you're trying to wind down after a long day.

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It's hard not to see HOMESHAKE as a project affiliated with the mighty Mac DeMarco (who currently has indie music by the balls) but with Midnight Snack, Sagar further pushes his own distinct sound – a jingly, chilled out blend of pitch-bending, R&B funkiness, and clever guitar work. I'll be looking forward to the next one for sure.

STUDIO SESSIONS

What are Studio Sessions? You might hear these words around WHUS a lot, and it's for good reason. Studio Sessions are a series of intimate performances within which we bring touring acts right into our suite in the Student Union. No specific genres, no boundaries, just good music and good people right here in Storrs.

We've hosted artists like *The Mowgli's*, *Foxtrax*, *The Funky Dawgs Brass Band*, *And The Kids*, *LuxDeluxe*, *The Sun Parade*, and many more.

And we're far from finished.

You can check out more Studio Session videos at **youtube.com/whusradio917**.

WHUS LIVE CONCERTS

FLORIST

ELISA AMBROGIO

Whether it's **The Hotelier**, **Alex G**, **Beverly**, or anyone in between, WHUS works to bring the best in indie music right here to Storrs. These concerts are often free for students, and aim to highlight the best of what we're listening to at the station, and who's next to be at the top of the game. If you like good music and good people, keep an eye out for our future shows.

Here are just a few of the other acts that we've brought to UConn throughout the years:

Killer Mike
Beach Fossils
California X
Blessed State
Pile
Fraternal Twin
Self Defense Family
Tops
Seoul

Every inch of content in this magazine was created by or contributed to by a member of WHUS.

If you'd like to get involved, no matter what you're into and no matter your skill level, please don't hesistate to reach out - send a shout over to **generalmanager@whus.org** or visit **whus.org/training**.

WHUS Radio is located on the fourth floor of the Student Union, in Suite 412.
Come say hi!

Check us out online at whus.org
or on social media (@whusradio) for continued event coverage, music reviews, ticket giveaways, announcements, and more.

Special thanks are due to the individuals listed below, who directly contributed content to this magazine:

MEREDITH ATKINSON
MARY BANAS
STEPHEN BOGDAN
MITCH BRITTON
SCOTT HOFFMANN
LUKE MALEY
DAN MANNING
ALI OSHINSKIE
KAILEY TOWNSEND
NOMI VILVOLSKY

There is a seemingly infinite list of others who helped along the way. Thank you to the entire WHUS family, immediate and extended.

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