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No Author

*Seattle University*

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# Is Drake Even Trying Anymore? [REVIEW]

Announced last June in Drake's poetry book "Titles Ruin Everything," the much-anticipated new album "For All The Dogs" had its release postponed from Sept. 22 to Oct. 6, only increasing the fan hype for the project. It is Drake's eighth studio album, and his third album in the last two years.

The Canadian artist, known not only for his rapping but for his singing and R&B focus, has been topping charts for over ten years now. No matter what he releases, it will do well due to his reputation and devoted fanbase, and it feels like he knows it on this new album. "For All The Dogs" is a boring hour and a half slog, enjoyable as background music at its best. It's dreary, generic, aimless, moody, slow and dispassionate.

One of its few redeeming features is the cover, drawn by Drake's son Adonis, featuring a messy crayon drawing of a white dog with red eyes, both endearing and menacing.

Another positive is the album's stacked list of featured artists. Yeat, Sexxy Red, Chief Keef, Lil Yachty, 21 Savage, SZA and J. Cole are not names you would expect to see on a project together. Most of the features are good, so good in fact, the listener is left wondering why they're listening to Drake instead of the featured artist. Although "Calling For You" is an overall standout track, and Drake's verse is passable, he's thoroughly outdone by J. Cole. The same could be said of "IDGAF," the song with Yeat. It feels like a Yeat song with a Drake feature, and the energy Yeat brings is a breath of fresh air compared to Drake's completely unconvincing delivery throughout the record.

Drake's lack of energy stands out on attempted high energy tracks like "Fear of Heights" and "Daylight," where Drake does his best impression of something in the Rage sub-genre. These songs are fun, but Drake just sounds like he's trying incredibly hard. Why not listen to any artist who can actually pull off this type of performance.



Kay McHugh

“Don’t tell me you’re scared of lil Drake, don’t tell me you’re scared of lil Aubrey,” Drake raps in a forced whisper on the track “Fear of Heights.”

Worse than Drake’s delivery, however, are Drake’s lyrics. The album is full of bitterness, pathetic energy, pining over various exes and so many eye roll inducing bars. Drake, to put it bluntly, is way too old to not come across as insufferable with lyrics like, “Ask me if I coulda treated you better, but no, not at all,” or “And I had way badder b\*tches than you, TBH.” Yes, he actually says TBH.

This continues on the track “Drew a Picasso,” where Drake goes on endlessly about someone he definitely needs to get over, with lines like “I’m the one that you was wishin’ for when you was married,” and “Too many reasons why I can’t picture you with him, that’s just so embarrassin’, I want to die, to die.”

We also get uncomfortable bars like “I was in the club, before she even had it,” then “Shawty still young, she don’t know the classics.” Across the album, Drake tries to make himself sound confident with comparisons to his ex’s new partners, but instead sounds transparently insecure and angry. He wants to be a sad boy, to complain and paint himself the victim in his relationships, but he also wants to sound cool by being toxic, unfaithful, and cold.

Sonically, the album does have a few standout tracks, including “Another Late Night,” with Lil Yachty. Drake flows well over the punchy bass and upbeat synths, and Yachty’s signature auto tuned vocals are fun. The album’s second track, “Amen,” with Teezo Touchdown, has crisp drums, rubbery 808s, and twinkly piano, forming a lush backdrop to Teezo Touchdown’s rich vocal harmonies.

Still an unforgivable length of an hour and 24 minutes, the project is mostly a soup of basic trap drums, spacy synth instrumentals, understated soul samples, emotionless R&B singing and repetitive flows. It’s just so meh. Listening to the whole project all the way through, there’s almost nothing that really pops. The listener is mostly just left with a few lines that could be cringey Instagram captions.

If you’re a ride or die Drake fan, you could come away from this album happy, with some new bland, inoffensive, and formulaic tracks, where Drake does his brand of R&B and raps about girls and being rich. But for anyone looking for something interesting, something with new sounds to offer the genre, or something genuinely fun to listen to, you will have to look elsewhere. It does not feel like Drake is even trying anymore.