

LANA DEL REY'S HONEYMOON

Worth the Wait

AYSHA AMIN

Lana del Rey had actually hinted that she started working *Honeymoon* almost as soon as *Ultraviolence* was done, which made it a very long wait. Fortunately, *Honeymoon*, which finally officially released on the 18th of September, doesn't contain any of those leaked songs from 2011-2013 which many fans feared it would, and the album is totally fresh, post-fame Lana.

There are twelve original songs, one cover and one interlude on the album. It's definitely not an album that displays variety or versatility; all of the songs fall into the same genre and convey the same imagery.

Lana had said she had been looking for the legal rights to cover a few songs, but had trouble acquiring them. She probably could have generated a lot more hype if she had covered bands like Guns N' Roses or Nirvana (as she has done in live concerts) but probably settled on Nina Simone jazz record "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" because it spoke of how

she felt at the moment. "The Blackest Day" serves you a dose of pure David Lynch melodrama. The vocals are multi-tracked and harps strumming as she appeals to God. The music is barely there, it sounds like beats pulsing from the Malibu beach house next door. This makes del Rey's voice the main focus, which is pretty much the idea of her music, generally. In "Swan Song", Lana contemplates retirement and uses an Ayn Rand reference to tell you she wants to let go of the glamour. "Religion" and "24" are the most forgettable songs on the list and are dips in the 12-track *Honeymoon* glide. "God Knows I Tried" is repetitive, but the Hotel California reference makes it cool. Lana goes all Spanish exotic in "Salvatore" and it's good enough, a little different from the rest of the album. When *Honeymoon* was released on iTunes, a *Honeymoon Hotline* was launched and if you dialled the number, you would hear Lana reciting a T.S. Eliot poem and asking you which *Honeymoon* song you'd like to hear. That's "Burnt Norton". "Terrence Loves You" is Lana's favourite

on the album, and it's clear why, because this song showcases her voice the best.

"Freak" is similar to Florida Kilos from her previous album, less upbeat, but there's still some good drumming. "Art Deco"'s electronic intro and outro is everything. The imagery in the title track is a work of art. The intro sounds like the credits are about to roll on a 30's spy movie. "Music to Watch Boys To" is one of the best. There are actually hints of flute music in the background and it marries exquisitely



Lana singing about love and lemonade.

It's a whole package of perfection, the music, the lyrics, the cover art, the music video. "High by the Beach" is my absolute, unparalleled favourite. It's almost like the tune of "Shades of Cool" meets the vibe of "Money, Power, Glory" with an extra helping of spunk. The subtle music and strong vocals is a match made in heaven, and the music video brimming with subliminal messages is a work of art.

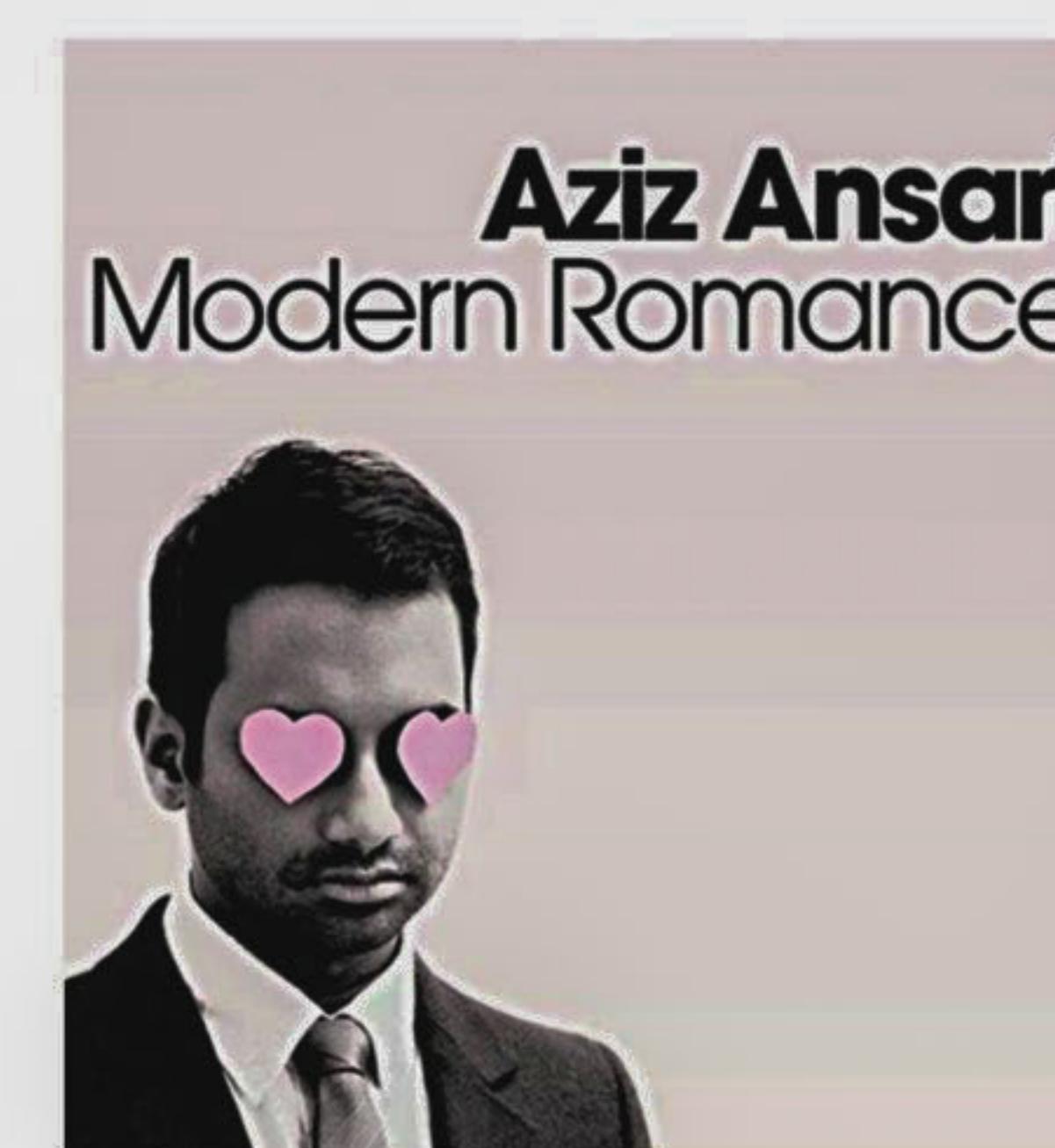
BOOK REVIEW

DIGITAL LOVE

RAYAAN IBTESHAM CHOWDHURY

The past few decades have seen remarkable changes people's romantic lives. Even in Bangladesh, where families fixing matches was the social norm for decades, young people have very different opinions about how they wish to go about things. *Modern Romance* by Aziz Ansari, comedian and *Parks and Recreation* actor, is a book that catalogues how dating and romance have changed in this age of smart phones and limitless communication.

For the book, Ansari teamed up with sociologist Eric Klinenberg of New York University and surveyed over three thousand young people from various countries. Now you can ask why a random comedian is the mind behind this book and to answer that Ansari recalls a romantic experience of his own. He and a woman, who Ansari calls *Tanya* in the book, had met at a party and hit it off. He was genuinely confident that this could go somewhere before *Tanya* suddenly disappeared. Aziz spent hours staring at



his phone, waiting for a reply to his text. This got him thinking about the uniquely modern act of waiting anxiously while staring at a blank screen. And from that experience, came the quest to write this book.

Modern Romance is roughly split into three parts, where the first details dating trends of the days gone by while the sec-

ond and the third talk about the trends of today and tomorrow, respectively. It should be noted that the book doesn't entirely read like a sociology book although there's a fair bit of research going on. It's mostly an informal look into how the trend grew. But that doesn't take away from the fact that you get a very clear idea of the evolution of dating over the past century or so.

While the study is distinctly American, the way the trends have changed is actually pretty reminiscent of how things changed over here too. Back in the early parts of last century, Americans meet their spouses in church groups or almost always in the nearby neighbourhoods, with the meeting often catalyzed by elders. Ring a bell? Yes, that's a roughly western version of our 'arranged marriages'.

Then we jump into the ages of computer screens and dating sites. Remember the confusion you felt about how quickly you should reply to a text, lest you seem desperate? Or the time you weren't sure you if you should ask your crush for a

date' or to just 'hang out'? These are modern day problems, of the sort that earlier generations never faced. Your grandfather wrote to your grandmother immediately and then waited for weeks for the letter to arrive. He did not receive her letter and wait to open the envelope so the 'SEEN' didn't pop up on your grandmother's letter and make it look he's needy. Yes, we live in a unique time and Ansari captures all of it.

Ansari's narrative is enjoyable and his jokes don't tend to get carried away like some comedians do when writing books. Some may argue the shift between jokes and analytical data leaves a big question mark over the book's actual identity but this was never meant to an overly serious study. So if you want a brief and informal look into the evolution of modern dating, this is a good option.

Rayaan Ibtesham Chowdhury is a 19 year-old with pent-up years of teenage angst who loves to complain about most things while listening to blues guitar tracks. Ask him to stop writing at rayaansmail@gmail.com