

NEIL CICIEREGA'S UPGRADING YOUR CHILDHOOD AGAIN

ZOHEB MASHIUR

Here's some Orwellian doublethink for you: Neil Cicierega's *Mouth Moods* is

- One of the best things I've ever heard.
- One of the worst things I've ever heard.

You know how in some works of fiction you have these characters who are always in the background and aren't usually noticed but every now and then they sweep into the frame to remind you how crucial they are to the whole thing? Neil Cicierega is that guy for the whole internet. You've probably seen something created by his twisted imagination.

That something might have been *Potter Puppet Pals*, it might have been "Ariel Needs Legs," or it might have been the nine albums he recorded under the name Lemon Demon. Cicierega's thing is taking pop culture, murdering it and then going out driving in the middle of the night in a suit made of its body parts. And he loves every minute of it.

Defiling 90s and early internet nostalgia is a particular obsession of his. He enjoys his memes, particularly the Smash Mouth song "All Star," which forms the backbone of the three albums he's released under his own name since 2014.



Mouth Sounds was a compilation of mash-ups that used "All Star" like an axe, and featured such blasphemies as a splice of "Smells Like Teen Spirit" with "Billie Jean" as well as using one of the most poignant quotes from *Blade Runner* to lend gravity to Tay Zonday. It was weird and wild but not very good as an album.

Months later Cicierega was back with

Mouth Silence, an altogether more confident work that saw Hanson and Ylvis come together to help Jimi Hendrix come out as a furry. "Wnдрwll" is also now the only way I can stand listening to Oasis' inexplicable classic. It was a pretty good album and would have been enough of an achievement for any internet music producer, not least someone who's basi-

cally doing it as a joke.

Then in January this year he dropped *Mouth Moods*, and that is a treasure.

This is a mash-up album that seems to have everything at just the right levels – or the wrong, depending on how you look at it. The emotional centrepiece is the vocals from "Y.M.C.A" layered over Han's Zimmer's "Time" from the *Inception* OST. This is a song with real, fearsome passion and desperation, at once moving and frightening. That it shares space with a version of "Eye of the Tiger" where every other noun is replaced with the word "Tiger" probably says something about Cicierega's intentions as an artist that is easily understandable but also difficult to articulate.

I mean, what do you want? "Wonderwall" meets "You Spin Me Round"? Korn singing along with Annie Lenox? An upbeat rendition of Drowning Pool's "Bodies Hit the Floor"? Will Smith telling you that you don't want to see his hand where his hand be at?

Probably you don't want any of these things. No one else but Neil Cicierega ever wanted these things. But they exist on *Mouth Moods*, and they are waiting for you.

DOING MAKEUP THE WRONG WAY

MYAT MOE KHAING

I can be a mysterious smoky-eyed girl or a demure girl with fluttering big lashes. It's amazing how different we can look when we apply makeup. Girls pay close attention to themselves, appreciate their features, and get to exercise their creative mind a bit. However, many tend to pound on pressed powder like there's no tomorrow and go overboard with the long lashes and coats of mascara.

I watch makeup tutorials and go "Whoa! How are these artists so good at it?" and the next moment I see someone who can barely move their face with overdone makeup. It's like meeting geishas. The face and neck are two different colours. You can't see the details and you are not sure if they brushed the makeup or dipped their face in it.

Makeup is almost like painting, which could be relaxing. Certain lipstick colours are bold and you deserve credit if you can pull it off. Celebrities like Youtuber Miranda Sings put lipstick on and around her lips. That's like a humour tactic and the signature of her grotesque character. That's not same as having lipstick smeared across someone's face.

Imagine observing that someone's eyebrow arch is like the wings of an eagle that extend way past their natural shape. It physically hurts when I think of heavy eye lids. When I meet a woman with overdone makeup, I automatically start sweating thinking what sweating will do to her eyelining which is 3 cm thick.

One point of makeup is to perfect your complexion and enhance your features. Far too often women get caught up in the marketing machine of beauty that tells us we have to be wearing all of these kazillion products, especially colour products.

Sometimes the contour lines are very obvious. One may think one looks like Angelina Jolie. But without those, it becomes difficult for people to recognise someone who looks drastically different with them on. Imagine running late to your office. You reach office without makeup. The security doesn't allow you inside since they don't remember seeing you with an extremely loud makeup and the ID card doesn't match either.

Makeup comes with odours too. Putting on makeup leaving no product left in the bronzer plate is good enough to repel everyone at proximity. So how do you convince someone to stop wearing make up? You don't. People are free to wear makeup however they want. If the other person is a good friend, you can tell her when she has overdone it. It's up to her if she wants to listen to you.

Make up can make you look and feel good. It is like a transformation! You want bigger eyes today. But tomorrow you want cheek bones. You want your skin to shimmer and glow next week. But next month you want to sultry and matte it up. Sometimes you just want green eyelids, you know?

Myat Moe is an occasional philosopher whose favourite pastime is confusing people with her nationality.

Reach her @145michelle@gmail.com

