

# THIS IS HOW THE SONG LIVES ON

## MOVIE REVIEW



SARAH ANJUM BARI

Bill Condon's 2017 rendition of *The Beauty and the Beast* ends with a song by Céline Dion. "How does a moment last forever? How can a story never die? It is love we must hold onto. Never easy, but we try," she sings. True to every line and note from the original, the movie is a dazzling proof of Disney's efforts to do just that.

It is a twisted and decadent prince who receives and rejects the enchantress impersonating a storm-tossed hag in the first scene. The party in full swing around him reeks of Oscar Wilde-esque revelry.

The setting is somehow already dehumanised – beastlike.

These first few minutes make two points clear: i. the movie is primarily for the fans of the original immortalised in 1991, and ii. those fans are now adults.

Every dialogue, every melody, every curve of the village and the castle reminded me that I knew what the next line or scene would entail. All the songs, from Belle's soliloquies to Gaston's raucous celebrations, are delightful in their loyalty to the 26 year old cartoon; the new version of *Be Our Guest* truly takes the cake with its blinding showers of colours, glitters, and fireworks, reminiscent of the Disney Dreams laser display I watched on Christmas night at Disneyland Paris.

As any true fan of Disney can testify, though, the sparks are mere decoration for the stories that we've loved all our lives.

We waltzed to the *Tale As Old As Time* not just because it was beautiful, but because we dreamed of becoming like the first Disney princess (at the time) who chose wisdom and empathy over mindless romance. We adored Beast for his transformation into human from within. This movie understands that, and highlights that.

Belle's characterisation, in Emma Watson's version of a more syrupy 18th century Hermione Granger, is by far the most gratifying element of the movie. She no longer lets an unwanted admirer throw her favourite book into the mud (raise hands if that scene from the cartoon still makes you see red). This new Belle rushes through forests to rescue the men she loves. She plans her escape instead of

crumbling on the bed in tears with the Beast barking out orders to join him for dinner. And when forced into a corner, she asserts that, "I may be a village girl. But I am not simple." These strengths are reflected in the character of Maurice, not the crazy old man-child of the cartoon, but a wise and progressive father. Together, they form an impressive duo that uses its smarts to get out of sticky situations and tries to save the day.

Of course, the strongest duo is that of the Beast and the Beauty, who fall in love not because they are imprisoned within a cursed castle, but because they find in each other the parts of themselves that the world looks down upon – literature, humour, the shadows of a difficult childhood. These additions to the plot surprise us as much as they add to the credibility of the story, making it easier than ever before to root for the couple as well as their friends.

*The Beauty and the Beast* will always remain unparalleled, with the tiniest of its details embedded clear as day in our memories. This adaptation works because it doesn't pretend to improve upon the classic. By filling up the gaps and sweeping through the cobwebs, it merely seeks to remind us why we loved it so much in the first place, especially the parts that we may have overlooked as children. It does that job to perfection.

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# VAPORWAVE IS NOT DEAD

ASIF AYON

As I put Blank Banshee's seminal album on for the first time, something echoed back to me and kept on doing so, till the album had stopped playing indefinitely. It was a feeling of nostalgia, gushing through a sense of melancholic unfamiliarity. I could easily argue that Blank Banshee 0 is a Progressive Trans record, however, there's this one sound clip right at the beginning which keeps me from doing so. The five second melodic sound bit of "You've Got Mail!" kept echoing back to me.

This feeling of nostalgia, evoked through samples and SoundBits from the '80s and decades onward, is one of the defining traits of Vaporwave artists.

Take seven minutes out of your day and find yourself searching for MACINTOSH PLUS 420 on YouTube. Press play on the first thing that shows up. This song catapulted Vaporwave into the mainstream. However, the laid back rhythm found on the track, owes most of the credit to Diana Ross' *It's Your Move*; an R&B track released way back in 1984 for it is essentially just the original but slowed down.

The song perfectly captures the essence of what Vaporwave music tries to tug at. The calming exposure to one's

psyche—"It's all in your head" shuffling in and out of our conscious mind encapsulates us within its transience. The song is perhaps aware of how unapologetically intrusive it is, yet with grooves so calming and melodies so airy, how can anyone say no?

Vaporwave is the unfiltered look at the

counter cultural musical and art movement that alternatively critiques and embraces consumer capitalism. When I first heard him say this I unknowingly thought of Saint Pepsi.

Ryan DeRobertis - pseudonym: Skylar Spence and Saint Pepsi (former); samples in early '80s disco while smoothly

using psychedelic effects that other Vaporwave artists such as 2814, Hong Kong Express, James Ferraro built a style out of.

This balance, of mixing '80s and '90s R&B, Disco, Pop music while still retaining the nostalgia and vibe, conceived within the music made within that time period, is something Macintosh Plus's album *Floral Shoppe* got just right and in turn helped to shape dare I say, the AESTHETIC appeal of Vaporwave. Each song, one after the other, cycles through musical time periods of the last 4 decades without ever becoming obnoxious in rhythmic complexity and harmonic flavor.

And while, Vaporwave is more meme than music now, I wouldn't have it any other way. It's not meant to be taken seriously, not meant to provoke our senses but to only tingle at our softer and happier sides. So if you'll excuse me I'm going to put on, *Enjoy Yourself* by Saint Pepsi and keep on believing that Vaporwave is alive and well.

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filtered stasis of our being, through the looking glass of meme dome and hypnotic rhythms. After Macintosh Plus's 420, there was *Dat Boi* by Vantage; transcending the boundary which was, the world of memes and the world of hypnagogic pop music.

Adam Neely defined Vaporwave as a

incorporating hypnagogic elements of pop in his music. *Private Caller*, undoubtedly his most famous song, is meant to take the listener on a smooth roller coaster ride through the yester years and back. He stands out from the crowd for his music, is a showcase of soulful dance grooves as opposed to