



“THE WEATHER” is perfect for a swim in the POND

AZMIN AZRAN

When people refer to Pond as a Tame Impala offshoot because they're both psychedelic rock acts from Perth, Australia and share a bunch of members, it irks me. Other than being grossly inaccurate (Pond already had 2 albums out by the time Innerspeaker was released), it undermines Pond's identity as makers of music that's wilder, crazier and often quite strange. For people who dig that kind of thing, their newest album “The Weather” will feel just the right amount of wild, crazy and strange, not to mention bags of brilliant as well.

The Weather is Pond's 7th studio album, and although their productivity is commendable, their earlier releases did sound like they lacked seriousness. They weren't results of carefully calculated compositions designed for the tastes of

any particular group of listeners. The way to best describe them would be as unbridled outpourings of raw creativity that made for frequent moments of brilliance, at least twice or thrice every album. Pond have threatened to raise the bar with their music to a level that could sit them with some timeless classics, with The Weather, they have come closer still.

30000 Megatons is a pretty sad song to start off an album with, and Nick Allbrook does a brilliant job on vocals delivering the despair about how mankind has failed, and we might as well end it. The mood in the album stays gloomy with Sweep Me off My Feet, which is a song crying out for some love and attention where mediocrity and desperation hasn't let any in. Paint Me Silver is a far happier love song where the band fools around with words and sound that is typical with Pond. A/B is basically two

songs inside one, the first minute has a swooshing punk tempo that makes your head bob for some reason, and then it ends with two verses that induce an emotion akin to melancholy, with a smooth jazzy piano backdrop. With Zen Automaton, they seem to have borrowed an electro swing riff that works surprisingly well with lyrics that include Sir Ian McKellen shooting lightning from his eyes.

Edge of the World (Part 1 & 2), were probably the best songs in the album. Part 1 puts the world on trial for the horror it has become, and ending with the familiar arena rock vibe that Pond executes so well. As for part 2, my favourite moment in the album comes 4 minutes 19 seconds into this track, where after a fair bit of complaining about how people are the worst (!), the band explodes into life with some beautiful arena synth, comple-

mented by impressive drumming.

The Weather is an album that is built on the foundation of grimness, on a sense of disillusionment, in the spheres of both love and worldly affairs. But with Pond, with their mastery of synthesisers, robotic vocals and computer-induced effects, they're never more than 10 seconds away from jumping into party and dance, which happens repeatedly in this album. If you're a Tame Impala fan, which everyone is, these days, Pond deserves a listen. The Weather is arguably Nick Allbrook, Shiny Joe Ryan, Jay Watson and Co.'s best work yet, so why not start here?

Azmin Azran is a 17-year-old boy stuck in the body of a 17-year-old boy. He talks a lot, mostly about football and politics because that's what's on TV most of the time. Contact him for an onslaught of uncomfortable jokes at azminazran@gmail.com

WHY YOU SHOULD TRAVEL SOLO

TABASSUM BINTE TABRIZ

We are always surrounded by people: friends or family, acquaintances or lovers. But sometimes, we need to find time for ourselves, and what is more perfect than travelling solo to rediscover who you are? Packing your bags, getting out of your comfort zone, going into the wild, getting to know more people, eating new food, and seeing the sunset on the beach-seems like the perfect vacation to me.

Here are some reasons as to why you should definitely go solo:

BREAK YOUR USUAL CIRCLE AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS

When you are travelling with your regular people, you don't get the chance to meet people outside that circle. Travelling solo helps one to acknowledge other people and allows you to open to experiencing new adventures with strangers.

TRY NEW THINGS

When you travel solo, you'll find the locals are a bit more open to helping you. You will notice the small things they do for you, the smile they give you when you are asking about them; which doesn't always happen when you're travelling with other people.

INDULGE IN ANYTHING WITHOUT BEING

JUDGED

There's no one to judge you or stop you. And the most fun fact is that you can become more adventurous with food. You can finally take in all the Thai pad Thai, Belgian Macarons and Chinese dumplings without worrying about what other people would want to eat.

SAVE MONEY

You are most likely to buy fewer souvenirs and gadgets



while travelling alone. Your travel companion might prefer expensive ways of travelling and sometimes you might agree to their plans because it's too awkward to go against it.

GAIN CONFIDENCE

Do one thing a day that scares you and you learn to unlock hidden chapters about yourself. You'll learn to do things by yourself, explore new routes, and be responsible for your own safety. Travelling solo expands your comfort zone and you'll feel that you're much braver than you thought you were. This feeling will make you more independent and it's always a good feeling to regain the lost trust you had in yourself.

DRAMA? WHAT'S THAT?

How many times did you have to argue with your travel buddy or have to beg someone to go with you? If things don't go well, the whole trip might turn out to be a total disaster! But when you travel solo, there are no fights and arguments about silly matters.

To sum it all up, travelling solo might be a very scary decision for some people. But at the end of the day, you will not regret it when you'll be able to understand how it can shape your personality by putting you in challenging situations.

So don't wait up for anyone. Pack your bags and go. Happy Travelling!