

Shining through the glaring faults

NUREN IFTEKHAR

With great releases this year from artists like Gorillaz, Blackfield, Pond, and so on, Foster the People's latest release "Sacred Hearts Club" brought with it a whole lot of expectations to live up to. Indie pop darlings Foster the People met that expectation with a mixed bag of tracks that has some of their best as well as some of their worst work so far.

Foster the People have always been bold about crossing that arbitrary genre boundary, and their confidence in experimenting with their sound shone through this album. After their breakout album "Torches" in 2011 - which put them on the map as a name to watch out for - they didn't come close to playing it safe as they released the album "Supermodel" in 2014, with more focus on acoustic and miscellaneous instruments. This time the EDM vibe had been more dominant rather than the psychedelia of the previous two albums. The change in their sound is made evident from the very first track with retro background music accompanying it which continues throughout the rest of the tracks.

This time Foster the People struck a chord between experimenting with their sound and being faithful to the albums before. Tracks like Sit Next to Me and I

Love My Friends could have easily slipped into the Torches album while Pay the Man and Harden the Paint reminded the listeners of Supermodel. The pacing on the album has been a bit slower than before but this particular choice helped emphasise the change in their music style. Tracks like III and Harden the Paint have been different from anything they've done before, making the album distinguishable from its predecessors in one listen.

Starting with the positives, Static Space Lover and III will slip into the list of their best work with ease. The strong influence of the 60's retro along with probably the best lyricism in this album mesh together into a unique Foster the People experience when it comes to these two. The psychedelia which apparently they were aiming for have been very evident in Time to Get Closer and Orange Dream. The starting three tracks Pay the Man, Doing It for the Money, Sit Next to Me get the album off to a great start.

The shortcomings of the album are as glaring as its brilliance. First I need to get this off my chest. Loyal Like Sid & Nancy is the single worst Foster the People track by quite some margin. There is simply no redeeming factor in this track. The title track of the album is also rather disappointing and feels like an oddly mismatched attempt at a song. The experimentation in the song Lotus Eater



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didn't have the payoff it could have had. Lyrically the album has been Foster the People's weakest by some margin. Lines like "These pixelated dreams are blowing up my pocket" are rather hard to find throughout the album. Most of the tracks unfortunately have forgettable and one dimensional lyrics.

There are a lot of things where "Sacred Hearts Club" comes up short. But the things that it does get right, it blasts them

out of the park. Although it doesn't surpass the brilliance of its predecessors, it holds its ground as a fantastic album on its own right.

Nuren Iftekhhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at n.iftekhhar18@gmail.com

There's a new go-to pizza place in Dhanmondi



MAHEJABEEN HOSSAIN NIDHI

Pizza Roma formally opened a new branch in Dhanmondi, Dhaka on July 29. This is the 3rd branch to open in the 4 approximate years that Pizza Roma has been running. To mark the opening, 5"x5" pizzas were being offered at only BDT 50.

The response that the inaugural offer received was overwhelming. The square pizzas were completely sold out by 4 in the afternoon. A new offer of 20% off on all items was introduced post that hour, as there was a constant flow of folks turning up to get a taste of the authentic Italian flavours that Pizza Roma is well known for.

The ambience is fun and vibrant as you walk down into the basement floor of Ahmed & Kazi Tower on Road 2, Dhanmondi. The upbeat décor coupled with the comfortable seating arrangement make it a perfect joint for an afterschool hangout.

With a fast casual service, this pizza outlet offers a semi upscale dining experience with honest, delicious food.



Ulfath Kuddus, part of the management team, said, "People came in expecting a quick bite. Then we saw people sitting down with friends and family, conversing, really starting to enjoy their experience here, and then ordering another slice of pizza over time."

With all the pizzas having the classic Italian crust and topped with top quality, primarily imported ingredients, Pizza Roma does not compromise when it comes to delivering arguably one of the best pizza experiences in town. Ranging from true Italian pizzas like Margherita to a fusion of *deshi* ingredients such as Tandoori, there is no shortage in the variety of toppings offered. The pizzas are

offered in 12" and 16" diameters. Soon - *pizza al taglio* - rectangular slices will be integrated into the regular menu. Current head chef, Filippo Ferri, who has worked with Pizza Roma since its inception, strongly recommends the premium pizza Mediterraneo which features components like sundried tomatoes and feta cheese.

Aside from the delectable pizzas, the "sweet stuff" on the menu are a must try. The tiramisu is exquisite. Served in a small glass mason jar, each spoonful of mascarpone, biscotti, and hits of coffee and chocolate is an absolute delight.

There are plans for expansions up ahead with smaller sales points in more places. The next big stop for Pizza Roma will be Uttara. Much like the very successful BDT 50 per slice of pizza offer, there are plans to have more great deals on a monthly basis.

That's not all. There's a 10% discount on regular menu items for students on dine-in/takeaway when you present your student ID at Dhanmondi Pizza Roma. Can't beat that.

With a keen eye and a broken brain to mouth filter, Mahejabeen Hossain Nidhi has a habit of throwing obscure insults from classic novels at random people who may or may not have done anything to warrant them. Drop a line at mahejabeen.nidhi@gmail.com