

■ MUSIC ■

# Taylor Swift's The Tortured Poets Department

## Still a confusing mess

RAIAN ABEDIN

I never quite enjoyed Taylor Swift's latest album, though upon release I did make several attempts to do so. To me, the album represents everything pop music shouldn't be: lyricism that is either painfully derivative or generally not well thought out, production that is skeletal and gutless— with no sound standing out in particular— and a mix that makes the overall listening experience feel like it was prepared by amateurs.

Between the first release of this album and now, the billionaire entertainer has released several versions of *The Tortured Poets Department*, with some sources claiming around 19 different physical versions alone. One has to wonder if there is any artistic intent behind these actions, but the reality is clear once you see the charting numbers, and the desperate attempt to hold on to the continued quantitative success brought about by so many pointless releases.

Revisiting this album months after its

release, I take away even less than when I initially listened to it front to back.

While the description may create expectations of vastly different sounds in the two halves of the album, the truth is most of what is present here sounds incredibly lacklustre in terms of catchy melodies or interesting and punchy beats.

For the biggest pop star in the world (and one of the biggest of all time) to come up with a serving of songs that sound so watered down is, to say the least, disheartening.

Then there's her song-writing, which has been on a downward spiral since *Midnights* but has never seen a point as low as this before. Every single song is chock-full of half-baked metaphors and images that add nothing to the emotional weight of what Taylor is actually trying to say and, instead, take away from the song.

While there are certainly highlights (such as "The Manuscript"), to say that they make the listening experience worth it after trudging through everything else would simply be a lie.



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