

MUSIC

MAYHEM

Lady Gaga's new album is a delightfully chaotic mix of old and new

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When I opened Spotify on March 7 and was greeted by *MAYHEM*, a brand-new Lady Gaga album — whose first track, "Disease", sounded like a grungy, gothic callback to "Born This Way" and *The Fame Monster* — I was instantly hooked.

Following the slow and heavy opening, the second track, "Abracadabra", is what many describe as classic Lady Gaga. Its psychedelic dance-pop sound and energetic choreography is the wave of nostalgia that numerous fans, old and young, have been craving for.

A strong suit of *MAYHEM* is in its choruses, as seen in "Garden of Eden". The sultry track is characterised by brash and energetic vocals in its verses followed by soft vocals in its chorus, almost like it is luring the listeners into temptation.

The album presents a variety of sounds, ranging from heavy metal to vapourwave. Tracks such as "Perfect Celebrity" and "Can't Stop the High" (bonus track) might compel one to scream the lyrics out loud while "Don't Call Tonight" and "LoveDrug" are



songs one might blast on a lonely evening drive.

"Zombieboy" and "The Beast" were probably the most fun tracks in the album. Hedonistic and unhinged in all the right ways, they preached a complete lack of inhibition.

While the first three-quarters of the album had absolutely enraptured me, the last few tracks left me somewhat disappointed. The Taylor Swift-esque sound of "How Bad Do U Want Me" felt disconcertingly odd in her voice. "Blade of Grass", a romantic nod to her fiance, employed a rather common pop melody that stripped it of all its Gaganess. And arguably the biggest song of the project, "Die with a Smile", a collaboration with Bruno Mars, felt entirely out of place.

However, despite a few duds, *MAYHEM* might just be Lady Gaga reclaiming her place as a queen of pop. She manages to pay homage to her old self and bring back the sound that enraptured so many Little Monsters while showcasing the maturity she has gained as a songwriter and musician. *MAYHEM* not only stands true to its name but also to the brand of Gaga.

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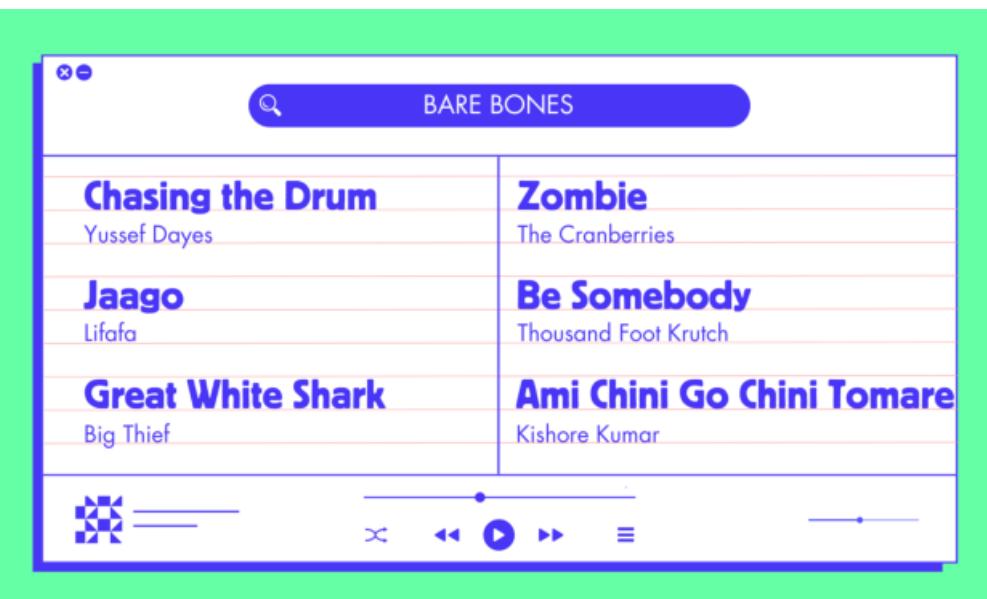
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