

Oneohtrix Point Never: Love in the Time of Lexapro

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Like its predecessor *The Station*, Daniel Lopatin's new Oneohtrix Point Never EP *Love in the Time of Lexapro* isn't shy about being a tie-in to this year's *Age Of* full-length. Two of its four tracks are remixes of songs from that record and the album cover hews to roughly the same design, but it stands on its own a little more readily, for better or worse.

The title track doesn't have much to do with anything Lopatin's made in the last five years. A far cry from the spidery, mechanical robo-music on *Age Of*, "Love in the Time of Lexapro" is a sweeping love theme that reminds us why Lopatin should've been first on the list of candidates to score *Blade Runner 2019*. It's built around a detuned old synth that we might've heard on an early Lopatin album like *Returnal* or *Replica*, but rather than retrofuturist fantasy, its graceful three-chord arc evokes the romantic sweep of classic film music.

"Last Known Image of a Song," an *Age Of* cut, is here reinterpreted by Ryuichi Sakamoto, perhaps to return the favor of Lopatin remixing his "andata." Like the original, the Sakamoto rework is prickly and desolate, but the music-box plink that floats over its deserted landscape betrays Sakamoto's sentimental streak. Though Sakamoto's work, both solo and as part of Yellow Magic Orchestra, has a direct influence on the parodic dystopian aesthetic of contemporary electronic music, Sakamoto is as sincere and happy-go-lucky as Stevie Wonder or Paul McCartney.

"Thank God I'm a Country Girl" is two minutes of absent-minded keyboard flutters that's less memorable than its title, the joke being that the bearded man from Boston is not, in fact, a country girl. Ever since the deconstructed grunge of *Garden of Delete*, we've had to accept Lopatin's ironic streak as a given, but never before has he sunk to this kind of falsetto-Britney-karaoke kind of masculine cheekiness. The title has nothing to do with the music and is just a nasty distraction that makes the song—and the EP, and Lopatin himself by extension—harder to root for, especially given how underrepresented women still are in electronic music.

The real curveball is Alex G's take on "Babylon." Like Anohni's version of "Returnal" from 2010, it's a full-blown pop version of a song whose hooks and song structure were previously obscured by Lopatin's trickery. Here, it's just the singer-songwriter with his guitar (which, down-tuned, sounds a lot like the fake guitars on *Age Of*) and layers of keening harmonies. It's uncanny in part because while *Age Of* went to great

lengths to sound like it wasn't made or played by human hands, G's version sounds very much like a broken-hearted guy alone in his bedroom.

The guests' open-hearted sincerity only emphasizes how mean-spirited a mood Lopatin seems to be in throughout this album. The title of the EP and "Thank God I'm a Country Girl" are cheap jokes, and the dolphins on the cover bring to mind the digital-ocean aesthetics of Lopatin's early *EccoJams* tape and the vaporwave genre of which it was a foundational text. Maybe he's looking back in earnest, but more likely it's his way of letting us know that he's not the refracted-memories guy anymore but a different artist—one that may not be quite as likable.