

01

Fall/Winter 2023

TEMPO

A pair of white over-ear headphones with gold accents, positioned behind the word 'TEMPO'. The headphones have a white headband and gold-colored ear cups and hinges. The ear pads are covered in a white mesh fabric. The background is a soft, warm gradient of pink and orange.

The Celebration Issue

table of contents

01

space to listen: a fan's perspective

03

stories on film

06

roses are red...

08

victoria monét: the jaguar's turn to pounce

11

r&b review

14

music lives here





R&B REVIEW

R&B fans unite! Here, you'll get
in the know about 2023's
standout R&B projects.



who's loving you?

Ambré

R&B singer Ambré's latest EP, *who's loving you?*, does not offer the same sonic variety and creativity as her longer projects, but is nevertheless a short, sweet gift to her fans. Clocking in at just over 16 minutes, the project, released in June 2023, is comprised of five tracks and includes a Mack Keane feature.

ALBUM HIGHLIGHT:

"PT. II (DRAKE & DRIVE)" is a continuation, or perhaps an update, of the track "Drake and Drive" from Ambré's 2022 album, *3000°*. The original begins with an orchestral flourish, later joined by a thumping bassline over which Ambré sings about the inability to commit to a relationship. She references the discography of the titular artist, Drake, with the lyric "But if you're listening, it's too late/Though I'm glad you came/Nothing is the same", and wistfully concludes, "You couldn't persuade me to stay here and trust in you". The track itself ends after a minute and a half, transitioning into a cheeky voicemail in which the speaker confidently asserts, "...you not about to be driving my car!".

Part two, which samples Usher's 2004 track "Can U Handle It?" sounds more like the soundtrack to a quiet, pensive car ride. While the lyrics in both versions are the same, the songs exude very different vibes - a testament to the artistry present in the tracks' production, which Ambré herself is responsible for. In true Ambré fashion, the second part begins with layered, distorted vocalizations, smoothly transitioning into the lyrics. The bassline stays consistent, but on this version of the track, the vocals are slower, and have a more laid-back feel. Near the end of the track, in a newly added verse, Ambré seems to question her decision to let go: "Yeah, spendin' the night alone/ Hopefully you're not too far gone/ Yeah, I took the night off for you, you". Ultimately, she comes to the same consensus as she did during her original car ride: "I know I should let it go, try not to think about you too much/ You would've been the one but I got/ I, I got trust issues". Nonetheless, both versions of the song make for a good soundtrack to a late-night drive.



Red Moon in Venus

Kali Uchis

Kali Uchis' newest album, *Red Moon in Venus*, was released in March of 2023, and boasts features from Summer Walker, Omar Apollo, and Don Toliver. Uchis, whose background is Colombian, often sings in two languages; *Red Moon in Venus* primarily features English songs, some of which include Spanish verses.

ALBUM OVERVIEW:

Prior to its release, Uchis explained the meaning of the album's title in a newsletter: "Love is the message. *Red Moon in Venus* is a timeless, burning expression of desire, heartbreak, faith, and honesty, reflecting the divine femininity of the moon and Venus. The moon and Venus work together to make key aspects of love and domestic life work well. This body of work represents all levels of love — releasing people with love, drawing love into your life and self-love. It's believed by many astrologers that the blood moon can send your emotions into a spin, and that's what I felt represented this body of work best".

The moon is not the only facet of nature drawn on to represent the divine feminine; the album begins by transporting listeners into a garden, as Uchis talks over a combination of instruments and soft chirps. Its first track, "I Wish you Roses", uses the flower as a metaphor for letting go of a relationship, yet wishing the best for the other person. This mature, open energy flows throughout the rest of the album as well.

“Fantasy”, a collaboration with partner Don Toliver, is one of the album’s highlights. The two artists alternately sing verses that combine effortlessly with the track’s laid-back production, creating the image of a lavish relationship. Sonically, the album’s tracks fit together like puzzle pieces, but Uchis cycles through a whole set of emotions on its tracklist. While it is not completely linear, the beginning tracks focus largely on the euphoria that comes with a new relationship, and gradually become more wistful, diving into conflict as the album progresses.

For those who enjoy the album’s production, there is something to be found within the tracklist for every mood and every situation.

“Sonically, the album’s tracks fit together like puzzle pieces, but Uchis cycles through a whole set of emotions on its tracklist.”

Standout single “Moonlight” is in the same vein as “Fantasy”; on the track, Uchis sighs “I just wanna get high with my lover...”,

but “Blue” is a far cry from these songs, as she mourns “What’s the point of all the pretty things in the world if I don’t have you?” “Hasta Cuando”, particularly its rhythmically spoken verse near the end, is the soundtrack to unbothered pettiness, and “Happy Now”, the album’s final track, is an upbeat ode to starting over.

Red Moon in Venus is softness, vulnerability, and divine femininity in album form, with Uchis emphasizing self love & self care all the way throughout. For those looking to journey through a sonic landscape of love’s ups and downs, this is the perfect album.



A NEW TWIST: COVER ALBUM SPOTLIGHT



Memory Lane
Shea Diamond

...
Memory Lane is R&B/Soul artist Shea Diamond’s latest release. An American singer and transgender rights activist, Diamond is best known as the voice behind the 2016 track “I Am Her”. The powerful ballad, chronicling Diamond’s real-life experiences, was described by the artist as “a statement to a world that said I shouldn’t exist” and “an anthem for all those that felt shunned for simply being who they were”.

She released her first EP, *Seen It All*, in 2018, and she also contributed to the soundtrack for the 2020 film *Happiest Season*. After a pause in releasing music, Diamond returned in 2023 with *Memory Lane*, a 15-minute long cover EP. Comprised of tracks released throughout the 20th century, the title suggests that these songs have personal significance to Diamond. Many of these, such as George Gershwin’s “Summertime”, will be familiar to audiences as well.

Diamond puts a soulful spin on the songs, showing off her impressive vocal range and abilities, while incorporating some of the tracks’ original characteristics, and staying true to their themes with her energy. Her twist on these iconic tracks makes for an enjoyable, classic bit of listening.

....



