I remember a time where EDM, or songs that drew influence from it, rocked the Hot 100. Each track had a degree of wholesomeness or nostalgia that made them to die for. A number of new DJs wanted a piece of the action, and the lemons that made lemonade ended up running dry. Instead of expanding upon the signature sound, various artists decided to replicate it. The lyrics also became more mundane and sometimes nonsensical. Once rap began to retake the charts, EDM had to be put down (even the catalog on iTunes isn’t as busy as it once was). However, there might be one group of DJs who haven’t lost their touch. The legendary trance trio Above & Beyond released “Happiness Amplified,” a single from their fourth studio album, Common Ground (out now), and it delivers exactly that.

The track opens up with a warm arrangement of strings and piano, with a little bit of distortion thrown in, effectively creating a bright, welcoming atmosphere for the listener. It isn’t long before a magical row of chimes introduce the first verse. A plucky bass line underlays the rich vocals of Above & Beyond’s frequent collaborator Richard Bedford, who sings about being emotionally captivated by the one he loves with romantic, picturesque lyrics. The pre-chorus reintroduces the strings from the beginning, combined with blip synths and Bedford’s powerful vocals, to build up energy for the drop, which has a satisfying release. Arpeggiated synths, a four-on-the-floor beat, and other plucks recreate the wholesome, nostalgic feeling that a good deal of EDM songs have been lacking for years. The drop doesn’t last too long either, which makes it a good track for those who are beginning to listen to EDM. The second half of the song uses a new set of lyrics, which most EDM songs also struggle with, and extend certain portions of the pre-chorus and drop in order to keep the song fresh. Once it’s all over, the song mixes its various instruments to create a melodic outro that seems like a heartfelt goodbye.

Overall, “Happiness Amplified” is a very well-written, well-composed track that makes the best use out of its five-and-a-half minute runtime. The only criticism I have is that the rhythm of the song throws off the first half of the first verse, which makes that set of lyrics seem like an incomplete thought. Other than that, I’d definitely recommend this song!

9/10

Sounds Like:
Armin van Buuren
Sounds Like:
Markus Schulz
Recommended Tracks:
Happiness Amplified

Name:
Nick Ramos
Date Reviewed:
11/07/2018

- Big house
- BPM
- Trance