A Moment Apart (Deluxe Edition)

Artist:
ODESZA
Non-Airable Tracks:
11
Label:
Foreign Family Collective, Counter, Ninja Tune

In 2017, ODESZA broke out of isolation, tweeting a short compilation video of fans asking for another album before fading out to a single date. The EDM community blew up. No one had heard from these guys in over two years and now something special was about to happen. On September 8th, A Moment Apart was released to the public.

Flash forward a year and you’d find that the album is considered among the best EDM albums of 2017 – and the Grammy committee seems to agree. The original album was nominated for the Best Dance/Electronic Album and track 5, Line of Sight (feat. WYNNE & Mansionair), was nominated for Best Dance Recording at the 60th Annual Grammy Awards. Now, they’ve released a Deluxe Edition, featuring nine new tracks.

To be honest, this review just gave me another opportunity to listen to my favorite album of 2017. What separates this album from so many in EDM is the cohesive sound; the layers of synths, strings, and percussion are similar in every song. Each tells a unique story, but the overall concept of the album is consistent. Spotify and Soundcloud have pushed music to question the purpose of an album. Why release ten or fifteen songs at once, knowing that many listeners will skip over tracks to listen to the hits? I hate this mentality for numerous reasons, foremost that an album needs to bring the listener on a journey where each song incites an emotion that only the contextual surroundings can arise. That is when an album is impactful. That is when it is truly something special.

From the moment this album begins with dialogue taken from the television series Another Earth, something awakens in the listener. A sort of grandiose emotional presence begins to settle upon you as the title track takes over with a shortened snare hit and strings building tension. When the main percussion line rolls in and the vocalizer – another commonality of every song on this album – begins a repetitive melody and you can’t help but jam, if only for a brief moment. Higher Ground follows with Naomi Wilde’s voice perfectly matching the movement of the production.

I could go through every song, but I’ll choose to refrain from doing so for the sake of time and repetitiveness as a review has already been done on the entire album. With that said, I’d like to make a few comments. First, the instrumentation of every song is incredibly similar yet diversely deployed. Percussion sets the movement of nearly every song, and a string section is arranged to create the mood. No song shows a stark contrast to the preceding one with a few flowing immediately into the next as if in a DJ mix. Finally, nearly every melody is created using a vocal-sounding synth. A popular trend in EDM since 2015, using the human voice as the melody during the instrumental segments brings out the humanity within each song, allowing the listener to connect on a deeper emotional level. This is a sort of summary of the original album; I highly recommend you actively listen to this.

Now on to the new stuff. One new original track appears on disk two: Loyal. iPhone XR television ads have been utilizing this song as of late in case you hadn’t already known it. The entire original album is fairly mellow and vibey, but this track flips that and uses a drum and bass attack to be more dirty or gritty than any other track. The bass drop here is dominated by a bassline melody with snares and a vocalized synth filling the high frequencies. Still very ODESZA-esque, this song has more banger potential than any other track on the deluxe edition.
The next two tracks are ODESZA VIP (Variance in Production) remixes of songs off their sophomore album, *In Return*. Each utilizes the hard bass hits of *Loyal* to add an entirely new feel than the originals. Again, these tracks don’t fit the mold of the synth- and vocal-driven songs on the album, but they take a new look at some of ODESZA’s most popular releases.

The next three songs are reprises (i.e. rearrangements) of vocal tracks off the album: *Falls*, *Line of Sight*, and *Higher Ground*. Instead of using electronic production techniques, the songs are reimagined using live instruments including drums, strings, and horns. Each version is more relaxed than the original, and it is possible to appreciate the musical range and talent of ODESZA. Finally, the last three tracks are just instrumentals of the three reprises. Again, the instrumentation of these reworks is astounding.

My overall analysis of the deluxe edition is this: the original album is one of the most cohesive projects released into the EDM community, but the deluxe edition adds tracks that were popular festival tracks during their *A Moment Apart* tour as well as acoustic/instrumental versions of popular vocal tracks on the album. They add another dimension that can be enjoyed by any music lover.

Sounds Like:
Jai Wolf
Kasbo
Petit Biscuit

Recommended Tracks:
*Loyal*: Hype song with fantastic drums; 4 star
*Higher Ground* (Reprise) (feat. Naomi Wild): Slow track with so much emotion; 4 star
*It’s Only* (ODESZA VIP Remix): Percussion adds a lot of movement, great track if you enjoyed the original; 3 star

Name:
Ryan Carlson
Date Reviewed:
01/29/2019

- chill trap [1]
- electronic [2]
- RPM [3]