

Justin Bieber: A Renewed Purpose

- Kyra Veprek & Maeve Reilly

Almost every girl my age can recall a time ten or so years ago when they suffered from “Bieber Fever.” It was everywhere. Girls my age quickly fell suit after listening to his lite pop songs and his innocent romantic lyrics. His first two breakout albums, *My World* and *My World 2.0*, were both full of pop guitar loops, simple beats, and Bieber’s famous young voice. After the release of those albums, Bieber did not release another serious album until 2012, with his release of the pop and R&B record, *Believe*, which did not achieve the enormous success of his past albums. Bieber then released another album, *Journals*, the following year which, again, failed to top the sales of his past records. Bieber has been in the public eye for the last couple of years, but not for the reasons one would hope. After a series of scandals and the loss of support, the 21-year-old singer is making a huge comeback. The apparent dark fate of Justin Bieber seems to have changed as he's showing the world that he has matured and has found his purpose once more with the release of *Purpose* on November 13, 2015.

Bieber’s sound takes a 180 turn on his new album. The tracks on *Purpose* do not reflect the pop and R&B sounds that the world has come to associate with Bieber. Almost all the tracks fall under the EDM or dance-pop genre, which is tailored more towards the club scene rather than the young tweens Bieber’s music was originally targeted towards. Many of the tracks hold a unique balance between the presence of a fast electronic beat, and the preservation of raw and rich vocals. Justin’s voice sounds fuller and more mature than ever before. The lyrics are relatively basic and clearly written to be subconsciously memorized by all listeners; however, they no longer tell tales of making one less lonely girl or giving his heart to someone. Bieber opens up and makes himself vulnerable in a way the world has never heard from him before. He remains humble while describing his struggles with love, fame, self-image, and more. The intimate style of songwriting makes the tracks feel genuine and honest. He sings about the pressure of being in the spotlight and asks the world, “don't forget that I'm human.” In the end, he makes promises of a better future. “No matter what they say, I'll show you,” one song concludes. Additionally, Bieber speaks to his listeners through the use of spoken audio clips placed in many in the songs. In these clips, Justin gives his listeners advice, defines what love means to him, encourages them to continue their journeys with hope, and reminds them, “Life is Worth Living.”

With all that said about the lyrics of each song, the main appeal comes from the background beats created by producers including Justin Tranter, who is known for creating tracks for artists such as Fifth Harmony and Selena Gomez, and DJ’s such as Skrillex. There is one song on the album, however, that stands out for its gentle and raw acoustic guitar beat rather than techno sounds. “Love Yourself” is co-written by fellow singer/songwriter, Ed Sheeran. Here, along with a few tracks with piano, Bieber's vocals sound their richest and most pure. But, overall, the fun beats and repetitiveness of the tracks make the music on *Purpose* perfect for dancing, working, or driving around to.

Bieber’s album was also preceded by the release of “Where Are U Now,” which featured Bieber's vocal tracks over the tangled beats of Diplo and Skrillex, two widely renowned EDM

and Dubstep DJ's. The release of this track began the association of Bieber with a Dance-Pop scene rather than the lite and acoustic pop he was previously recognized for. Again, the popularity of this song is mostly based on the background tracks produced for Bieber rather than his talents. Nonetheless, "Where Are U Now" is still a widely successful and fun song. Following this success, the debut of Purpose was preceded by the release of Bieber's single, "What Do You Mean?" which is popular for its flute instrumentation and tropical synths. The song was clearly written to please a wide variety of listeners, including teens and college students, which it achieved. The tribal tones of this song make it the perfect summer song for anyone to dance along to. The fan favorite at the moment, however, appears to be "Sorry," Bieber's final headlining single before the release of Purpose. The bouncy drum beat and synth-styled background vocals make "Sorry" instantly addictive and fun to sing along and dance to with friends. Equally as entertaining is the music video that accompanies this song which showcases the talents of a female hip-hop dance crew.

Bieber's shift to a Dance-Pop artist is one that ultimately benefitted him in the chase to make money in the ever progressing mainstream music scene. Enjoying Bieber's music was once associated only with pre-teen girls and is now widely accepted and shared among high-schoolers and college students. Regardless of past controversies involving Bieber, Purpose has instantly blown up and become hugely popular. This album is just the thing Justin Bieber needed to come back and continue to create music with just as much, if not more, support than ever.