



The Top 5 Albums of 2015

BY JOHN WILLIAM CREEL

With the end of any year there are always tons of “Top 5 Lists,” so I thought I would contribute in the only way I know how: albums. 2014 saw the release of several great albums, and while my taste is flawed, I feel that these albums shine above the rest. I want to go ahead and say that I’m not numbering this list in terms of which I think are better, I am just simply naming 5 albums that came out last year that I enjoy.



The first on the list is Alt-J’s new album

This Is All Yours. I enjoyed their first album greatly, but I feel that Alt-J really shined with this album. With the exception of “Left Hand Free,” this album flows from one song to the next very smoothly to make a very complete and powerful LP.



The second album is How To Dress Well’s new album *What Is This Heart?* If I had to stick this album into a genre, I would say minimalist R&B. The instrumentation is powerful and incredibly complex, but every song is framed in silence,



to keep a soulful feel.

The third album is Chromeo’s newest album *White Women*. Unlike the other two albums I have already mentioned, this album is not deep or powerful. Chromeo is a synth-funk band, with dancey beats and infectious grooves. Their lyrics are childish to the point of laughable, but, oh man, are they fun. This album is easy to listen to and there are some more than decent tracks on this album. My personal favorite is “somethinggood.”

Fourth, we have Death



From Above 1979’s album *The Physical World*. Returning from a decade long hiatus, this heavy, bass-driven, rock band returns with an album that is as head-banging as anything they’ve ever done. Death From Above 1979 consists of a six-string bass player, and a drummer, so therefore, the songs on this album are heavy and just moaning. It’s a really unique sound that’s pretty hard to describe.

Fifth is Mac DeMarco’s album *Salad Days*. This album features very psychedelic, and very poppy music, but the real

strenght of this album is the lyrical content. Mac DeMarco writes songs about love, but the way he does it is simply hilarious. Sometimes the songs are legitimately about love, sometimes



they’re giving sage wisdom, and sometimes the song is just making fun of something. This is easily one of the most enjoyable albums to listen to this year.

Rae Sremmurd Unlocks The Swag With Sremmlife

BY DAVID VELAZQUEZ

After taking the rap game by storm with two major hits “No Flex Zone” and “No Type,” Tupelo natives Swae Lee and Slim Jimmy (Real names Khalif and Aquil Brown respectively) have finally graced us all with their debut album *Sremmlife*, which was released on January 6th of this year. But can *Sremmlife* unlock the swag and push Rae Sremmurd up even higher in the game?

Short answer: Yes. Long Answer: This album is great. Rae Sremmurd definitely hit the ground running with their debut album. While their lyrical content is nothing near that of a Conscious Hip-Hop artist, it’s fine because they know what they’re doing with their music. They’re not rapping about social issues, living the trap lifestyle, or being the toughest guys hitting the block.

Rae Sremmurd is entirely an act for “turn-up music”, stuff to play at a party. In

short, these guys just want to have fun with their music; they know that and that’s their main strength. Just like the Wu-Tang Clan which firmly established their identity (tough-guy rappers who like old kung-fu movies) with their debut, Rae Sremmurd knows what they’re doing with their music. They’re not wasting time trying to be something they’re not or trying to create a sound to define what Rae Sremmurd is (Their singles did that for them). With that in mind, they go full-throttle with each song and have perhaps way too much fun with their music.

Speaking of the music, production on this album is great. For those of you not in the know, Rae Sremmurd’s primary producer is Mike Will Made It (another up-and-comer who has worked with the likes of Lil Wayne, 2 Chainz, and Schoolboy Q) and while I don’t typically lose my head over his beats (he’s good but not *amazing*), I

think they worked extremely well with this entire album. I can’t say why I particularly enjoy his production on this record, but it all just *works* and definitely pushes the album up (other producers on the album include Young Chop, Sunny Digital, BackPack, and more) Though the beats are great, the album is lacking in guest features, only featuring four guests (Jace of Two-9, Big Sean, Nicki Minaj, and Young Thug) in three songs. While that’s not a *huge* fault to the album, I think it would have been fun to see other guests drop a verse on with the duo since it’s something the music would have called for and benefited from.

Another problem I have with the album is that sometimes I don’t feel like the album gives off enough energy. Granted, I’m not listening to Electro or Drum and Bass, but I feel like some songs could have come in a little stronger than they did. It’s worse when you consider

the duo’s skill when it comes to rapping. There were some moments where Slim Jimmy or Swae Lee actually surprised me with *how* they delivered certain lines or the just the lines themselves. Believe it or not, Rae Sremmurd actually has a pretty good handle on rapping and know just how to flex that muscle. Lyrically they might be a few sandwiches short of a picnic, but when it comes to actually *delivering* their verses, they do great and the album goes full throttle when they tap into thir ability to rap well with a good beat backing them up.

I can’t really pick my absolute favorite track out from this album, but *Sremmlife* sets a goal for itself and commits from start to end, definitely delivering a fun expeirence. Some of my favorite songs from the album are “Up Like Trump”, “Unlock The Swag (Feat. Jace of Two-9)”, and the notorious “No Flex Zone”. Overall, it’s a fun, 46 minute long hip-hop romp

giving it a solid 8 out of 10. There were some things they could have improved on, but for a debut album, this is a really solid and enjoyable listen. Let’s see what the duo does next.



The cover for *Sremmlife* with Slim Jimmy on the left and Swae Lee on the right.