

Fall Out Boy brings out punk edge on new album

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Pop-punk group Fall Out Boy exploded out of their four-year hiatus in February 2013 with their hit single “My Songs Know What you Did in the Dark (Light ‘Em Up)” and their equally successful album *Save Rock and Roll*. With *SR&R* sounding so different from Fall Out Boy’s previous works (incorporating pop influences and collaborations on songs), many have been wondering if the new sound will stay or go. Wondering is no longer required, however, because the band’s seventh studio album *American Beauty/American Psycho* dropped Jan. 20, and it is obvious that Fall Out Boy is emphasizing the “punk” in “pop-punk.”

AB/AP opens strong with the captivating “Irresistible,” which offers a dominating beat and, for the first time since fifth studio album, *Folie a Deux*, a massive horn section. The title track, “American Beauty/American Psycho,” is

a prime specimen of the grinding guitars and frantic anger for which punk is so well-known. “Centuries” is the lead single of the record, and for good reason: its eerie backing vocals and intense energy demonstrate raw power in song form.

“The Kids Aren’t Alright” is a nostalgic tune reminiscent of My Chemical Romance’s similarly-named single “The Kids from Yesterday,” and evokes bittersweet memories. However, “Uma Thurman” is a shocking get-up-and-dance number with a resonating beat. “Jet Pack Blues” has a lonely quality with lyrics like “She’s singing, ‘baby, come home’ in a melody of tears / While the rhythm of the rain keeps time.”

The seventh track, “Novocaine,” is clearly to *AB/AP* what “Rat a Tat” was to *SR&R*: the punk-metal outlier, too deliciously angry for its own good. The explosive “Fourth of July” is joyfully sad and comfortingly lonely, the song of perfect contradictions. “Favorite Record” has a romantic air to it and could almost be described as optimistic.

The album version of “Immortals” offers a slightly different sound than the version featured in Disney’s *Big Hero 6* with identical vocals but darker instrumentals. Finally, “Twin Skeletons (Hotel in NYC)” leaves one nostalgic for what he or she never had and lonely without it, perfectly finishing out the album.

Overall, *American Beauty/American Psycho* is the perfect blend of soul-voiced frontman Patrick Stump’s *Save Rock and Roll* vocal style, the punk energy of the EP *PAX-AM Days* released in autumn 2013, the raw emotion of the second studio album, *Take This to Your Grave*, and the metaphor-laden lyrics



of the band’s 2009 album *Folie a Deux*. With this intense mixture, Fall Out Boy has once again exceeded expectations and created nothing less than a masterpiece.