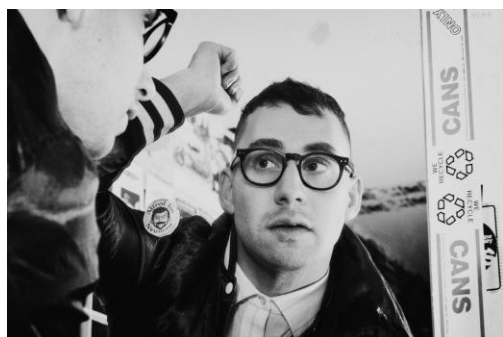


## 'Strange Desire' Bleachers

You know that feeling you get when John Bender (the "Criminal") from *The Breakfast Club* throws his fist triumphantly to the sky because he got the girl and had the best day in detention? Or when Ferris from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* breaks into "Twist & Shout" during the parade and your heart can't help but swell in elation because you dream of leading and being a part of something so grand as that, with everybody coming together to share a moment of joy? Jack Antonoff of Bleachers delivers this same rush of adrenaline in powerful waves throughout his debut album, *Strange Desire*, released July 2014.

Antonoff began writing this album while on his band fun.'s tour for *Some Nights*. Seeing "The way a hook would make a crowd physically rise and fall. [He] wanted to lift people up and bring them back down not just emotionally, but sonically." Demonstrated flawlessly in the album's first single, "I Wanna Get Better"

"I Wanna Get Better" is considered Jack Antonoff's 'mission statement' as he recounts every bad thing that has happened to him in a lonely yet inexplicably uplifting anthem of self-help. It's hard not to get lost in the distorted guitar riffs, and anthemic, shout-inducing chorus as you ride the waves of emotion ingeniously underlain. It will have you wondering how tears come to your eyes when you belt the words, and yet as the song ends you find yourself in a state of euphoria.

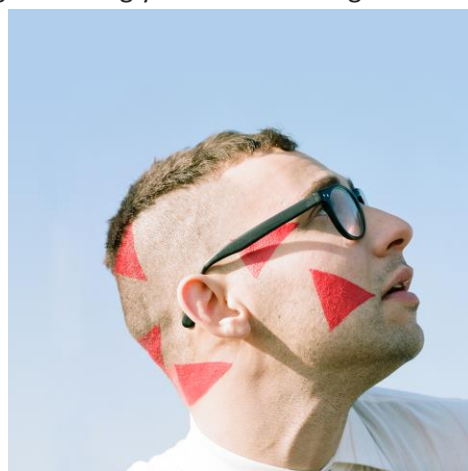


"Rollarcoaster" and "Like a River Runs", the second and eighth track of the record, also epitomize the premise of *Strange Desire* to the same anthemic level as "I Wanna Get Better". Being about the wild ride of an adventurous love, "Rollarcoaster" is the second single from the album. The driving synths sounding in the background of the entire track alludes to its title and makes you feel as though you are along for the ride. While "Like a River Runs" takes you soaring over Antonoff's experience when the adventure ends; stating "what I lost in you I will not replace" and his desire for "the rhythm of your wild heart".

Wild hearts appear to be a reoccurring theme of *Strange Desire*, beginning with the first song on the album, "Wild Heart". What could be straight from a critical movie scene, starts softly with delicately pitched synths and the occasional shouts- leading into the chorus with pounding drums, building up to the inevitable anthemic sound. You hear this song once again later in "I'm Ready To Move On/Wild Heart Reprise" featuring Yoko Ono, which falls short of expectations, being abstract and difficult to follow. Not unlike the other collaboration on the record, "Take Me Away" featuring Grimes, is disappointing in all aspects. Known for her stimulating electronic music and layered vocals, Grimes incorporates these same elements, but the two musicians fail to deliver a track worth the anticipation.

"Shadow" shows Antonoff is equally as capable of creating a seemingly less intense song. Comprised of the same shout-along worthy lyrics, and sharp, staccato drum machine beats accompanied by a tropical guitar riff, he teases a powerful underlying tone. Along similar lines, "You're Still A Mystery" invokes an undeniable (strange) desire to dance as though from an 80's movie yourself.

As a stepping-stone into a much gentler sound, "Wake Me" takes the energy down a couple notches, serenading you



into a soothing place where Jack Antonoff takes your heartstrings and wraps them around his finger. It's impossible to not find yourself swaying as though in, what this song can only be likened to, an ocean breeze. Immediately following suit, "Reckless Love" sticks with the same gentle feeling, yet subliminally hints at the revival of Antonoff's bold sound.

The final track on the album is "Who I Want You To Love". Upon first listen, one may feel let down by its comparatively stripped-down nature, expecting the album to go out with a bang. However, when heard in context of the record, and with a little consideration, it is easy to see why this predominantly instrumental piece was chosen to close the record. The sounds of youthful ignorance mixed with the trials of teenage love piece together this melody of someone who is full of uncertainty and searching for guidance.

From beginning to end, Bleachers' debut album delivers exactly what inspired its conception—waves that lift you up then gently bring you back down. Jack Antonoff has created eleven songs that together paint a full, vivid story as he travels back to explore his teenage years with a new perspective; still maintaining a raw and juvenile edge. Each song individually brings you to a place not easily accessible, most leaving you feeling as though you could conquer the world. 'Anthemic' and 'personal' parallel *Strange Desire* perfectly.