

"The Heist" album review

by Hunter Abel

The artists behind the creation of The Heist are **Benjamin Haggerty** a.k.a. Macklemore, is a Seattle, Washington born rapper whose been rapping since 2000 when he released his first mixtape labeled Open Your Eyes under the stage name of "Professor Macklemore". But Macklemore isn't the only mind behind this album in 2009 Macklemore joined up with DJ/record producer **Ryan Lewis**. Ryan Lewis is a DJ born in Spokane, Washington and later raised in Seattle, Washington. Ryan and Benjamin first met each other over Myspace, and before they started working together Ryan actually did some photography work for Benjamin. This led to a 9-year career together as a duo making many singles 2 albums and 1 ep and becoming best friends in the process. Macklemore & Ryan Lewis debut work together was "The VS" ep redux which they released in 2009, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis started picking up more fame working together. In February 2011, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis started a multi-city tour starting in Seattle, Washington which included 3 sold out shows at Seattle's music venue "The Market".



(Ryan Lewis, Benjamin Haggerty)

The Heist helped propel Macklemore and Ryan Lewis to stardom. Before the heist Macklemore had little radio play with some singles getting traction. "Thrift Shop" in particular out just two months before the heist, it coming out in August of 2012 while the heist came out in October. The single ended up getting 1.1 billion views by 2014, I believe the number one single coming out helped with the success of the heist by getting his name out there more and giving him more attention by radio stations.

The duo of Macklemore and Ryan Lewis are an interesting group for a primary reason in my opinion. Yes, they are good but they win my respect not because of that but because they aren't afraid to make a song on a controversial/sensitive subject. The duo has made songs on drug abuse and **addiction**: "Drug Dealer" which goes on talking about how big pharma and DR.'s also cause addiction not just dealers. "Otherside" which is a song about addiction and the struggles one has when addicted and when trying to get off (influenced/inspired by red hot chili peppers song of the same theme and title). Macklemore being an addict of lean who has stopped using and has relapsed multiple times, and because of that they make many references to addiction in their other songs. **Gay marriage**: "*Same Love*", **racism**: "White Privilege II", **capitalism**: "Wing\$", or "A Wake" which doesn't just talk about one issue but rather talks about many social controversies.

**It takes 10,000 hours of practice
to make you an expert of
anything**

Malcolm Gladwell's Outliers

"Ten thousand hours" is the first song on the album and although doesn't go over a controversial subject it has an interesting theme all the same the title itself is based of Malcom Gladwell's theory that it take's 10,000 hours of practice to be a master at something. Macklemore talks in the song about the theory and about how that dedicating that 10,000 hours is worth it if it's dedicated to what you love.

"Thrift Shop" Macklemore & Ryan's highest selling song selling 7 million copies in the US alone since its release. The song is one of Macklemore's best-known songs and made some waves in the process. The song goes on about Macklemore's interest in buying cheap clothes from a thrift shop, disdaining designer labels and trends. Going against the trend in rap culture to spend boat loads of money and things like clothes jewelry and cars. Instead it promotes buying clothes for as cheap as possible while still buying the best-looking clothes you can get Macklemore said this to MTV News about it "*It's the polar opposite of it. It's kind of standing for like let's save some money, let's keep some money away, let's spend as little as possible and look as fresh as possible at the same time*"

When he was asked why he thought the track was so successful, Macklemore replied: *"I think hip-hop goes in waves, and it's something that's different. It's a concept. It's obviously against the status quo of what people normally rap about. This is a song that goes against all of that. How much can you save? How fresh can you look by not looking like anybody else? And on top of that, you have an infectious beat and a hook that gets stuck in people's heads."*

"Same Love" is a song about gay marriage and tackling the issue of stigma around the LGBTQ community. The song was recorded during the campaign for Washington Referendum 74, which was to legalize gay marriage (the referendum was passed). The song soon after coming out became an anthem for gay marriage.

"Wings" The song goes over Macklemore reminiscing about his child and about how all he wanted was a pair of Jordan's. The song goes over capitalism and Macklemore figuring out as he grew up about how he started to grow a distaste for capitalism and what it does.

"Victory Lap" 18th and final song on the album is in a fitting spot in my opinion since the song is about not forgetting your roots when you get big. Macklemore goes over the ups and downs of the grind he was on to get where he is and what it took to get there. Macklemore concludes the song and that album by saying:

Now they say, "Don't forget where you come from
Don't die holding on to your words
Cause you know, that you got a whole world to change
But understand who you gotta change first"

The Heist was nominated for the "Grammy Award for Best Rap Album" and "Grammy Award for Album of the Year" in 2014, that year Macklemore & Ryan Lewis also got nominated for "Grammy Award for Best Music Video" for their video of can't hold us and Macklemore won the "Grammy Award for Best Rap Song" for thrift shop.

The Heist by Macklemore & Ryan Lewis is a great debut album that propelled the duo to super stardom giving them 1 Grammy, 3 Grammy nominations and has made Macklemore a common name in the rap scene. After their 9-year career in together Macklemore and Ryan mutually agreed that it would be best for them to go and work on their own. Ryan even said to Macklemore that the worst thing he could do for his career right now is to stay working with him, the two are still best friends but are currently perusing independent careers. Macklemore's most recent work is his newest album Gemini which is his first work since he and Ryan decided to work separately.

I give Macklemore & Ryan's album *The Heist* 81/100 for it's a large album made up if 18 song's which are all of good quality and many of which decided to delve into some more controversial topics seemingly with no regard to how it'll effect they're sales.

