

Kendrick Lamar Mr Morale & The Big Steppers



Kendrick Lamar was born June 17th, 1987 in Compton, California. He is recognized as being one of the greatest rappers of all time by the media and fans, he is also the only rapper to receive a Pulitzer Prize for his album DAMN.

He started his career by releasing his first mixtape under the name K.Dot when he was only 16 years old, he then caught the attention of Dr Dre, his career took off in 2012 when he released his album good kid m.A.A.d city, followed by To Pimp A Butterfly (2015), and DAMN. (2017).

Kendrick has 16 grammys and 39 nominations, 3 platinum albums, and he is the most awarded BET hip hop artist with 29 awards.

Kendrick Lamar's latest album is Mr Morale & The Big Steppers which was released in 2022, 5 years after the release of DAMN. Many people thought the album would be a flop when it was first announced, but Kendrick went on to prove them wrong.

N95

“N95” is the second song on the album, and it’s name references the N95 masks used during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the song, I think the N95 mask serves as a metaphor for how people often ‘mask’ their true selves, hiding behind things like designer clothes and superficial appearances. Aside from it’s deeper meaning, “N95” is also very catchy, with an engaging and memorable beat.



Father Time

In the beginning of “*Father Time*,” Kendrick’s longtime partner Whitney says that he needs to see a therapist. At first, Kendrick seems skeptical about the idea. However, as the song progresses, he reveals that he did eventually talk to a therapist, showing how his upbringing shaped him. This narrative adds depth to the song and it helps show Kendrick’s journey understanding the impact of his past on his present.

“Lookin’ for, "I love you, " rarely empathizin’ for my relief
A child that grew accustomed, jumping up when I scraped my knee
‘Cause if I cried about it, he’d surely tell me not to be weak”



We Cry Together

"*We Cry Together*" was released both as a short film and on the album. Kendrick said that it was the film and music first, and the song getting added to the album came later. The track itself is an intense dialogue of a heated argument between a couple. Its meaning is shown from the emotions and the rawness of the argument. Kendrick's portrayal of these emotions adds so much depth to the dialogue, making the song powerful on its own and in its cinematic form.



"We Cry Together" - A Short Film

Savior

In a different song on the album Kendrick admits that he struggled with writer's block for two years, which may explain the five year gap between "DAMN." and this album. Given the success of "DAMN." which won a Pulitzer Prize and many other awards, it's possible that Kendrick felt pressure to live up to the high expectations. This may also explain why Kendrick made the song "Savior", to show that he struggles with the idea of being seen as a savior. Also, the song references other rappers like Future and J. Cole, stating that they are not saviors, reinforcing the idea that artists shouldn't be idolized as flawless leaders.



Auntie Diaries

The song features powerful messages and touches on important themes from Kendrick's life. It addresses issues like transphobia and how it was encouraged when he was young and he never knew any better. Another part of the song I found very interesting is when Kendrick references a time when he invited a white fan on stage to rap along to "m.A.A.d city," and she said the n-word. He brings up this incident at the end of "Auntie Diaries," showing how these experiences continue to influence his music and the conversations around it.

"The very second you challenged the shit I was kicking
Reminded me about a show I did out the city
That time I brung a fan on stage to rap
But disapproved the word that she couldn't say with me
You said, "Kendrick, ain't no room for contradiction
To truly understand love, switch position"
"F*****, f*****, f*****, " we can say it together
But only if you let a white girl say, "N*****"



Summary

The beginning of the album foreshadows what's to come later on in the tracks, it was praised for addressing some sensitive topics such as childhood and generational traumas, cancel culture, infidelity, grief, and the struggles black people face living in America. This album is packed with great beats, lyrics, and a lot of thought and perspective. This album is an overall masterpiece. Kendrick Lamar's storytelling offers a good blend of thought-provoking and deep personal narratives. I definitely rate it 10/10 for meaning and creativity, and 8/10 for day-to-day listenability.