

Album Review by Jack Shaw Blurryface, Trench Scaled and Icy, Clancy



Intro

The albums I have selected are a collection of the four most recent albums released by my favorite band, Twenty One Pilots. These Four albums are called Blurryface, Trench, Scaled and Icy and the newest of the four, Clancy. The albums come together to create a story that has been going on for over nine years. It tells the story of a land called Trench, ruled over by nine evil “bishops” who watch from their nine towers in the middle of the main city called Dema.



The Band

There are only two actual members of the band as of 2024 and that seems like it won't change.

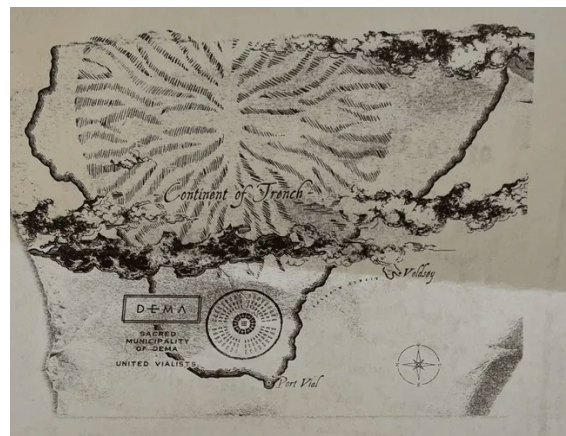


These two members are Tyler Joseph and Josh Dun. Tyler's main roles are vocals, guitar, ukulele, bass and piano. He also produces and writes most of the songs either alone or with Josh. Josh Dun is the second member of TOP and is almost always doing drums only. He occasionally does other things like sampling music on his music pad or lending his voice to the tracks. Together they are a Grammy winning duo

with multiple awards and a world record. They also both have alter egos in the trench world with Tyler being "Clancy" and Josh being "the torchbearer" who helps Clancy along his journey.

Trench (The Place)

Trench can mean one of two things when it comes to TOP. Either the platinum award record or the fictitious continent of which all of the story takes place. On the continent side of the word is where our story begins. Trench is a mysterious continent that is said to represent depressive thoughts.



This is heavily implied to mean the saddest, most lonely part of depression. It's a land with only one city ruled over by nine "bishops" of sorts. They are a metaphor for the thoughts that pull you further into depression and try to keep you there. The head bishop has a few names such as Nico and Blurryface and he is the main antagonist of the story.

Dema is a city that's (almost) impossible to leave and is constantly watched. There are no secrets and there is no hope. The bishops are the main rulers that sit in the nine towers at the heart of Dema. The bishops also all have a sacred power to control dead bodies using a ritual. But there is hope in the form of the "Banditos", a rebel group that lives outside the walls and out of reach of Dema. They are the symbol of hope and companionship that gets you out of those dark times. [Dema](#)→



Album 1. Blurryface, 2015



Blurryface was our first hint to the ideas of this storyline with a mostly indie/reggae/rap type of sound to it. This album gave us some absolute hits such as "ride", "stressed out" and "heathens". These three songs made Twenty One Pilots go from small groups of very devout fans to millions of them. For their first major selling album they did really well and have maintained a consistent release schedule of one album per three years. The title itself, "Blurryface", is also the character whose

name was said in "stressed out". This person represents that voice of depression you may hear. It points out your flaws and makes you believe what isn't true. This album has nine circles on its front, each with a different pattern in them which symbolises the nine towers of Dema that the bishops sit in.

[Blurryface/Nico](#)→



Song 1-Stressed Out

The best place to start at in my opinion is the second song on Blurryface, "Stressed Out". This song has the message of wishing that you could go back to when you were younger and didn't have all these insecurities. Back when everyone was innocent and nothing mattered. This song

is sung from both the perspective of Tyler looking back on his childhood and Blurryface reminding him of his current life with all these insecurities. This song reached number 2 on the billboard top 100, with this song being the first of theirs to do so. "Stressed Out" has always held a special place in my heart as it was the song that introduced me to TOP back in 2015 with my friend at the time Arlo. The lyrics are well thought out and the backing track is unforgettable.

This song has an easy to remember feel and just hits so hard. "Stressed Out" gets a 9/10 for me.



Song 2- Heavydirtysoul

"Heavydirtysoul" is the first song on this album and is a near perfect opener for the album. The opening few lines of the song are sung in a rap with the lyrics "There's an infestation in my mind's imagination, I hope that they choke on smoke cause I'm smokin' them out the basement." These lyrics are in reference to the character Blurryface as he is like an 'infestation'

in Tyler's mind. He has said in a few interviews that his weapon of choice against his thoughts and mental health is music and he uses it as a sort of chemical weapon like an exterminator uses on pests. Now this may be a fast song but the substance in its lyrics are amazing. Tyler talks about how he fights his own problems but also on the opinions on modern music and art, mainly that it's slowly going downhill and musicians are only making songs for money that have no substance. The video shows Tyler standing on a flaming car for most of it which will be important later.

Great intro song, 8/10

Song 3- Lane Boy

Lane boy is the 6th song on the album and speaks about how the music industry is almost just a 'single-lane road' that shouldn't be deviated from "they say stay in your lane boy". They're talking about how despite this lane existing that they could easily follow to churn out top selling hits, they don't, because they believe that what matters more is when people understand their lyrics, they last longer and are more meaningful. "But will they be alive tomorrow?" is another great lyric about how these days artists make pop songs that are popular for a week or two and then just die off so Tyler doesn't want to make songs that will just die off and no one will know. They also speak about how they don't want all their songs to sound the same and that they only care about the message, not the fame. But the fame itself could help them get their messages out much more easily. This song has a rap and pop type of sound to it. Personally it's not my favorite of their songs but its meanings bring the song back up for me.

Solid song, 6/10

Song 4- Message Man

Message Man is a more hard, heavy sounding song that isn't really "rock" but more an alternative/indie vibe to it. The part of the song with the title phrase in it, "message man", isn't even written the same as in the song it has a comma turning it into "message, man". The whole phrase is switched from being a song about messing with some guy who sends messages, to a song about listening and interpreting what the lyrics are actually saying as opposed to what you hear. The song still has that underlying message of depression, shown in the lyric "you don't know what i've done, i'm wanted and on the run" which could be a reference to an earlier song where Tyler said that he had "killed a man". This man could be himself in a metaphorical way

where Blurryface killed the happier, more cheerful version of Tyler and all that's left is what we have now of him. Absolutely the greatest song and one of my favourites from the album. 10/10

← Tyler Performing A "Ritual" To Message Man



Album 2- Trench (The Album This Time), 2018

Trench is the fifth studio album made by Twenty One Pilots. It has 14 songs in total and each one displays just how cryptic and deep this band's music can get. In my opinion this is one of their top albums as it has a nice strong bass line in most songs and some heavy drums in some songs and light drums in others.

The album features a very distinctive vulture on its front. This vulture is a symbol of depression as it attacks when you're at your lowest points and doesn't stop until you either get away or succumb to it. This is also when we first got introduced to the character Clancy. He is the main protagonist of the Dema storyline. Before I even get into the songs, this album is easily a 9/10, no doubt about it.



Song 1-Jumpsuit

← Clancy In His Green And Yellow

This song is one of my favourite songs on this album. It opens with a hard bass line that sounds so good and rough with a background noise that sounds like it's circling you. Now the lyrics don't actually have that much of a connection to the storyline but one thing that does is the video. At the beginning of it we see

Clancy on the car from Heavydirtysoul. It then cuts to him waking up in a river at the bottom of a ravine with a new jacket on, sporting yellow tape on his shoulders, a symbol of the Banditos. It then cuts to one of Nicos on a white horse, racing towards the unknowing Clancy. Now we see that on top of the cliffs surrounding Clancy are the Banditos. The bishop catches up to Clancy so the Banditos throw yellow petals towards him to ward Nico off. The bishop resists however and manages to put Clancy into somewhat of a trance in order to take him to Dema. This whole interaction is an exaggerated version of starting to fall into that depressive state with Nico actually dragging him into the hub of depression. The song itself is a message about Tyler wanting his friends to help him out and save him from this downward spiral by calling them his protectors or in this case his "jumpsuit". Top 3 Twenty one pilots songs of all time in my opinion.

10/10

Clancy Facing Nico→



Song 2- Neon Gravestones

"Neon Gravestones" is the 7th song on the album and is a grim one to say the least. It's a song about suicide as a whole. The song is structured to be kind of a fast paced ballad that's lyrics can be controversial but are exactly how Tyler feels about the concept of suicide.



←The Neon Gravestones In Dema

The first verse is mainly talking about how we as glorify celebrity suicides and host these big parties to remember people. Now that's okay but at one point these parties have gone from being just about remembering people, to being almost a way of saying "if you take your life, it will

be okay and we will host a party to remember you". Tyler at one point says the lyric "an earlier grave is an optional way, NO" as a means to say that despite how we treat it, suicide is never okay and is also never an option. It harms more than just you and is not acceptable. He also makes mention of the fact that he could die right now if he wanted and for some reason he will become more known if he does so but he chooses to stay alive despite what his legacy could give him if he just stopped. This song may not be my favourite or many people's favourite songs but it is one of the darkest songs I know and one of the most important songs they have made. 5/10 for the actual song but 10/10 for the meaning of it.

Song 3- Nico and The Niners

"Nico and The Niners" is the 9th song on the trench album and is one of the main storyline songs of all the albums. Just from the title you already can figure out that this song is about the nine bishops including the main one, Nico. The video of this song takes place inside of Dema where Clancy has been brought to by Nico on the horse. The bishops are doing their ritual from the made up religion of "vialism". To make it short, they do this ritual and it allows them to take control of dead bodies. While this ritual is happening, the Banditos come and break Clancy out of Dema and give him back his black jacket with the yellow tape. The Lyrics themselves are all about how Nico and the nine bishops use their powers and religion to keep everyone in Dema. The main repeating lyric "east is up" can be taken in one of two ways that both spell out hope. On one hand you can take it as the fact of the sun rising in the east, where going east would take you towards the light. The other meaning involves the actual structure of Dema. It is a city comprised of nine inner towers, a ring of housing buildings, a ring of neon gravestones and then the outer wall. Because every direction is blocked, the only way out is up so every way out is up. This song has a dark feel to it, not in the way of depression but in the evil creepy way. It's mainly a song about not being able to get out of that evil part of your mind and being stuck in this depressive state. 7.5/10 for "Nico and The Niners".

Nico And The Nine Other Bishops→



Song 4-Legend

“Legend” is the 11th song on this album and is just about one thing, Tyler’s grandfather Robert. It’s a song to pay respects to just how great of a man he was. Sadly during the making of Trench, he passed away due to Alzheimer’s disease. Legend is actually in direct relation to the song “Neon Gravestones” as at the end of it, the lyrics “find your grandparents or someone of age, pay some respects to the path that they’ve paved” are sung. Those lyrics are exactly what this song is, a tribute to his grandpa for the life that had. One lyric that is repeated quite a bit is “I wish she knew you”. This is about his wife Jenna only getting to know Tyler’s grandpa when he was in this state instead of when Robert was always cracking jokes and brightening up the room wherever he was. Tyler wishes she got to know Robert when he was still ‘Robert’. The final lyrics of the song always hit the hardest with the line “Then the day that it happened, I recorded this last bit, I look forward to having a lunch with you again”. On March 17th Robert Joseph passed away and that last line was recorded. Tyler is hopeful that when he dies, he will get to sit and have lunch with his grandpa again. 10/10 but absolutely gut wrenching.

Robert Joseph (Right)→



Album 3- Scaled and Icy (2021)

Scaled and Icy is the sixth studio album made by Twenty One pilots. It’s usually pretty overlooked compared to the other albums as it has more of a pop-type feel to it. This album has about the same amount of lore as Trench and goes more into depth about the Bishop’s powers. This album was released during covid so it uses some themes of isolation. Scaled and Icy has been hated on by some fans as it doesn’t fit the usual style of the band, but personally I find it a



refreshing spin on their usual sound. The pop genre is a great fit for Tyler’s voice and gives Josh a chance to show off his ability to play drums in multiple styles. Tyler also tried out a new hairstyle in this album, hinted at in a [teaser skit](#) by the band. Scaled and Icy may not be Twenty One Pilots’ usual sound but I think it serves as a perfect switch in style for the band.

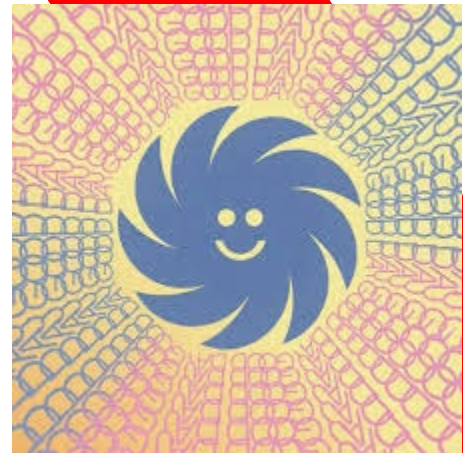
This album had a livestream concert based off of it where Tyler and Josh played live for millions of people. This showed one big thing about the album, SAI is propaganda. It is made by the bishops to convince people that Dema is great and there’s no reason why anyone should ever, ever, try to leave. During the livestream it also became apparent

that Clancy was being held captive by the bishops and was being forced to sing songs to make people trust them.

8.5/10

Song 1-Good Day

“Good Day” is the first song on the album. It has a cheery type of feel with some lyrics that make you think the singer is lying. Throughout the whole song the singer says how great his day is going but never really brings forward a reason why it’s so good. He actually sings that it may be “hard to believe him” but he is actually having a good day. The words themselves describe a guy where things keep going wrong in his life. The singer talks about how he is slowly losing his ‘saturation’ or brightness and informed his family while they were away on a vacation. His family left him, he lost his job and his friend is now suing him. During an interview Tyler stated that this song is how he would be at some stage of grief if his family died. At some point he would just be in total denial of everything that was happening. He would try to act like nothing happened and everything was okay when it is truly not. I think this song, despite its sad lyrics, still feels quite happy and actually somehow makes the lyrics not feel all that sad. It’s definitely pop sounding and makes for another great opening song. One of my favorite songs on this album. 10/10.



Song 2- Saturday

“Saturday” is the 5th song on the album and is probably the most pop sounding song this duo has ever made. It has a driving drum beat, a strong bass line, catchy lyrics and just to top it off, a cowbell that plays nearly the whole song. It’s another song that Tyler wrote for his wife Jenna and features a guest appearance of her voice on a call with Tyler. The video itself is the main reason why I put this song on the review as it has some good lore. Clancy starts off singing on top of a boat with Josh playing his drums beside him. The boat is being driven by some hooded figures and eventually arrives at a submarine where the pair goes in. They then play music at a party in the submarine when all of a sudden a large beast in the water rams right into the front of the boat. The sub then floods and everyone floats up to the surface of the water where we can see just how big this beast really was.

Clancy on the first boat→

It becomes visible that this beast was a dragon who died and is being controlled by one of the bishops. Not my favourite song as I find it a bit



too pop-y and bland for my taste but still decent. 6/10.

Clancy in the
Sub →

Song 3- The

“The Outside”
the more lore-
alternative,

how Tyler feels about the music industry's favor for songs that have no meaning and aren't controversial in any way. This makes him feel as if he's on the 'outside' of the music industry, but he feels completely fine to do it as he knows what his music means to millions of people. This song could also be seen as Clancy going against Dema and its control over him.



Outside

is the 4th song on the album and is one of having songs on Scaled and Icy. It has an indie, style to it and is another song about



Clancy on the beach→

The video starts with the bishop who was controlling the dragon in “Saturday” being assassinated by the other bishops, also killing the link with the dragon. Then it shows Clancy crawling up onto a beach from the ocean where the sub sank, also back in “Saturday”. Beside him is the torchbearer. They hike along a path which leads them to a cave and some new, less soaked, clothes. In it is a group of creatures that feed the two and eventually lead them into a cove. One of them hands Clancy a pair of antlers and shows him how to do the ritual that the Bishops use to control bodies. He uses this new power to take control of one of the dead bishops and knocks over a light which starts a fire. We then cut back to Clancy



and the torchbearer who looks across the

water to see more torches.

Clancy with the antlers These other torches are the Banditos.
and the new clothes ^

Solid song that has a good vibe to it. 7.5/10

Song 4- No Chances



Bit of a grim title but it is also a rough song. "No Chances" is the biggest sign of the "SAI is propaganda theory" as it basically spells it out for the listener. There is no video for this song but the song is a masterpiece by itself. It has a deep sounding rap for its two verses that are sung by Tyler, but are very clearly the Bishops talking to Clancy about how they managed to find out where he and the Banditos are.

The chorus is also very clearly the bishops trying to make people trust them by getting someone who the people trust "Clancy" to say it instead of them. They reassure people that if they get "kidnapped" by the Banditos then the bishops will have "people on their way" as they "want you home in one piece". In reality if the Banditos help you escape the reach of Dema, then the bishops will drag you right back as soon as you're found, this was seen in "Jumpsuit". Another lyric by the bishops is "we get bodies everyday", this is ironic because of the fact that they probably caused the bodies in the first place. Another funny thing is that they probably find your dead corpse much more useful to them as they can control you from anywhere if you die. Really cool and different sounding song. 9.9999999/10

Album 4- Clancy (2024)

Last but certainly not least is Clancy released only back in May. I love this album with a passion. It has everything from alternative to pop and then all the way to slow love songs. Not only did I watch the livestream where Tyler and Josh premiered the whole album but I actually got to see the concert in Seattle a few months ago. This album in all honesty isn't perfect. It's also not my favourite one, that title is given to the predecessor to Blurryface called Vessel. But its flaws are easily overlooked because of just how good it sounds. The album is named after the character we've all come to love, Clancy. It's also supposed to be the finale of the Dema storyline as it finishes up the major points of the story perfectly. Clancy is a strong album that thrives off of its driving bass and drum features while also having exceptional vocals. The album cover features Clancy and the torchbearer in their new outfits boasting red tape as opposed to the usual yellow of the Banditos.



This album may not be perfect but it is damn good and deserves the love every other album of theirs has gotten.

9/10

Song 1-Overcompensate

“Overcompensate” is the opening track for Clancy and serves quite a good reason for being given that spot. The opening starts with an off pattern style of drum beat that reminds listeners of the songs like it back in “Trench” and “Blurryface”. It goes into a small bit of German and French words that roughly translate to “This small island has made me a weapon. We both believe that we can use it to change the momentum of this war” referencing the island in “The Outside” called Voldsoy where Clancy was given the power of the bishops. It then uses the lyrics from a song in “Trench” called “Banditos”. The line is “I created this world to feel some control. Destroy it if I want so I sing Sahlo Folina”. Sahlo Folina is a phrase used by the Banditos where if someone says it, then any bandito nearby will help. It’s a call for help that will always be answered. The listener is “welcomed back to Trench” and the song actually starts. The title phrase itself “overcompensate” is sung multiple times and is Clancy talking about how he isn’t scared to fight back against Dema for what it’s done to him and won’t “hesitate to overcompensate” against them. In verse one Clancy says that you shouldn’t “sleep on a boy who can’t fall asleep twice” as a way of saying that you shouldn’t underestimate someone, especially if that someone has gone against problems multiple times and still wont stop trying.



New Clancy Outfit^

The song keeps going and eventually finishes. But that isn’t the end of this section. The video shows Clancy with his brand new mask in a school setting talking to a bunch of people and seemingly trying to get them to join the Banditos in the fight against the bishops. He goes through the whole song and then at the end collapses revealing that Clancy was never actually at the school and was using his new power to control a corpse all the way from Voldsoy. “Overcompensate” is exactly the type of song you would want as the opener for your final album of a story. It manages to be it’s own song whilst using the same elements or even the same lyrics from earlier albums as sort of a nod to the journey it took to get to the

place we're at. I love its weird drum pattern as it keeps my brain engaged in musicianship going on behind the vocals. Perfect opener as always

10/10 [Corpse Clancy Controlled](#)→

Song 2- Lavish

"Lavish" is the 8th song on Clancy and is ultimately just a song as itself with not very much connection to the lore. Lots of times Twenty One Pilots will put a 'joke' song in their albums just to throw something in there and it seems like "Lavish" is just that. [Quite the](#)

[Lavish outfits](#)

This song is a criticism of the music industry once again, this time focusing on the artists who are new and just managed to get a lucky break but now have to act like they know what they're doing. The opening lyric "welcome to the new way of

living, it's just the beginning of Lavish" is welcoming the new artist/ band to the music scene and saying that this is just the start of how they will be living for a while. The first verse also is, in my opinion, like the voice in your head when you're wearing something fancy where it tells you "hey you should act like how you're dressed, be fancy, bask in your greatness". The first line of this verse "Try your best to look like this is not your first time" seems to be a great way of showing that whoever this person is, they are clearly in over their head. Maybe 'overcompensating' for something.

Solid Song but a bit bland.

6.5/10



Song 3- Oldies Station

"Oldies Station" is the 11th song in the album and is written specifically for the fans of Twenty One Pilots. It's a song about growing up and becoming an 'oldie' but having to endure it and "push on through". This is probably my favorite song on the album despite it actually being not very full. The lyrics are deep but not as deep as some of their other songs, and the instrumentation is a bit thin when it comes to its layers. But its surface value is perfect, with a clear meaning to it and that meaning has so much emotion. When the song hits its emotional climax towards the end you hear Tyler singing "You're in the crowd at her first dance recital". Tyler's daughter Rosie enjoys dance so Tyler goes to her recitals. Behind those vocals you can faintly hear Tyler cheering her on saying "Go Rosie Go" and it's so heartwarming to hear. When

I was at the concert for this album I was so happy to hear this song start and I loved hearing that line of “push on through”.

Actual song 7/10

My personal opinion however 10/10

Song 4- Navigating

The 9th song on the album and the next main lore piece of the story. The title itself is a good place to start. Navigating is one of the terms that Tyler uses when he describes how he feels going through the thoughts in head. He ‘navigates’ through his emotions on a journey to feeling better. The song as a whole is also about that, a path through Trench to beat the bishops and then leave Dema. Tyler is beating the thoughts and getting out of his head. This is the path that he takes every time he feels bad emotions. The video itself consists of landing on the main land of Trench with the torchbearer in a boat. They



are met by some Banditos on the beach and begin to start walking a long path. The video cuts between this and clips of Clancy and torchbearer playing at a bonfire. Eventually Clancy and the torchbearer make it to a large open field with the bonfire in the middle of it and across the field is a single bandito. He pulls down his mask to reveal that he is the torchbearer and has been remotely helping Clancy along his journey and was never right beside him. This could be a metaphor for the

friends who don't need to be there directly to help you but can help by just talking to you over text or calls. “Navigating” is a strong song with some really hard sounding drums that give it an edgy feeling and it has a bass line comparable only to the bass from “Jumpsuit”. The video for “Navigating” is a great setup for the final video of the album which concludes the whole story.

8/10

← *FIREEE*

Song 5- Paladin Strait

The final song on Clancy is also the final song of both the Dema story and this article. Starting off with the video we see Clancy sitting on a rock with the shot cutting between both that and a video of Tyler playing ukulele facing the ocean. Banditos come up to Clancy and bring him the clothes from “Overcompensate” to switch with the ones from “The Outside”. He then goes to the main Bandito camp and helps prepare for the coming fight. The group of Banditos walk with Tyler to Dema as they are watched from above by the bishops controlling dead vultures. They

then switch from the vultures and take control of everybody in the ring of graves that surrounds the inner city. The fight begins between the bodies and the Banditos while Clancy goes through the underground tunnels used back in "Nico and the Niners" and goes into the city. He begins to scale the towers in the middle of the city and eventually finds the bishops. Because they are still fighting using the bodies they don't see him and he kills them all. This releases their grasp on the bodies and the Banditos win.

Clancy and the Banditos→


Once all the bishops are down, Nico bursts into the room, grasps onto Clancy and says "So few, So proud, So emotional. Hello Clancy". Clancy lifts his head to stare him in the eyes for a second and the video ends. The song itself describes Clancy's journey from Voldsoy, back to Trench over the Paladin Strait, and all the way back to Dema. Usually the cycle is Clancy escaping and being forced back into Dema but this time he is the one in control and is coming back to finish what he started. "Staring down a hurtling storm Makin it's way towards me" is one of the lines and is clearly referencing the fight that is soon to come after he crosses the strait. After the main song ends there is about 45 seconds on the actual audio release of the song that is just birds chirping. After this pause is one more short verse played only on ukulele by Tyler that describes him "climbing the top of the tower" and yelling at Nico to "show himself". He gets cut off by Nico opening the door and floating quickly towards Clancy in the music video which could be taken as Tyler being ready to fight the last bit of his depression but it takes him by surprise and he may not truly be ready to finish the job. Clancy and Nico→ Solid finisher to 9 years of a story so it's a perfect 10/10 on both the music and video sides.



Conclusion

The Dema storyline has been going on for 9 years and honestly may not even be done. During the livestream reveal for Clancy, Tyler hinted that there may be more to come but it's not confirmed. As a whole, these four albums have been on repeat for me for as long as I can remember. I was given the album "Blurryface" back in 2015 when it first came out and since then I have been a die hard fan of Twenty One Pilots. I was originally only going to do Trench as it has so many awards and things to talk about but I felt it would be more fitting for me to do all four of the more recent albums as they're some of my favourite albums of all time and showcase just how great this band is. They host some of the best concerts and are always so engaged with their audience so it feels nice to recognize them as much as I can. I find it hard to put it into words just how much all of these albums have done for me when it comes to being able to

analyze music but also are just generally really good sounding. You can never get bored listening to them because they're style changes so much from album to album, so you never know what to expect next. Seriously go listen to their music as I couldn't recommend them more. Thanks for reading my review:)-Jack

A large, solid yellow diagonal bar that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right, partially overlapping the text.