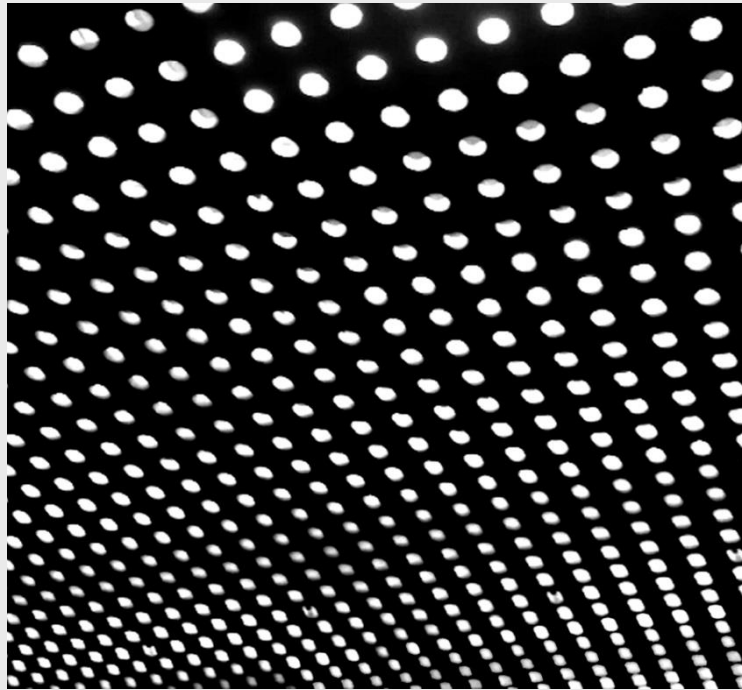


Beach House - Bloom



"Ballsy" might not appear to be an adjective that would immediately come to mind when the acclaimed Baltimore band Beach House is mentioned. When you hear that word used to describe an artist, you would imagine the artist to make some aggressive or gritty type of music, like punk or hardcore rap, but surely would not expect it to refer to a dream pop band. Ironically, that's exactly what I think Beach House is, because with their music they attempt to capture an emotion that not many other artists aim for: pure bliss. To me, on first listen, *Bloom* felt like waking up on a Saturday morning with the sunlight blinding your eyes: you're not exactly sure what you're looking at, but you know it feels amazing. I couldn't really put my finger on which part of the music was giving me this feeling because it didn't come from any specific part. Add to that the fact that the hook of the first song, "Myth", is simply vocalist Victoria Legrand dreamily exclaiming "Help me to name it," and it's almost like Beach House knew I'd have a loss for words upon hearing it.

Of course, everything so far in this review has just been me comparing Beach House's music to vague sensations, but I don't think there's actually a concrete, objective way to approach this type of music. This kind of music is especially subjective; if you don't really feel any strong emotions upon hearing it, I don't think there's any objective, technical arguments to be made to justify the

album. And that's the beauty of Beach House in my opinion: everyone who connects to the album feels something different, but all of them struggle to articulate what exactly in the music makes them feel that way.

Earlier, I explained how the album made me feel the first time I heard it, but upon further listening, you realize that the album is deeper than chords arranged to make you feel happy. The lyrics, abstract as they are, still convey vivid messages despite their vagueness. In contrast to the instrumentation, the lyrics lend a melancholiness to the sound of the album, resulting in a beautifully sad album that still sounds dreamy enough to send good vibes your way. For example, on the second track, "Wild":

*Wild in our ways
What we are making
Heartless to say
Go on pretending*

These lyrics are essentially inscrutable for the first few listens, but even if one does not understand them, the words being used ("heartless") make these lyrics sound like they'd be said with a sigh, as if the character speaking them has given up on trying to control something or someone. The entire album follows this model, where the lyrics are melancholic, the instrumentals are blissful, and the vocals are dreamy, yet if someone asked me to explain specifically what a line means, I wouldn't be able to. *Bloom* is an album more concerned with feelings and less with explanations and reasons.