

= Pyramids (song) =

" Pyramids " is a song by American recording artist Frank Ocean , released as the second single from his debut studio album Channel Orange (2012) . The song was written by Ocean and produced by Malay and Om 'Mas Keith . The track features an uncredited guitar solo from recording artist John Mayer . On June 7 , 2012 , Ocean posted a small teaser video featuring a snippet of the song onto his tumblr account , and released the full , nearly 10 @-@ minute song later that day onto his official SoundCloud account . The song explores a narrative of a pimp falling in love with one of his clients . The track lyrically contains several extended metaphors referencing Cleopatra , pyramids , and strip clubs . The song received highly positive reviews and was called epic in nature by several publications , who praised the ambition and scope of the track 's length , along with the lyrical merit .

The song was featured in a teaser for Ocean 's then @-@ upcoming album and was released with a cover that featured The Simpsons style characters . The music video was directed by Nabil Elderkin and featured an orange car with an atmospheric background . The song has since debuted on the UK R & B Chart at number 31 . The track has been featured during television promos for Channel Orange . Ocean performed " Pyramids " during his Channel Orange tour through North America .

= = Background = =

On June 8 , 2012 , Ocean posted onto his tumblr a cryptic , nearly two @-@ minute video , promoting an unknown project which was titled Channel Orange . The clip mostly featured an expensive @-@ looking car , and it also contained new music . Later that day Ocean posted the full song used in the video , titled " Pyramids " onto his Soundcloud account . Popdust noted that " trailers won't tell you everything . For example , the brief snippet of Frank Ocean 's new track ? Pyramids ? heard in an ambiguous trailer a few days ago left out one key detail of the track : the damn thing is 10 minutes long . " The cover artwork for the single features sexual Simpsons characters .

The song was Ocean 's first new single in over a year , which was described as him coming " back into the spotlight in a huge way . " The track was labeled indicating that it was to be the ninth track on the album . It was later announced that the Channel Orange project was actually his debut album and that he would launch a corresponding tour . The release of the album 's tracklist confirmed both the track placement of the track and the appearance of it on the album . " Pyramids " serves as the second single from the project following " Thinkin Bout You " . The following day Ocean posted that , " playing ? Pyramids ? on the road is gonna be my favourite part " on his Twitter account , speaking about his promotional tour .

= = Composition = =

" Pyramids " is a nine @-@ minute @-@ and @-@ 54 @-@ second R & B song . It has been described as a " nearly 10 @-@ minute epic that touches on everything from club music to good old @-@ fashioned slow jam R & B " and is " an ambitious song with multiple movements . " The song features groaning club beats , psychedelic guitar noodling , crunchy synth leads , a funky @-@ up beat , and " Ocean 's distinctive croon and lots of vague new @-@ R & B angst " . The opening segment sports the " beautiful , warped R & B that Ocean has become known for " , but from there the song transitions into a smattering of electro @-@ house synths , Michael Jackson @-@ influenced pop melodies , spaced out electronic segues , UK bass breaks , saxophone , and guitar solo courtesy of John Mayer . " The track is an " R & B odyssey " slinking from ancient Egypt , where wild cheetahs are on the loose and Cleopatra meets a " snakey doom " , to the present day where " Frank is living that sleazy motel room life . " It serves as " another case where the production far outstrips the vocal work " , with " clanging and chiming and choirs for the intro , " a dance break toward the middle that sounds like it was " recorded in 2018 " , and a slow jam for the

second half that closes the song .

The chorus boasts about a woman ? working at the pyramid tonight ? . The track lyrically features intricate imagery that depicts a fantasy @-@ like scenario , and the length gives the song the ability to change pace with " patience , with suave , like a furthering of the foreplay " . The first half details an account of ancient history , " even your junior high school social studies teacher would blush over " , with the second half containing a narrative where Ocean serves as Cleopatra ? s pimp but through years of working together , he eventually falls in love with her . Through the " unwritten bylaws of their profession " , however , his love is no match for the " rules of the game which were established long before he or she rose to power . " The narrative of " Pyramids " draws inspiration from real events in Ocean 's life . When the singer lived in Los Angeles , he lived alongside actual pimps , and in an interview the singer mused that " it was fantasy built off that dynamic ? but you can only write what you know to a point . " The storytelling scope of the song has been compared favorably to Bob Dylan 's " The Hurricane " , and has been described as an anthem " for the Drake generation . "

It was reported that Ocean was really stretching the limits of the term ? song ? on " Pyramids " , and that there are " more ideas on this track than on most albums " . The single runs the gamut of Ocean ? s various influences , pulling from European electronic dance music and Prince 's early 80s discography , notably Purple Rain . The moody tune finds Ocean moaning over ethereal swirls and pulses while cooing about " working at the pyramid " and finding " my Black queen Cleopatra . " It encompasses a multitude of " suites and a kaleidoscope of moods and tones " from " vainglorious to melancholic " and has been called the " Paranoid Android " of R & B. Although Ocean is oftentimes labeled as an R & B artist , he has " entirely steered clear of confining himself to one genre " with the song .

= = Reception = =

" Pyramids " received universal acclaim from music critics . Complex Magazine named the track " song of the week " upon release . Complex later named the song the fourth best song of 2012 . Siân Rowe of NME compared the track to Prince ? s " Purple Rain " and reported that that the song " is the kind of track you ? ll lose hours and hours of your life to . This week alone , NME has spent at least two days having our minds freaked on by its space funk swirl . " Pitchfork Media 's Evan Minsker labeled it a " Best New Track " and wrote that " the song 's a 10 @-@ minute R & B event , traveling from club banger ancient Egypt (' send the cheetahs to the tomb ') to the slow jam strip club (' she 's workin ' at the Pyramid tonight ') . It 's a journey well @-@ suited to Ocean 's smooth croon . " The publication 's Ryan Dombal commented that it " essentially reincarnates one of the most storied female rulers in history as a six @-@ inch @-@ heeled woman of the night . But still , the song doesn 't read as an indictment of the last 2 @,@ 000 years as much as yet another attempt to cleverly level the playing field . " The Telegraph 's Neil McCormick stated that the track was the " real miracle of the album " , noting that while Ocean " can embark on something as flamboyant as Pyramids - a 10 @-@ minute , tempo @-@ shifting , minor @-@ chord narrative of Egyptian queens and Las Vegas strippers , marrying Tangerine Dream sequencers and a jazzy John Mayer guitar solo to a rapturous slow jam ? and make it all seem to make sense . "

Melissa Locker of Time called it a " tour de force " and " a ten @-@ minute history of R & B , arcing from club thumping beats to a sultry drawn out jam with Ocean ? s voice veering from a velvety croon to an endearingly creaky falsetto . " Spin 's Marc Hogan declared " this much is clear : Ocean continues to deliver songs that combine the narrative punch of a great singer @-@ songwriter with the stylish flair of contemporary hip @-@ hop . " John Hall of The Independent described the song as more new material from the " hardest @-@ working man in hip hop " and that the " 10 @-@ minute single works its way through every genre of contemporary pop , from club banger to slow jam . " Nathan S. of the DJBooth described the song as a sprawling affair , noting that it contains " hazy and ambient cut that manages to weave in soaring guitars and ? 90s funk synths . " Alexis Petridis of The Guardian mused that the track seemed ambitious to the point of sounding slightly daft , and that the track was " certainly unlike anything else in current R & B. " PopMatters 's Brice Ezell stated

that all it takes is one listen to ' Pyramids ' , the shape @-@ shifting opus of channel ORANGE to cement Ocean ? s status as one of contemporary R & B ? s vital songwriters .

John Calvert of The Quietus called " Pyramids " a little " structurally ramshackle though never erratic , it 's the type of massive album centrepiece that was inconceivable before The @-@ Dream 's stadium @-@ R & B reinvented the genre as a mythological epic . " Paley Martin of Most Blunted stated that the track " is so much more than a song ; it is an audible baptism , a narrative delicacy , a self @-@ indulgent experience ! And you best believe once you press play , this ride will take you to the destination of your choice . " Jason Lipshutz of Billboard felt that the real triumph was Ocean 's song structure : " verses and hooks collapse onto each other , rhymes pop up out of nowhere , and the singer acts like minutely balancing a 10 @-@ minute concept piece is no big deal . " Chris Richards of The Washington Post Company described the track as a " righteous funk opus that spans nearly 10 minutes " , commented that it " is loaded with metaphorical riddles , drawing parallels between Cleopatra and a 21st @-@ century prostitute . Puzzle over it . Dance to it . All of the above . "

Ocean 's Odd Future cohort Tyler , The Creator called it his favorite Ocean song on his Twitter account . The song has over one million plays on Ocean 's official SoundCloud account , where the song was originally released .

The song is ranked as the most acclaimed song of 2012 , the 4th most acclaimed song of 2010s and the 172nd most acclaimed song of all time , according to Acclaimed Music . The Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop annual critics ' poll ranked " Pyramids " at number 10 to find the best music of 2012 ; Ocean 's previous single , " Thinkin Bout You " charted at number four on the same poll .

= = Promotion = =

When " Pyramids " was first released , it debuted within a promotional video less than two minutes long . The clip consists of an extended shot of a car , which flickers slightly with " otherworldly effects " while a " slinky soul tune plays in the background . " The video was directed by Nabil Elderkin , who also helmed the music videos for past Ocean singles such as " Swim Good " and " Novacane " . A portion of the song was used during television commercials advertising Channel Orange , which began airing following the 2012 BET Awards . Siân Rowe of NME mused that the song will definitely get an outing on his upcoming US tour ; " Imagine lots of dry ice , a velvet @-@ covered rotating stage and the entire front row sighing , ' I love you , Frank ' , what a beautiful sight . " Ocean performed the track during his 14 show Channel Orange tour through North America .

An extended , eight @-@ minute video for " Pyramids " , also directed by Elderkin , was later released on September 8 , 2012 . The video follows a loose narrative , with stream @-@ of @-@ consciousness scenes , and utilizes several songs from Ocean 's album channel ORANGE . It begins with Ocean drinking four shots of absinthe at a bar , before opening fire upon the bar itself ; a segment of " Pink Matter " plays during this portion . A title card appears as Ocean boards his motorcycle (the song " Start " appears .) As he rides off into the desert , a snippet of the first half of " Pyramids " plays before transition directly into the second half . Shots of Ocean singing on his motorbike are interspersed with slow @-@ motion scenes of Ocean walking through a strip club in a hallucinogenic haze , occasionally bursting into laughter ; the club employs vampy women . Ocean is then seen in front of a large neon triangle with the Kabbalahian Tree of Life in neon upon it , from which John Mayer emerges and performs an entirely new guitar solo exclusive to the video . James Montgomery of MTV News characterizes the scene as an inadvertent " vision quest " . Ocean falls down backwards , instantly re @-@ appearing in the desert as a plane flies overhead . The song " End " appears as Ocean walks back to his motorcycle , picks up his helmet and walks down the highway towards a pyramid in the distance .

= = Charts = =

= = Remixes and cover versions = =

On September 4 , 2012 , producer Chi Duly released " Pyramids (Chi Duly Remix) " , an uptempo nu @-@ disco version .