

Taylor Swift's Album 'Red' is an almost miss for old fans



Photo created by Big Machine Records

Taylor Swift's new album "Red" was released Oct. 22. The 22-year-old has won several music awards, and her second album was the top-selling album of 2009.

By CHARLES BEACHAM

Taylor. Taylor. Taylor.

When I first heard "Our Song" on the radio, I knew I should have said no, but you pulled me in. When I gave "Fearless" a spin I told myself you belong with me. Then you released "Speak Now," and to be perfectly honest, I found myself less than enchanted. Now after hearing your latest album, I must say I don't hate it — but I almost do.

Please don't get mad and write an angry song about me (or do, I don't care, I'm not your boss), but as a fan I've got to tell you, you've let me down.

As a songwriter, Taylor Swift has so much potential; I saw it when she was 16 and I'm hopeful with every release that she'll rise above her typical teenage trysts. But here we are at 22 and nothing's changed.

The first track "State of

Grace" sets an analogous tone for the entire album, which promises to be lengthy and lack-luster, if nothing else.

With the very first line Swift paints a familiar picture of herself walking on a street and thinking about a boy — you've already done that. She continues with a musically over-thought chorus. After an intimate verse about an awkward adolescent bedroom scene we jump into a drum heavy lyrical breakdown, just to change things up before another chorus (this time with some of those signature back-up vocals we all love). The track continues on from there with soft bridge, a chorus and a coda that seem to drag on before resolving with a pitifully cliché lyric.

The lyrical idea behind the album's title track is great; the execution of the idea — not so much. I doubt very much that Taylor Swift has ever driven a new Maserati and the crossword puzzle metaphor is just terrible.

Musically, the weird marriage of banjo and overly affected backing vocals in the hook did more to hurt than to help.

The middle of the album was like a PB&J sans the peanut butter — and the jelly. There's nothing inherently wrong with the songs "Treacherous," "All Too Well" or "Sad Beautiful Tragic," but there's nothing really right about them either. "Stay Stay Stay" was almost awesome. The first verse was clever, cute and captivating. The chorus is catchy, but then with the second verse she quits. I took a bite and wanted so much to love it, but I choked on the Wonder-less Bread.

"We're Never Ever Getting Back Together" and "22 are atrocious. With "22" Swift joins the ranks of Ke\$ha in using the word "hipster" in her lyrics and with "Back Together" she single-handedly gave every father of her fans a migraine.

The album boasts duets on "The Last Time" featuring

Snow Patrol's Gary Lightbody and later on "Everything Has Changed" with British artist Ed Sheeran. Though "The Last Time" was co-written by Swift and Lightbody, it's hard to tell which one is the guest and the entire track is reminiscent of Snow Patrol's hit "Chasing Cars."

The highpoint of "Red" comes 15 tracks and 62 minutes into the album with "Begin Again." This is easily the best song on the release, not just because it was the last song, but because it's the most honest. Though it's about a relationship, the song has transparency that none of the other songs have. The listener can feel Swift's appreciation for this new guy who treats her well; it's a nice change of pace.

Overall, "Red" isn't treacherous. It's just kind of there. If you're looking for an album with depth this probably isn't for you. If you want more of the same, you'll love it.