

10/13/25



Faithful Followers,

Of unconventional beginnings I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge I am about 2 months removed from social media, and the only word I have to describe it is **refreshing**. I haven't felt a *huge* difference, but I was not too involved to begin with. I *do* however, feel a bit more cognizant of everything around me, a little less beholden to any expectations, and less numb from the instathots. So thank you for following my words and thoughts in the most inconvenient way possible!

This month is a special one. It's a weird one in my life, but a special one record wise. To begin, I recently put in my notice to vacate San Diego by the end of October. Not but two days after doing so did I get a callback for a Senior Field Appraiser position, here in San Diego. I'd already started packing. Confused is an understatement. In moments like these, I lean on what I know. I put this record on and then ended up playing all **four** of the Mac Records I have consecutively. I did find myself briefly in tears, just because I miss him. If you've followed me this calendar year, you know that Mac and I were but 3 months apart in age. I often see and hear bits of myself, in his music and clips. This is one of my favorite records to begin a painting session – it's short, a great vibe, and significant moment in history. Please take a moment this month to listen to **Mac Miller - NPR Tiny Desk!**

This record is a live recording of the popular live showcase venue that is National Public Radio's Tiny Desk studio. Artists of all shapes and sizes have performed here, but Mac's is far and away their most watched session. He performs 3 tracks from his at the time upcoming album – *Swimming* – which would be the last album he'd release in his life here on Earth. The tracks in order are *Small Worlds*, *What's the Use*, and *2009*. I remember when *Swimming* first dropped. I had it pre-saved on Spotify, and began a long run around North Park. I didn't like the album at all. I thought about this recently as well. The idea that I was 3 months his senior, but at 27 (yeah 27 club) he'd lived more than I have in my 34 years today. To think of all the love, joy, and pain that was crammed into those 27 years. That despite the hardened exterior baring full sleeve tattoos and gold teeth, he was still a golden Ponyboy underneath it all. He was looking for love in a world filled with demons. And with a trained ear, that's what *Swimming* really was. It's in his voice, and it's in his lyrics.

But back to this record... This one is like a movie that you know every word to, and can quote the dialogue from all characters at the right time, in the right tone, without the movie even being on. The interlude *banter banter banterrrr*, the lyrics of emphasis, and of course, his laugh. The world misses you buddy.

10/13/25



Perhaps more valuable and entertaining than the sneak peak snippet of his upcoming value, is this snapshot of him as a person. At this point, he is battling full on drug addiction of multiple capacities, in and out of a somewhat dramatic relationship with budding superstar Ariana Grande, travelling all the time, and making more money than ever. Kind of a lot for a 27-year-old to handle in my opinion. But on this set, he's light as a feather. There's a little droop in his face, but he looks put together. Hard to judge someone when everyone is in a *room full of rolled up hundred dollar bills*.

If you're not listening on vinyl (and if you are), I'd recommend watching the video on Youtube as well. On the vinyl, he does sound a bit more happy, silly, and free. Not that he doesn't in the video. Or maybe it's just that hardened exterior amplified through the lens of hindsight that comes with the video. But he had that about him wherever he went. The "I don't take myself, or yourself too seriously" attitude. He was a lite hearted, good spirited, but competitive rapper. Definitely the type of kid who was good at rec ball and little league but probably not a great pop-warner guy. It is hard for me to really enjoy his "have a great day" and "how's your day?"s – as I have a former roommate that was formerly asked to leave approximately 2 years ago that would say these two adlibs in the exact same tone and pitch. So when I hear them on the album, it does bring me back to some *interesting* places. But he captures the beauty of music, so perfectly. During the interlude of What's the Use and 2009, Mac takes a moment to acknowledge that he *really* wanted to have strings (orchestral instruments) for this song, but they weren't going to be able to bring their own instruments (or players) to the set. Because music too is a language, that can be written, read, spoken, and communicated, they were able to send the sheet music ahead of time, and practice the song together for the first time just 20 minutes before performing it live for this recording. *Music is a beautiful thing, man*.

This is also a diamond in the rough, in that all 3 tracks sound better here, live, than they do on the studio album. I touched on it briefly earlier, but there is a bit of a darkness tied to the album tracks, that just isn't there at all on these versions. The 2009 of this record is reflective, but there's no unsuredness masked with autotune as there is on Swimming. It might be a stretch, but what this shows me, is that naturally he was pure. But overthinking, overdoing, including other influences, soured some of the tracks on Swimming. Looking back with this lens or filter, definitely does make it a better album. But it certainly explains why I didn't like it in 2018.

I'd like to let the listener take in the album with a relatively blank canvas at hand. But I will drop you my favorite line from each 3 tracks.

10/13/25



Small Worlds: You never told me, being rich was so lonely. Nobody know me? Oh well, it's hard to complain from this 5-star hotel...

What's the Use?: It's been a while but I'm down til I'm out and it is what it is til it ain't.

2009: (a) Now every day I wake up and breathe, I don't have it all but that's alright with me.

(b) The whole team about to figure it out, we ice cold that's what winter about, and sometimes, sometimes, I wish I took a simpler route, instead of having demons that's as big as my house, have a ball with a dribble and bounce, cause the party ain't over til they kicking me out. Isn't it funny, we can make a lot of money, buy a lot of things just to feel a lot of ugly. I was yay high and muddy, looking for what was looking for me.

Don't Trip,

Dan Diego



10/13/25



Past ROTMs:

November 2023: Desire, I Want to Turn Into You – Caroline Polachek

December 2023: Depression Cherry – Beach House

January 2024: MTV Unplugged Live from New York – Nirvana

February 2024: Actual Life 2 – Fred Again..

March 2024: Music from the LOTR Trilogy – The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra

April 2024: Greatest Hits: Volume 1 – James Taylor

May 2024: Hybrid Theory – Linkin Park

June 2024: Ursa Major – Third Eye Blind

July 2024: Live 1997 – Daft Punk

August 2024: White Ladder, Live in Austin – David Gray

September 2024: Tidal – Fiona Apple

October 2024: Kid A – Radiohead

November 2024: Alive 2007 – Daft Punk

December 2024: Ten – Pearl Jam

January 2025: Balloonerism – Mac Miller

February 2025: Ceremonials – Florence + The Machine

March 2025: Narrow Stairs – Death Cab for Cutie

April 2025: Pang – Caroline Polachek

May 2025: 4:44 – Jay-Z

June 2025: Third Eye Blind – Third Eye Blind

July 2025: Live from Joshua Tree – Rufus Du Sol

August 2025: Magic – Bruce Springsteen

September 2025: Push the Button – The Chemical Brothers

October 2025: Mac Miller – NPR Tiny Desk