

1989 Album Review

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Quick! Grab your grandparents and your parents because finally there's an artist in today's rather scandalous society that all of you can enjoy! No more changing the station on the radio when an inappropriate song comes on that you don't want your parents to hear because [Taylor Swift's 1989 album](#) has arrived, and with it comes a new 80s synthetic sound that attracts both the young and the old. The young love the 1989 album because it embodies the spirit of the younger generation: dynamic, nostalgic, and hopeful. The elderly love the album because it echoes the synthetic pop sounds that they listened to while growing up (think a blend of OutKast and Madonna). While listening to the album, the audience is taken on a synthetic pop journey that is filled with the most enthusiastic energy. This album is the epitome of Taylor Swift's career, effectively completing her transition from country music (heard in her *Taylor Swift* and *Fearless* albums) to pop (heard in her *Speak Now* and *Red* albums). She has evolved so much, that she has rewritten her own genre of music, utilizing popular styles from the past, but mixing them in such a way that an incredible new sound is created.

The first song in the album is "Welcome to the New York" which uses synthetic beats to introduce the new atmosphere that the album has created. It is about Swift's discovery of the magic that New York City contains with its freedom to love who you want and its throngs of people all with their own ideas and energies. The culture shock remained a lasting impression on Swift as she had lived in Nashville for most of her life, so when she moved to the Big Apple the new dynamic surprised her. She translated this newfound environment into a new style of music that was the basis of the 1989 album. The song is the perfect introduction to this upbeat album because right off the bat, Taylor Swift captivates her audience with this song that

parallels her transition from Nashville to New York with her [evolution from country music to pop revolution](#). “Welcome to New York” expertly captures the essence of the 1989 album with its brand new perspective of a well-known city. The most admirable part of the 1989 album is Taylor Swift’s commitment to keeping the standard of her previous albums. She is well-known for the honesty in her lyrics, and many were concerned that with her transition, Swift would lose the integrity of her music, but she amazed her audience with her ability to infuse powerful lyrics into a song that had equally powerful beats. It is simply impossible to listen to her 1989 album and not admire Swift’s pioneering journey in a previously undiscovered path of music.

Synthetic pop beats may all sound similar, however, in every one of her songs in the album, Swift has managed to add a new element, so each song is its own entity and easily distinguishable, but the overall album seems to fit together to create a story. In other words, the album has a very cohesive sound, while not having the impression that each song is the same. In “All You Had To Do Was Stay,” Swift added an ear-piercing shriek at the end of each chorus, which sounds like it should be disastrous, but it was so expertly weaved into the song, that it is hardly noticeable and makes the accusatory tone that Swift is trying to convey in the song even more clear. In “Out of the Woods,” however, Swift differentiates her 80s pop sound by removing any gimmicks like the high pitched note played in “All You Had To Do Was Stay,” and instead keeps it very simple with only the synthetic pop beats and the piano. These two songs have a cohesive sound, but they could never be confused as the same song because of the adept way Swift manages to compose her music. The songs in the 1989 album are magical because of their unique sounds that when put together form a beautiful, iconic album that has changed the music industry forever.

Taylor Swift was born in 1989, giving meaning to her album name. She named the album after the year of her birth to give credit to the 80s music she admired, and then she

implemented some of those styles into this album. Furthermore, the album name, *1989*, shows how this album was kind of her rebirth into the music world because previously she was considered to be a country star, but after this album there would be no question about it-Taylor Swift has left the country genre. While her music does not identically match that of the 1980s, it identifies just enough with this brand of music to generate interest in older audience members, while still remaining fresh and new enough to capture the attention of the rather fickle younger generation. Taylor Swift's fan base is enormous because of her ability to connect to such a vast range of people through her lyrics, her style, and her compositions. It is simply inconceivable that a woman of only 27 years can create such a masterpiece of music that will inspire the next generation for years to come.

As an avid fan of Taylor Swift, I can personally testify to the monumental affect the *1989* album had on me. This album showed me that even when it is unimaginable, there is always room to improve. After each of Taylor Swift's albums, I could not even conceive the notion of her creating a better more powerful album, and yet each time she proved me wrong. She moved on from her 16-year old country songs to a more pop-infused country style that told a story with a more fast tempo. She then transitioned into a more rock-pop style where there were many beat drops and more emphasis on the bass. Finally, with *1989*, Taylor Swift has evolved into more than just [someone experimenting with her music](#). She has transcended beyond the imaginable and created her own sound, and her own genre of music: synthetic pop. This breakthrough in music inspires me daily because even when I believe I can't possibly find another way to make myself different from the crowd, I simply remember that Taylor Swift in a world full of billions of people each trying to make their own kind of music managed to somehow create a sound that was previously unheard of, and she made the album so flawlessly that people of all ages would enjoy it and appreciate its novelty and ingenuity. Everyone- young or

old, boy or girl, straight or gay- should listen to *1989*, even those who previously critiqued Taylor Swift's boy-oriented song lyrics, should give this album a chance because it is incomparable to her previous work. The multitudes of you who will fall in love with the album as i have should also check out Alessia Cara's revolutionary work as well because obviously you enjoy lyrics that reflect honesty (no matter how brutal).

Taylor Swift's *1989* album marks a new era in music that has changed the world of music. A new sound using older styles that emphasize the new atmosphere she has created for her fans: nostalgic and yet still moving forward, pulsating. Taylor Swift's *1989* album speaks to the endless possibilities of the world, there is always room to improve and evolve, and the world awaits for her next record-breaking album release.

RULES FOR WRITING REVIEW

Maura Johnston has written multiple album reviews for Rolling Stone, and in all of these reviews she utilizes a few rules that I tried to emulate in my review of Taylor Swift's album:

1989.

1. She starts off her album reviews by briefly mentioning previous work that the artist has done. This captures the audience's attention right away because they are most likely familiar with the artist's previous work (since they are reading the article about the artist's newest album) and they are interested in how the old work compares to the new. Also, by referencing the artist's old work, Johnston is establishing her credibility as a critic, since she is showing the audience that she has had a lot of experience listening to that particular artist and is knowledgeable about their particular sound and style, and therefore the audience can imply that she is qualified to make judgements on their new album and give an accurate description of how the sound has changed, and hopefully, improved.
2. Johnston then goes into a description of particular songs on the new album. She takes individual songs and critiques them on their sound which gives the audience a sense of what the artist wants the whole album to be like. Furthermore, Johnston is again enforcing that her opinions are valid since she can name individual songs and their meanings it shows how much research has been put into her paper. By using this method of breaking down the album, Johnston is also shaping her audience's perception of the album since they are more likely to listen for what she is telling them is there.
3. Then Johnston talks about the history behind the album. She goes in depth into what influenced the album and why the artists wrote the songs the way that they did. For example, in the review of Ed Sheeran's newest album, Johnston discusses how his Irish

roots influenced this album especially a certain song that is a remake of a popular Irish drinking jig. In the Solange review, Johnston explains how Solange's third album is very honest and forthcoming because her mother and father had lived harsh childhoods, and Solange's album is sort of a tribute to them, so the messages are very hard-hitting.

4. Throughout her reviews, Johnston uses a plethora of figurative language in an effort to really get her audience to understand the music and to actually make them hear the sound and style of the music through her words. This vivid language is very effective in getting the audience to be captivated by Johnston's point of view, and may even spark enough interest in them that they may want to go out and listen to the album that Johnston is reviewing to try and find everything she has now pointed out to them.
5. Johnston always has a few sentences dedicated to how the album or artist she is reviewing has affected the music industry. This gives her audience the impression that her review is crucially important to the music industry, and it will promote further interest in her article. In the review of Solange's album Johnston stated, "Her [Solange's] minimalist distillation of R&B, takes into consideration not just the genre's rich musical history but also its penchant for social commentary, has resulted in a stunning statement that redefines the R&B genre." Johnston is implying that Solange's album has significantly changed the R&B music industry. In the review of Ed Sheeran's newest album, Johnston states, "the British singer-songwriter hasn't just become a star – he's helped make over pop's sound. Blending acoustic sensitive-guy vibes with digital-age craft..." which proudly exclaims how Sheeran's album is a massive deal for the music industry.