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Arcade Fire - Everything Now

Joe DeMars

University of the Pacific, j_demars1@u.pacific.edu

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Everything Now - Arcade Fire

By Joe DeMars



July's *Everything Now* is perhaps the first hiccup in Arcade Fire's seamless progression as the innovative, emotive indie icons we accepted as cultural canon with 2004's *Funeral*. A hodgepodge of stand-out highlights and head-scratching missteps, simultaneously capable and lacking, *Everything Now* fumbles in delivering the effortless consistency you have come to

expect from the prophetic songsters.

Framed by the distressed-turned-disco melody of its title track, *Everything Now* prepares the listener for a line-up of tunes that find a sure-footed groove to drive lyrics defining and distrusting the crowded frivolity of our modern world. The thumping bass and grating strings of "Signs of Life" carry this theme forward, followed by the unforgettably explosive "Creature Comfort." A major highlight of the record, "Creature Comfort" chases its own tail with melodic echoes from the likes of *Neon Bible* supplementing Butler's bombastic cry: "On and on I don't know what I want! On and on I don't know if I want it!"

Showcasing an empathy steeped in bitterness, Butler's imagery and declarative delivery leaves an impression that's strangely Dylanesque amidst this synth-infused champion of a track.

And then? It is easy to recall how bewildered and disappointed I found myself during the 5 song slump that follows, which all but halts the thriving build-up of *Everything Now*. “Peter Pan”, “Chemistry”, and “Good God Damn” combine experimental soundscapes with an uncharacteristically campy array of vocal chorus hooks, all the while straying further and further from the promising theme of the record’s opening stanza. Likewise, the bizarre garage rock, beachside combination of tracks “Infinite Content” and “Infinite_Content” (yes, that’s real) exist as an odd, pretentious wink that may make you double check the packaging to confirm that this is still, indeed, Arcade Fire’s fifth studio album, *Everything Now*. Perhaps all this is done so that when Chassagne’s melodic pipes come drifting atop the hip-shaking “Electric Blue,” you may actually cry with relief. While “Put Your Money On Me” still seems an odd thematic fit, its earnest sentiment and thoughtful harmonies won me out after a second listen and set up an intriguing shift into the transformative, spun-out “We Don’t Deserve Love.” A final message before the album close, this track’s somber, self-critical verses and acoustic strumming, bell chiming chorus will stay with you longer after each additional listen.

A disappointment only by expectation, *Everything Now* can still boast a lineup of strengths that outshine its weaknesses.