



YOUR TAKE ON TUNES

Guiding Ideas

ENDORSEMENT. Write about what you love, or plug a band that you think deserves wider attention. We want your music recommendations!

- EXAMPLE – *Rolling Stone* review of “Reputation” by Taylor Swift: *Reputation is her most intimate album—a song cycle about how it feels when you stop chasing romance and start letting your life happen. As one of the all-time great pop masterminds, she’s trying something new, as she always does...The songs are full of everyday details.. But they also explore a timely question: What happens to your identity when you step back and stop defining yourself by how strangers see you?*

CONTEXT. Paint a picture for how this album came into existence. What were the artist’s main influences? How does this album compare to previous ones? What cultural or social significance do you see this album representing? And how does it compare to other music in the genre?

- EXAMPLE- *Spin* review of Coldplay’s album “A Head Full of Dreams”: *If this is indeed Coldplay’s final album, as frontman Chris Martin has implied in interviews, then no band this massive—like, Super Bowl massive—will have ever undergone a dissolution this quiet. For 15 years, the quartet’s brand has been stasis, and it would be fitting that their breakup should occur as unceremoniously as every other aspect of their career has. Martin compared seventh album A Head Full of Dreams to the “seventh Harry Potter book,” and it’s clear that he wants the band’s swan song to be viewed sentimentally but not dramatically, not to be questioned any more than why a book series has to have a final entry.*



SOUND. One of the most challenging parts of the album review—but the most interesting to the reader—is to communicate the album’s ‘sound’ through words.

- EXAMPLE- *NYT* review of Sharon Jones’ album “Soul of a Woman”: *Sharon Jones sounds anything but fragile on “Soul of a Woman,” the last album she recorded before her death in 2016 of pancreatic cancer. She wails, she shouts, she rasps, she exhorts, she fills phrases with teasing curlicues and holds pure tones endlessly aloft.*

YOUR VOICE. Make the album review your own. Music journalism is a form of writing that can be a little informal in style. Imagine you are telling a friend about this album, allowing your natural voice to come through. Or try adding a bit of humor.

- EXAMPLE- *Rolling Stone* review of Morrissey’s album “Low in High School”: *Quiz: Morrissey’s endless, withering disdain for cultural hypocrisy might get wearisome if not for A) his equally-relentless tenderness, B) his Wildean wit, C) the truth of his observations. Yes, it’s D) all of the above.*