

WORD SOUP "EVERYTHING HARMONY"

there is no non-pretentious way to say this, but I loved this album years before it came out.

on december 15, 2021, the lemon twigs performed at the bowery ballroom in new york city. this was one of only three shows played by the lemon twigs in 2021. these shows were in support of their 2020 album songs for the general public, which had largely been unplayed due to the pandemic. but mixed among the setlist were new songs off of an album that was 'very nearly done'. new songs that sounded like they had existed forever, but had only just been found.

this was *EVERYTHING HARMONY*.



a subtle harmony appears in the second verse, followed by a chorus, which leads to a bridge, which explodes into one of the most stunning instrumental breaks I've heard in a while, with reverby snare hits that could rival those in the boxer. the sound is all encompassing (a sea that speaks from every side, if you will) and filled with the lushest of harmonies.

(my favorite live version of this song was performed on may 25, 2023 at le trianon in paris, france. the entire show is very good, but this song in particular works so well as a solo guitar performance)





# STRANGERS PASSING

this one is like getting to listen to something off of *rubber soul* for the first time again. the dual rickenbackers and harmonies make this song so incredibly bright (and speaking of harmonies: obviously you would expect a harmony or two on an album called *everything harmony*, but this is the first track where I feel that they really call attention to themselves. vocal harmonies used to be such a big textural element in music, but good examples of this seem so rare in modern popular music. luckily, *in my head* has plenty of la-la-las to make up for lost time). a lovely song that is shiny and nostalgic.



corner of my eye was one of the songs played during the bowery ballroom performance (I should note that this show was not the debut of any of these songs; most or all were first performed on august 18, 2021 at elsewhere in brooklyn, ny. this song in particular was played a few times before that in some solo sets by brian. the bowery performance is just the one that I latched onto and listened to over and over again, thus making those versions of the songs the definitive versions of the songs. to me). and I do still believe that that live version is the best version, the studio version is still great, of course. it has soft brushed drums, a warm jiggly vibraphone, there is truly nothing bad that can be said about it.

but I am here to discuss the live version:

I love everything about it. the false start. the vocal lines switching between Brian and Michael.

"I've got a wonderful feeling that's ripe for being wrong"

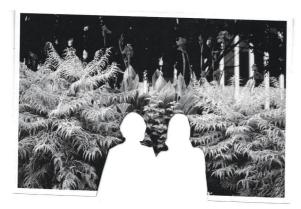
even the approach to the vocals seems different; the vocals in the studio version are very soft spoken and more reliant on falsetto, as are most of the live versions of this song once the album was released. but the bowery version is louder and more confident, which works so well when set against the two guitars. it also has an added bonus of the crowd singing along towards the end, despite them probably never having heard the song before. excellent performance, no notes, I love this song.



I have a legal obligation to hoot and holler whenever this song comes on. the bridge really makes this one of my favorites off of the entire album. the prog chords, the bass, the key change, *the bass* (definitely recommend watching a live version to fully appreciate the bass playing, it's a bit easier to hear there than in the studio version, the le trianon version is very good), you really can make it bright

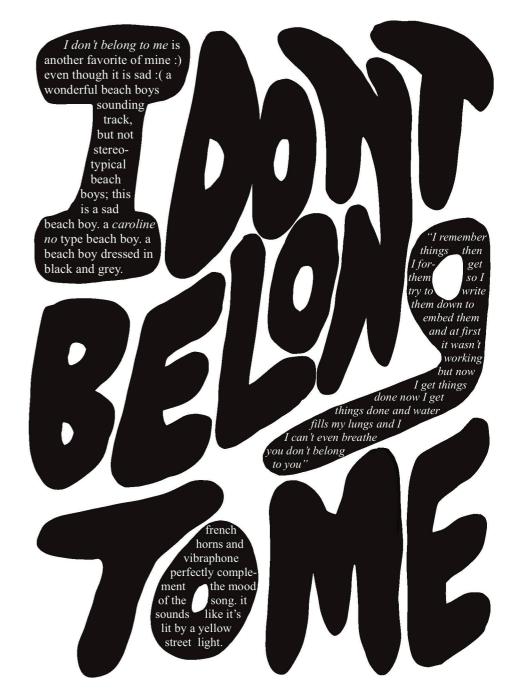
#### $A\;N\;Y\;\;T\;I\;M\;E\;\;O\;F\;\;D\;A\;Y$

when you put on this song. I still want to try and write out all the harmonies at some point. they elude me. I've never been upset about hearing this song and I don't see how I ever could. extremely good.



#### WHAT YOU WERE DOING

what a surprise, it's another really good song! this one sort of sets off the mid-album-sad-song-interlude (where the middle of the album has a momentary run of sad songs). I love the atmosphere that gets built up during the chorus, especially with the reverby backing vocals that just float over everything else. the doom solo at the end is very fun and unexpected. but I think my favorite part of this song might be the little chromatic run on the *what were you doing?* just before the outro. such a small touch that I still appreciate every time.





EVERYDAY IS THE WORST DAY OF MY LIFE

this could so easily be a terrible song. the lyrics are as repetitive as they could possibly be, the message of those lyrics could come off as whiny and annoying, just another melodramatic acoustic guitar song, and somehow it is none of those things.

#### EVERYDAY IS THE WORST DAY

*OF MY LIFE* instead comes off as oh so sincere, with an occasional wink thrown in so that it's not taken too seriously. (I would once again like to recommend the bowery version of this song, where the outro becomes a bit more hectic and pained, especially in the vocals.) the acoustic guitars are lovely and textured. another personal favorite!



now concludes the mid-album-sad-song-interlude. sort of. in theory, this is still a sad song, but it is very difficult to be sad when you are surrounded by harpsichord and strings. we are now in baroque territory, with one of my favorite verse melodies on the album. *very good* drum tones throughout. but this song's best feature is without a doubt the INSTRUMENTAL BREAK. the strings, harpsichord, percussion, and horns all swell into this huge moment that is just so lively and in your face.

#### WHAT HAPPENS TO A HEART

is a lovely reprieve from the mid-album-sad-song-interlude, which will continue momentarily.

when I was in elementary school they would sometimes have the middle school band come and play music for us, as a sort of incentive to join the band program. the whole school would sit criss cross applesauce on the cold tile floor of the cafeteria and watch the band play.

and I would be sitting on the floor blushing. because I somehow had it in my head that the band had come to play just for me.

I think it was the first time that I fully understood the point of music (whatever that may be). and I know now that this revelation was probably sparked by an undoubtedly mediocre rendition of the simpsons theme song, but I still remember the feeling of sitting on the floor, looking at my classmates, and thinking

do they know? do they know it's just for me?

this song made me feel the same way the first time I heard it

### STILL IT'S NOT ENOUGH

"nothing was ever enough"

this is another one of the bowery songs that immediately became one of my favorite things I had ever heard. it was like every song I had heard up until that point was just a primer for hearing this one. I will never have an objective opinion about this song; I don't even know if it's a good song. all I know is that the 'try to hide' chord progression made me gasp the first time I heard it, and every time since! most beautiful song in the world. to me.



a lovely lovely track that brings back the beloved french horn.

#### BORN TO BE LONELY

is a very classical, almost musical-theatre sounding song with a ton of fun and unexpected chord changes. the chorus is grand, exploding into a sleigh bell driven waltz (tangent: sleigh bells are yet another textural element that you really don't see being used much anymore. maybe it's due to their associations with christmas, but it's so nice to hear them here. you really don't realize that you've been missing them until you hear them again). a recent stripped-back performance of this song really shows off the harmonies in the chorus (WXPN's free at noon, performed on june 21, 2024).

#### ghost run free

is pure power pop. it is so poppy that I thought it was quite simple and straightforward at first, but there is a ton of neat choices packed into this song. The bridge is a standout, with a sneaky key change and a tone that reminds me of *see emily play*. my only gripe with this song (or rather, with the studio version of this song): I do not enjoy the lead guitar tone. it is a bit too tinny for me. I am so sorry.

the penultimate song doubles as the album's title track, and is a wonderful summation of what I think the album is trying to get at. it's all about finding and acknowledging small joys throughout the day, despite knowing that the melancholy will continue. which may sound cliche. maybe it is. but it's such a sweet song that I'm willing to overlook it. it works especially well when contrasted with the mid-album-sad-song-interlude. 'I love the hazy sky. I love the noisy street. I love how the wind feels on me.' writing down nice moments so that they are not forgotten. and that's not even getting into the sound of the song. I love the harsh piano and the odd time signatures. I love the piano itself being used as a drum. I love

#### **EVERYTHING HARMONY**

#### new to me

the final track is a bummer! it's a very good song, very well written, etc, but it is also very sad in a dreadful way. it's got some great beach boys-esque background harmonies. there's also a floaty string section (played on an ARP solina or quartet) that has a wistful and carnival-like feel to it. I don't know why I haven't figured out how to play the guitar part yet; it's beautifully arranged for classical guitar and has a lot of movement. a beautiful end to a beautiful album, as the final lines tragically echo -

## "we can fall in love again"

I do not feel very competent with my music reviewing 'abilities.' I know I used the word 'lovely' way too much, and this issue turned out very different from what I initially thought it was going to be (it was more of an art-based zine in my head, but apparently I had some things to say). I do love this album a lot:) if you've never heard this album, consider giving it a try (especially if you're a fan of classic 60s/70s rock). I hope you enjoy it <3











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