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Dr. O'Donnell

Advanced Composition, ENGL 3130-001

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Band: Dawes

Album: *All You Favorite Bands*

Tracks: 9

Running Time: 47:51

Genre: Folk/roots rock

Release Date: June 2, 2015.

Label: HUB Records

Available on Amazon.com on CD (\$10.06),
MP3 (\$8.99), & Vinyl (\$18.99)

Dawes' Most Dawes Record Yet: A Review of *All Your Favorite Bands*

*A music lover discovers and becomes a fan of a modern band with a vintage sound
and reviews their latest album.*



DAWES IN 2015, LEFT TO RIGHT: TAYLOR GOLDSMITH, GRIFFIN GOLDSMITH, TAY STRATHAIRN, AND WYLIE GELBER
(PHOTO CREDIT: DAWESTHEBAND.COM)

“Good evening. I’m David Dye, and you’re listening to the World Café.”

It was a school night at my family’s Flag Pond home in fall 2011. I was a junior at Unicoi High School working on French homework and listening to the radio in my room. I had only been listening to the NPR radio program for about two months, and I found it almost by chance. Tired of the CDs my collection had to offer, I turned to the radio. My station options were limited because it was overcast. Frustrated at not being able to pick up 101.5 WQUT or 103.5 WIMZ, the classic rock stations I had adored since my mother introduced me to them as a child, I cut the dial to the end to find out exactly which stations I could pick up. The first clear station was playing a Death Cab for Cutie song I recognized from one of my older sister Amanda’s CDs. Thankful at being able to listen to a clear station, I kept listening. The station was 88.7 WNCW, a public radio station out of Spindale, North Carolina, and the program was the World Café, hosted by David Dye. I enjoyed the variety of blues, alternative, folk, and world music and began listening to the program each night from 6:00-8:00.

That evening in fall 2011 had been an average listening experience. I enjoyed songs I knew, jotted down the titles of new songs I wanted to hear again, patiently waited for the songs I didn’t like to end, and dutifully worked on conjugating the French verbs on the page in front of me. Everything was normal until an unfamiliar song started playing. The breezy sound of the guitar, the excellent drums, and heavenly sound of an organ all grabbed my attention. I appreciated the singer’s voice and the harmony vocals that kicked in at the chorus. I was amazed. When the song ended, I couldn’t wait for the host to give the name so I immediately started writing the lyrics in my notebook. After another song, David Dye commented on it and added “... and before that you heard ‘Time Spent in Los Angeles,’ by Dawes off their new album

Nothing Is Wrong.” Just one song in and I knew I wanted to hear everything this band had ever created.

The Band

Dawes is a California folk rock band known for its vintage California sound. Many critics note how much you can hear their influences, such as Jackson Browne, the Eagles, Crosby, Stills, Nash, & Young, and Warren Zevon, in their sound. The band is composed of singer, songwriter, and lead guitarist Taylor Goldsmith, his younger brother Griffin on drums, percussion, and backing vocals, bassist Wylie Gelber, and, until departing from the band for “musical differences” in September 2015, keyboardist and backing vocalist Tay Strathairn. The band formed from the aftermath of previous band Simon Dawes, an alternative band that consisted of Taylor, Wylie, Blake Mills, and Stuart Johnson. Dawes is known for their superb harmony vocals and instrumentation skills. During 2011 keyboardist Alex Casnoff filled in for Tay, who had a previous engagement to tour with Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeroes. On the band’s current tour, guitarist Duane Betts and unofficial keyboardist Lee Pardini accompany the Goldsmith brothers and Wylie.

Dawes’ Discography:

North Hills, 2009

11 tracks, running time: 54:56

Nothing Is Wrong, 2011

11 tracks, running time: 51:49

Stories Don’t End, 2013

12 tracks, running time: 51:10

All Your Favorite Bands, 2015

9 tracks, running time: 47:51

Over the group’s seven-year existence, the group has played major music festivals like Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, the Newport Folk Festival, Austin City Limits and Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion. The band has also made television appearances, including *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*, *Conan*, *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live*,

and six appearances on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. The band has filmed an episode of *Austin City Limits* and an episode of *Guitar Center Sessions*.

The band has also earned some famous friends and admirers. Jackson Browne sang on their second album and asked them to tour with him in 2011. Dawes later made an appearance on Jackson Browne's 2014 record *Standing in the Breach*. Robbie Robertson also hired them as his touring band in 2011 after Taylor sang backing vocals on one of his singles. The band played on John Fogerty's 2013 album *Wrote A Song for Everyone*. Dawes opened for Bob Dylan during his 2013 tour. They have toured with Mumford & Sons as part of Mumford's "Gentlemen of the Road Stopover" tours. They played on "Christmas in L.A.," The Killers' annual charity Christmas song for 2013. The band also toured with breakout artist Hozier in 2015.

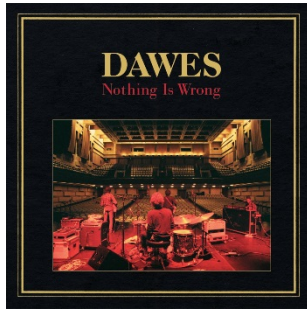
Known for their incredible live sound, at any given moment Dawes is usually on tour either domestically or internationally. I unfortunately have never been able to see them live due to conflicting dates, but numerous fans generously post footage from concerts on YouTube. One can see from a quick scan of the audiences that while there are many younger fans, a lot of the band's fans are in the 40+-age range. These fans appreciate the seriousness of the band and their fantastic sound that evokes the music the fans listened to in the 1960s and 1970s.

North Hills, Nothing Is Wrong, and Stories Don't End: The Previous Records

The band's 2009 debut *North Hills*, with its hushed volume and recorded-in-one-take tracks, feels like you're in the studio room with the band as they're playing it. You can hear the band trying to find their sound.



(Photo Credit: dawestheband.com)



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dawestheband.com)

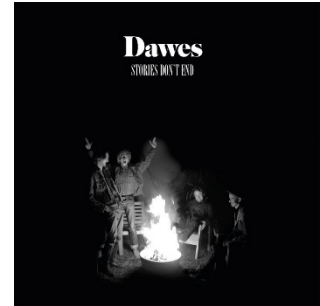
Their second album, 2011's *Nothing Is Wrong*, stepped slightly away from the folk rock sound to incorporate more of a roots rock vibe.

As with *North Hills*, the album was recorded live to tape and has the same feeling of being in the studio with the band. *Nothing Is Wrong* secured the band's first appearance on the U.S. Billboard album charts.

The musicians' skills shine on this record even more than on the first record.

2013's *Stories Don't End* marked several changes to the band's recording method. It was recorded in Asheville, NC, making it the first album recorded outside the band's home state of California. It was also the first record released on their own record label, HUB Records.

The band also recruited a new producer. Instead of going with *North Hills* and *Nothing Is Wrong* producer Jonathan Wilson, the band hired



(Photo Credit:
dawestheband.com)

Jacquire King, a three-time Grammy winning producer known for his work with artists such as Tom Waits, Modest Mouse, and Kings of Leon. This album has a more polished sound, and (when compared with the first two albums) one gets the sense that this album's tracks were probably recorded and rerecorded, with doses of overdub here and there. The album is good and fans like the songs, but many fans argued that with the audible production changes the album just didn't sound "Dawes" enough. After all, this is a band known for sounding great live, so it isn't that much of a stretch to imagine that the use of overdub and studio tweaks left a bad sound in some fans' ears.

All Your Favorite Bands



(Photo Credit:
dawestheband.com)

The band released their most recent album, *All Your Favorite Bands*, in 2015. It was recorded in Nashville, TN with the help of producer David Rawlings, best known for his work with Gillian Welch.

The album gets back to the band's live sound quality. The songs sound as if you're sitting and listening to them play the songs all the way through.

The songs on this album represent some of Taylor Goldsmith's strongest songwriting. The theme of the songs revolve around the aftermath of a breakup. He presents honest imagery in the songs and the songs feel relatable.

The album opens with "Things Happen," which was also the album's first single. The video features an actor portraying an L.A. street performer dressed as a *Sgt. Pepper*-era Beatle trying to find his place in the L.A. scene. The band members pop up with Taylor dressed as a Charlie Chaplin impersonator, Wylie as an Elvis impersonator, Griffin as a plastic bucket drummer, and Tay as a Marilyn Monroe impersonator.

All Your Favorite Bands Track Listing

1. "Things Happen"	4:03
2. "Somewhere Along the Way"	5:39
3. "Don't Send Me Away"	4:54
4. "All Your Favorite Bands"	3:35
5. "I Can't Think About It Now"	6:15
6. "To Be Completely Honest"	4:43
7. "Waiting For Your Call"	4:09
8. "Right On Time"	4:48
9. "Now That It's Too Late, Maria"	9:45
Total Running Time	47:51

The song itself explains that some things, like a failing relationship, just happen, and "that's all they ever do."

The next song, "Somewhere Along the Way," tracks the progression of a relationship from the beginning to its end. From the beginning where the person of the speaker's affection is his "lullaby personified," to the middle where the relationship "just lost its fun," to the end where

the speaker “learned to smile again” after she leaves, the song plots the rise and fall of a relationship with emotional clarity. Goldsmith closes the song on a hopeful note: “Somewhere along the way/ Things will turn out just fine/ I know it’s true this time.”

In “Don’t Send Me Away,” the album’s third song, the speaker pleads with his former girlfriend to not give up on him. He affirms that “this is where [he’s] supposed to be,” and that she has no idea the



*DAWES IN 2015, LEFT TO RIGHT: TAYLOR GOLDSMITH, GRIFFIN GOLDSMITH, WYLIE GELBER, AND TAY STRATHAIRN
(PHOTO CREDIT: DAWESTHEBAND.COM)*

emotional toll it would have on him if she dumped him. The incredible instrumentation of the track steadily builds up to a gorgeous solo by Taylor.

“All Your Favorite Bands” became the album’s second single with a video featuring musician friends like John McCauley of Deer Tick, Matt Vasquez of Delta Spirit, Gillian Welch, Brandon Flowers, and Shovels & Rope lip-synching along. The track is probably the sweetest breakup song ever. Taylor wishes his former flame well and wishes her nothing but the fine things in life, most notably that all of her favorite bands stay together. The general singalong vibe of the track quickly made it a favorite amongst fans.

“I Can’t Think About It Now” is the fifth song on the album and it is one of my favorites. Almost immediately, the listener knows this is a departure from the lightheartedness of “All Your Favorite Bands.” The speaker questions both his life and what is around him. He

acknowledges that “time just keeps on slipping through [his] fingers,” and it is so frustrating that he can’t even bring himself to think about it. The instrumental break in the middle of the track is nothing short of phenomenal, and Griffin’s drums on this particular track work to show just how accomplished he is as a drummer.

In “To Be Completely Honest,” the speaker describes his ex-girlfriend as “the fading signal that would slip through the static/ For a station that I never could find.” He expresses that it still feels like she never left, making it hard to actually move on.

“Waiting for Your Call” is the only slip up for this fan on the record. The speaker sings about waiting for his ex to call him back “after her need to stray” and remaining in place “as [he’s] always been.” Sounding more like a bonus track a buyer would be rewarded with for buying the album at a sponsored store, the track is unnecessarily slow and mopey.

Thankfully, the band picks the pieces back up with the next track. “Right on Time” is one of the standout songs on the album. As with many of the songs, this track shows the speaker reflecting on the relationship. Unlike the other tracks, however, the song really shows the dark emotional feeling behind it. The instrumentation on this track is some of the best on the album.

The album closes with the nine minute long understated beauty of a jam “Now That It’s Too Late, Maria.” Like the opening track, the tune states that neither party is solely involved in the breakup; it was just an eventual mutual event. The song shows the speaker reflecting on the relationship in a restaurant, walking in the streets, and spending time in the city. He ponders the idea of the pair being fine in the long run and being able to look back and laugh together.

Instrumentation in the middle and end of the song mirror Goldsmith’s lyrical ramble. The speaker continues, saying that “There will always be a part of you that’s with me/ And you sure as hell had better feel the same” until he closes with the line “There is no one here to blame.”

Bottom line: while some critics have said that this record is just more of the same of Dawes' 1960s & 1970s-sounding California rock, the fans have been able to note that the band is reflecting their musical roots while also honing their own sound in the process. *All Your Favorite Bands* shows a band best representing the way they sound live. Having been a fan for five years now, this allows me to confidently say that this is the band's strongest and best offering yet. This is a band getting better and better with each album, and I can't wait to see what is next.



DAWES PERFORMING AT THE ACE THEATRE IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA IN 2016. LEFT TO RIGHT: DUANE BETTS, TAYLOR GOLDSMITH, LEE PARDINI, WYLIE GELBER, AND GRIFFIN GOLDSMITH (PHOTO CREDIT: MAURICO ALVARADO, WWW.MUSIC.MXDWN.COM/)

Author's Note

Kayla Hensley grew up in Flag Pond, TN. She is an English major at East Tennessee State University pursuing teacher licensure. She has been a music fan for as long as she can remember, and she appreciates a variety of genres. She is always on the hunt for new music.
