



No pun intended 浮華散盡

Singer-songwriter Jason Mraz ditches his trademark wordplay for a softer and simpler sound on his latest album *Yes!*, writes Dorothy So

唱作歌手 Jason Mraz 在最新專輯《Yes!》中捨棄玩弄文字的俏皮曲風，用音樂感動歌迷，Dorothy So 細訴箇中轉變

Before his Grammy-nominated single *I'm Yours* became the most-played song of 2008, Jason Mraz was known in coffeehouse circles as the musical wunderkind who delivered brazen verses with his buttery voice. In the 12 years since his major-label debut with *Waiting for My Rocket to Come*, the California-based troubadour has matured into a very different artist. He's grown up and mellowed out, and it shows in his music.

Instead of the rapid-fire wordplay that fuelled his previous works, Mraz's fifth studio album *Yes!* meanders slowly through lilting acoustic melodies. At best, the results are lush and beautiful, as in the gently soaring *Love Someone* and the sitar-accompanied *Long Drive*. At worst, his efforts translate into mawkish ballads such as the bleary-eyed *Out of My Hands*.

There are moments when the fun, old-school Mr A-Z re-emerges: *Hello, You Beautiful Thing* sees him playing once again with polysyllabic rhymes and reggae beats. Meanwhile, the up-tempo *Everywhere* benefits from the energetic harmonies of female folk-rock group Raining Jane and injects a much-needed sense of levity into the otherwise slow-moving tracklist.

Yes! may lack the tongue-in-cheek punch that defined Mraz's early career but the stripped-down production allows the singer's ultra-smooth vocals to take centre stage. This is ultimately the album's biggest strength and a solid sign of Mraz's growth as an artist.

早在格林美提名歌曲 (*I'm Yours*) 成為 2008 年最受歡迎的金曲之一前，Jason Mraz 已以獨立歌手身份在咖啡店演唱，以溫柔動人的歌聲唱出大膽露骨的歌詞，被樂迷譽為音樂神童。自從 12 年前加入著名唱片公司，推出首張專輯《*Waiting for My Rocket to Come*》以來，這位定居加州的歌手日漸成長，跟出道時相比已截然不同。年歲增長令他成熟起來，個性更加從容不迫，這些改變也反映在他的音樂之中。

有別於他以往作品裡常見的密集式歌詞，Mraz 的第五張專輯《*Yes!*》以輕快悠揚的木結他旋律為主，氣氛閒適自在。整張專輯的效果讚譽參半，精采之處華麗動聽，例如溫柔而激情的 (*Love Someone*)，以及印度西塔琴伴奏的 (*Long Drive*)。失色之處是部分慢歌的演繹過於煽情，例子包括讓人昏昏欲睡的 (*Out of My Hands*)。

新碟的歌曲中仍會找到 Mraz 昔日喜歡玩弄文字的特色，例如在 (*Hello, You Beautiful Thing*) 裡，他就再次運用多音節押韻和雷鬼音樂節拍。此外，與女子民謠搖滾組合 Raining Jane 合唱的 (*Everywhere*) 節奏輕快，洋溢朝氣活力，為這張以慢歌為主的專輯加添不少活力。

《*Yes!*》也許少了 Mraz 初出道時那些嬉皮笑臉卻精闢的歌詞，但捨棄這些花巧的修飾後，更能突顯他的溫柔聲線。這正是新專輯最大的優點，同時也是 Mraz 在演藝生涯中成長的明證。



Jason Mraz takes it slow on his new album

Jason Mraz 在新專輯中更顯從容

