

# Cathartic comeback

## 撫慰心靈

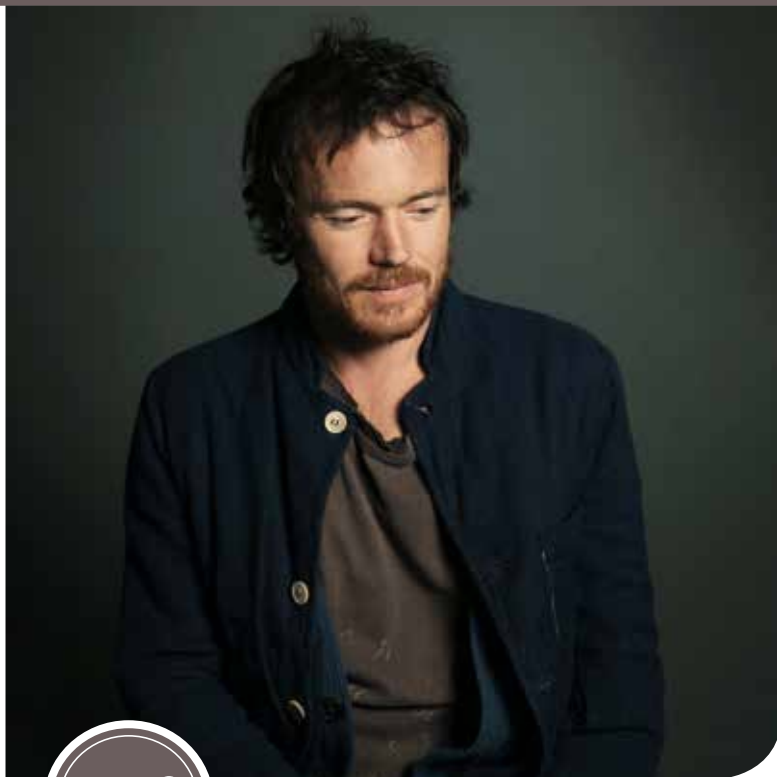
After a lengthy hiatus, Damien Rice returns with a dynamic new album about coming to terms with past conflicts, writes Dorothy So

Dorothy So認為，睽違歌壇多年的 Damien Rice 藉由推出感情澎湃的全新專輯，撫去昔日的傷痛

**D**amien Rice has no problems baring his soul. In his first two albums, he let listeners in on painful heartbreaks (*Cannonball*) and tales of betrayal (*9 Crimes*), and even overshared some uncomfortably intimate thoughts (*Accidental Babies*). But after an eight-year hiatus from the studio, the Irish singer-songwriter has come to the realisation that emotional scars are best soothed with a dose of self-awareness.

This newfound sense of personal clarity defines Rice's latest release, *My Favourite Faded Fantasy*. It's his first record since splitting with long-time band-mate and muse Lisa Hannigan and her departure has no doubt inspired several songs, including the haunting title track. Hannigan's waiflike vocals are sorely missed but her absence also frees Rice to explore new sonic avenues, from his own fragile falsetto that opens up the album to the four-minute instrumental outro of *It Takes a Lot to Know a Man*.

Thematically, the album is Rice's attempt to reconcile feelings of regret and regeneration – a dynamic that's reflected in the ebb and flow of *Long Long Way*. This balance doesn't come easy though, as he reveals in the ethereal breakup ballad *Colour Me In*. Like so many songs on the album, the track starts with a quiet, melancholic melody that swells into a cathartic coda backed by orchestral strings. It is a bittersweet moment but reassures us that there's always a light, even at the end of the longest, most frustrating tunnel.



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**Healed heart:**  
Damien Rice finds peace in *My Favourite Faded Fantasy*

療癒情傷：Damien Rice 的新作《My Favourite Faded Fantasy》讓他找到內心的平靜



**D**amien Rice 從不介意將自己的靈魂赤裸裸地曝露於人前。他在首兩張專輯中，透過一曲〈Cannonball〉讓樂迷感受到何謂傷心欲絕；藉著〈9 Crimes〉細訴被背叛的故事，甚至以一曲〈Accidental Babies〉毫無保留地分享一些令人臉紅心跳的私密心事。但在暫別錄音室八年後，這位愛爾蘭創作歌手終於明白，坦然面對自己，便是撫平情感傷疤的最佳辦法。

Rice 近期豁然開朗的心態，於其最新專輯《My Favourite Faded Fantasy》作品中清晰可見。這張專輯是他與合作多年的搭檔兼靈感女神 Lisa Hannigan 拆夥後的首張大碟，這位親密戰友的離開，亦成為其中多首歌曲的靈感，包括令人難忘的點題歌曲〈My Favourite Faded Fantasy〉。Hannigan 輕柔細膩的聲線固然令人懷念，但沒有了她伴隨左右，Rice 更勇於嘗試新的聲音領域，不論是他以假音為新專輯揭開序幕，或是在〈It Takes a Lot to Know a Man〉曲末以長達四分鐘的樂器演奏為歌曲作結，均可見其用心。

就主題而言，Rice 在《My Favourite Faded Fantasy》這張專輯中，嘗試將悔不當初及浴火重生兩種複雜的情感共冶一爐，這在高低跌宕的〈Long Long Way〉中得到充分發揮。至於讓人柔腸寸斷的情歌〈Colour Me In〉，更顯示出要將這兩種情感拿捏得當並非易事。〈Colour Me In〉跟專輯中的多首歌曲一樣，以靜謐憂傷的旋律為開端，尾聲則以弦樂奏出傾瀉的情感。儘管這樣的編曲令人聽得百感交集，但這亦提醒我們，即使是最漫長難熬的漆黑隧道，盡頭之處總會迎來光明。