

Album review 音樂評選

## Rave music 狂歌熱唱

Indie darlings Belle and Sebastian give listeners a reason to dance with their first studio album in five years, writes Dorothy So

Dorothy So形容，受樂迷寵愛的獨立樂隊Belle & Sebastian，五年來首次推出的錄音室專輯，令人鼓舞

Until the early 2000s, indie band Belle and Sebastian churned out almost exclusively jangly acoustic numbers designed for sensitive souls. Since then, the Glaswegian group's voice has expanded to incorporate faster tempos, slicker production and broader musical styles. With the release of the band's ninth studio album, this slow but steady evolution may have finally reached its tipping point.

As the name suggests, *Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance* is an upbeat record amped up with confident swagger and glossy EDM trimmings. It sounds a world apart from the group's 1996 debut *Tigermilk*, but is still essentially shaped around the band's greatest strengths – perceptive lyrics and melodies crafted with scholarly precision.

Tracks are given ample breathing space, including synth-heavy disco single *The Party Line*, which layers frontman Stuart Murdoch's magnetic vocals over pulsing bass and percussion. Some songs should have been left on the cutting-room floor (particularly the dated, seven-minute Europop number *Enter Sylvia Plath*) but these stumbles don't detract from the album's full-bodied feel. After all, even when Murdoch opens up about his personal struggles with chronic fatigue syndrome on opener *Nobody's Empire*, he does so over sun-drenched hooks and harmonies. It's an exultant sound and a fitting introduction to the band's triumphant comeback.

Photos: Belle and Sebastian: Søren Sølkær



Scottish band Belle and Sebastian step into new sonic terrain

蘇格蘭樂隊Belle and Sebastian邁步踏進新的聲音領域

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獨立樂隊Belle & Sebastian曾經為一眾感性樂迷創作了大量風格獨特的不插电歌曲，直至2000年代初，這支來自格拉斯哥的樂隊開始納入節奏明快、製作流麗及音樂風格更廣泛的作品。隨著他們推出第九張錄音室大碟，這個平穩的轉變可能終於到達頂峰。

《Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance》顧名思義是一張節奏明快的專輯，填滿自信和響亮的電子跳舞音樂裝飾音。雖然風格與樂隊1996年首張大碟《Tigermilk》有天淵之別，但本質上仍然圍繞著樂隊的強項，就是歌詞和旋律都細膩深刻，拿捏恰到好處。

專輯的歌曲為樂迷留有充裕空間喘息，例如重電子合成風格的士高單曲《The Party Line》，用主音Stuart Murdoch的磁性聲線覆蓋著低音結他及敲擊樂的節奏。儘管部分歌曲不該收錄在專輯中（尤其是過時的七分鐘歐洲流行曲《Enter Sylvia Plath》），但這些失誤無損專輯的整體感覺。畢竟，即使Murdoch在第一首歌曲《Nobody's Empire》中公開自己對抗慢性疲勞綜合症的經歷，他也是以充滿陽光朝氣的技巧與和聲去演繹。這實在是一張令人鼓舞的專輯，為樂隊強勢回歸打響頭炮。