

REVIEWS

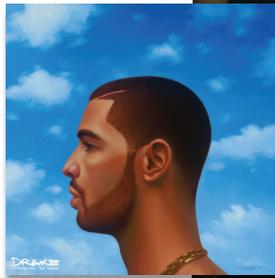
DRAKE

Nothing Was the Same

[Republic]

You can take the boy out of the teen drama, but you can't take the teen drama out of the boy. Back in the early '00s, before he got into music, Aubrey Drake Graham portrayed Jimmy Brooks on the TV series *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. Now that he's one of hip-hop's biggest stars—a kind of hybrid rapper-singer that basically chats at fans about whatever's on his mind—he remains as self-absorbed as your average high school student. That Drake is rich and famous only intensifies his navel-gazing, and for as much as he boasts about cars and women, he's never seemed comfortable in his own skin.

In that sense, the Toronto MC's third album, *Nothing Was the Same*, is more of the same: a collection of downtempo confessionals about achieving massive success and wondering if there's more to life. Once again, Drake has partnered with longtime producer Noah "40" Shebib, whose halcyon synths and floating vocal samples position this album in some limbo between absolute nightmare and dream come true. As Drake says on "Furthest Thing," he's "somewhere between 'I want it' and 'I got it,'" and despite the prevalence of



strippers and bling, it's not the most exciting place to be.

Drake's bummed-out shtick can wear thin, but when he commits himself to really singing ("Hold On, We're Coming Home") or rapping ("Tuscan Leather"), he's a unique performer deserving of his fame. Drake knows he's special, but somehow, that doesn't make life any easier. —Kenneth Partridge

'The Toronto MC's third album is a collection of downtempo confessionals about achieving massive success and wondering if there's more to life. When he commits himself to really singing or rapping, he's a unique performer deserving of his fame.'

