

BY JOHN TAN

**A**MONG the members of One Direction, Harry Styles arguably has the most successful solo career. Since the boyband's hiatus in 2015, Styles to date has outperformed the other members in every measure as a solo artist.

His success comes as no surprise considering the singer's charisma and star power. However, his approach to stardom has been quite fascinating. Unlike his former bandmates and male predecessors like Justin Timberlake and Nick Jonas, Styles has looked to the past to craft his image.

To kickstart his solo endeavour, for instance, he emulated the sounds of the 1960s and 1970s in his self-titled debut album, *Harry Styles*. Styles then followed this up by channelling the likes of Harry Nilsson and Paul Simon in his 2019's sophomore record, *Fine Line*.

And his latest work, *Harry's House*, of course follows suit, as it is reminiscent of the 1970s. In fact, he borrows influence from artistes like The Brothers Johnson - sampling their 1978 hit, *Ain't We Funkin' Now*. He even pays a nod to Japanese musical veteran Haruomi Hosono's 70's record - *Hosono's House*.

"The album is named after Haruomi Hosono, he had an album in the '70s called *Hosono's House* and I spent that chunk in Japan; I heard that record and I was like 'I love that. It'd be really fun to make a record called *Harry's House*,'" said Styles in his Apple Music interview.

**Further growth**

Although Styles very much draws influence from the 70s, his incorporation does not overshadow his musical abilities. It merely lends him the opportunity to further showcase his versatility and maturity as an artiste.

For example, with *Harry's House*, we get to see Style in a new light sonically.

Several tracks indeed mark his entrance into new territory. Tracks like *As It Was* and *Late Night Talking* see him playfully explore synth-pop and R&B. Though I must admit it took a while for the former to rub off on me. Initially, I was confused as to why Styles picked it as the lead.

But after a few listens, its vulnerability and production eventually caught on. *Daylight* (no, it is not about Taylor Swift) is another highlight on the record. Its simplicity and whimsical nature give it the potential to be the next



For *Harry's House*, Styles draws inspiration from the 70s - COLUMBIA RECORDS

Styles scored his third number one on Billboard 200 Chart with *Harry's House*. - THE LATE LATE SHOW WITH JAMES CORDEN

# Channelling that 70s Style(s)

» Harry Styles further ventures into the past with his new record, *Harry's House*

big summer ballad hit.

Styles's growth as a songwriter is also demonstrated in this new CD. *Matilda*, which is the seventh track, in particular, may contain Styles' most emotional and in-depth lyrics to date. This is because we see Styles cleverly and gently tackle the issue of generational trauma.

My favourite part is the chorus, where Styles sings: "You can let it go/you can throw a party full of everyone you know/and not invite your family 'cause they never showed you love/You don't have to be sorry for leaving and growing up."

**Sonically cohesive**

In addition to the 70's throwback and Styles' musical growth, the LP also strikes a chord for its coherent production. The arrangement is not all over the place. As a matter of fact, the laidback and consistent nature of the LP makes it easy for listeners to stop by for a tea with Styles.

Even if you are not a fan, listening through the LP will not leave you feeling confused or agitated - an occurrence that is unfortunately common among pop stars.

Styles has just released his third studio album, *Harry's House*. - HANNA MOON



**Vaguely personal**

While vulnerability is a common theme throughout the LP, *Harry's House* fails at maintaining it consistently. Yes, though tracks like *Matilda* and *Boyfriends* do earn Styles hefty points for his songwriting, that sense of personal touch was sometimes missing throughout the record.

In other words, *Harry's House* did not provide a structured and consistent glimpse into Styles' personal life, as compared to his two previous records which gave insights into the artiste's then state of life. As a fan, I would have liked to get to know him more through his songs.

**Good step forward**

Despite the inconsistency, *Harry's House* still marks a well-thought step forward for Styles. The album is proof that Styles is much more than a member of One Direction. Not only can he command his own spotlight, but this album also proves that he is among this generation's best artistes.

And considering how the album's cycle has just started, I am pretty sure *Harry's House* is only going to further set new milestones for Styles' career.

