

Emo Pop Band Hello, Atlantic Sets Cynical Thoughts to Bright Melodies with “Aroma”: This musical duo is challenging listeners to change their tune about existential frustrations



The breathy and clear techno chords opening this track definitely surprised me, given that the premise of this song is lyrically a bit depressing without the musical context. But the paradoxical mix of the bright with the dark, and joy with despair, brings a unique flair to this duo’s newest release.

Fronted by vocalist and guitarist Ian Dillon and supported by bassist Eric Sparfven, Hello, Atlantic is one of Rhode Island’s most inventive bands to hit the local sound waves. With a discography sounding

similar to that of acts like Panic! At The Disco, My Chemical Romance, and Grayscale in energy and tone, "Aroma" is a step away from those vibes with a much greater emphasis on techno beats and vocal effects over the guitars and the more typical pop punk sonic tropes previously emphasized.

Toeing the line between alternative rock and third-wave disco, "Aroma" boasts an emphasis on Motown-inspired rhythms, beats and styles. Sonically, it's very rich and upbeat, building a tense contrast with the overall message of the song, which, according to the band, is "a cynical take on life and existence. Nothing matters in the grand scheme of things. We're all gonna explode in outer space, so do what you'd like."

That message comes through very clearly in the chorus, during which Ian sings: "It's anarchy, and blasphemy, cleanse it with gasoline." Functioning as a commentary about the world as a whole and the state of uncertainty that is so prevalent these days, I find this song to be a powerfully accurate portrayal of the human condition. I especially enjoyed the poeticism of taking something destructive (gasoline) and transforming it into a sort of anointing oil in the lyrical narrative. Additionally, I found the opening verse to be especially relatable: "Do you wanna be happy / 'cause you don't know who you wanna be / and you don't remember anything." Everyone feels like they don't belong at least one time or another, and if you're anything like me still trying to find your place in the world, these lyrics are super relatable.

From the musical side of things, I definitely appreciated the ambient build of the drone-like shadowy riffs floating in and out of the background. It's an immersive experience that makes the listener feel instantly heard and understood. The vocal melody is also extremely catchy with easy-to-replicate phrasing that will stick in anyone's head for days on end. There are also many layers hiding in between the dynamic mix of the song, some of which are very subtle but no less important - very much like the layered styles of techno-pop music as heard in the full Waterparks discography, or the most recent Paramore album. Coincidentally, all these acts have taken a similar contextual stance on bringing about that provocative mix of happy-sounding musicality with the darker lyrics and ideas. It is that tension that makes listeners feel heard, understood and validated. It's an interesting vibe for sure, but given the way it still undeniably fits with the band's back catalogue of songs (which definitely still has these elements present albeit in smaller doses), I have no doubt that the forthcoming releases after this single will be just as captivating.

Hello, Atlantic is probing the deepest insecurities and discomforts of their fans through their music, bringing everyone together in their shared struggles - a truly beautiful thing. You can listen to "Aroma" on September 11, and to stay up-to-date on new music and connect with Ian and Eric, follow their social media profiles @helloatlantici and their YouTube channel [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjHEcIhANPjiZjma1Of1bmA/featured):

[youtube.com/channel/UCjHEcIhANPjiZjma1Of1bmA/featured](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjHEcIhANPjiZjma1Of1bmA/featured)