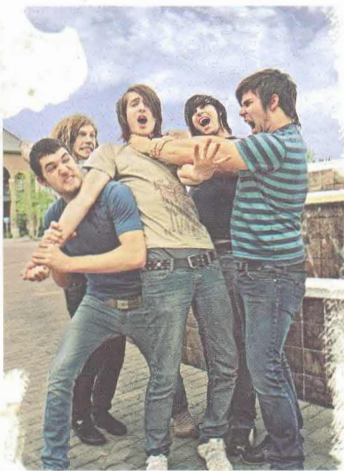


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+mayday parade



Imagine briefly, for argument's sake, that the Sunshine State could make its own decisions. Let your mind flutter, and pretend that it was a breathing thing, full of preferences. I think if it could choose a last meal, it would probably be seafood. If it could choose a favorite TV character, it would obviously be that silly cartoon mouse. And if Florida could stand up, and choose its own soundtrack, it would probably be Florida natives Mayday Parade's new album *A Lesson In Romanticism*. These pop-punk rising stars probably wouldn't have always been Florida's first choice. In fact, the band had to go through to some pretty extreme lengths to get their music heard. "We actually had this idea to follow Warped Tour last summer", says lead singer Derek Sanders. "There were, like, 15,000 copies of our EP press. We just walked around with backpacks outside and just sold to the people waiting in line, and we ended up selling a ton of them. It was great." The figure "a ton" actually ended up being right around 11,000 albums before the band caught the eye of Fearless Records. After taking control of the production and marketing of the EP, Fearless helped the EP break the 20,000 sales mark. And now, these five Floridians are back with their first full length album. "The cliché thing to say is that we've matured," says Sanders. "For us, that's how I honestly felt, ya know?" "All in all, we're all just super excited about it and super happy with it." As well they should be. The album is a really great listen from beginning to end. The first track, entitled "Jamie All Over", is a cover of a song that some of the members of Mayday played in another band when they were younger. According to Sanders, the song tells the story of a dream had by Jason Lancaster, a former member of the band. "He really had that dream",

Sanders promised. "It's an extremely personal song, but we felt like we really wanted to take it on." It's a great opening track that tells a romantic story of a trip to somewhere that's known for its temporary romances: good ol' Vegas baby. But it's not the kind of song you'd expect about a place known for shotgun weddings and big, bright lights. It's a true romantic tale which, given the name of the album, makes it a perfect opener. Providing a sweet 1-2 punch to start the album is the quick paced "Black Cat". The song keeps you going, as it tells the story of a relationship that rises and dies on the back lots of Hollywood. And with a chorus that any eccentric poet would love, the tune manages to cram so many amazing images into brief passages that you almost pass out. A perfect example comes in the chorus: "You're like a black cat with a black backpack full of fireworks, and you're gonna burn the city down right now." While the line is quite abstract, almost to the point of complete lunacy, it seems as if Mayday crafted to be that way. "That song's basically about jealousy," says Sanders. "We thought it would be a cool spin to put on it. Putting it on a movie set makes it a little different, ya know?" It's definitely different. The whole album is different from most of the things you've heard before. It runs the gambit of tones, tempos, and timing. It lifts you up only to bring you down, then only to shoot you right back up again. It seems fitting for these Floridians to have constructed an album so full of twists and turns that it would fit right into that magical little section of Orlando we know as Disney World. And to tell the truth, I think Disney would be proud to have them. I love the album. They throw a lot of different concepts at you, without beating you over the head with them. *A Lesson In Romanticism* is beautiful in its images, and complex in how it paints them. It's worth checking out. If it could, I'm sure Florida would thank you.