

POP MUSIC SEPTEMBER 4, 2017 ISSUE

LCD SOUNDSYSTEM IS EVEN OLDER

Known for its old-versus-young frivolity, James Murphy's band is now mourning greater losses.



By Hua Hsu

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LCD Soundsystem's career ended quite magically, in 2011, with a concert at Madison Square Garden. At the end of the night, after an almost decade-long run during which the group changed what both dance music and rock bands could do, balloons fell from the ceiling, strangers hugged one another, and devoted fans cried. The next year, a documentary, "[Shut Up and Play the Hits](#)," captured the concert's staging and immediate aftermath, and also James Murphy, the group's sole full-time member, having long, thoughtful conversations about the musical legacy he was leaving behind. In 2014, a lavish boxed set arrived to further commemorate that glorious last hurrah. Murphy, who is now forty-seven, retired to a life of seeming leisure, opening a wine bar, roasting coffee beans, and indulging in one-off, prestige musical experiments involving the U.S. Open and the New York City subways.



There is still some old-versus-young frivolity, but the new album feels heavy. Illustration by Nick Little

When Murphy announced, in January, 2016, that he and his principal collaborators, the keyboardist Nancy Whang and the percussionist Pat Mahoney, would reunite, many fans were excited but unsurprised, presuming that they had simply decided to cash in on their legacy—it was the kind of jaded response that had been conditioned by the group’s knowing, punkish music. But there were some people for whom the band, whose anthems about getting older and feeling younger had served as benchmarks for personal growth, belonged in the past.

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