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Justin Timberlake The 20/20 Experience Review

Album. Released 2013.



BBC Review

Timberlake's third solo album is all mood and no tension, exclusively foreplay fare.

Christina Lee 2013

With his first new music in seven years, Justin Timberlake acts a suave frontman to a Whispers-inspired ensemble. When he asks, Jay-Z gets up from his seat. Timberlake prides himself on his ability to command an audience, and to damning expectations.

With his 2002 solo debut *Justified*, he broke away from 'N Sync and into mainstream RnB circles; on its follow-up, 2006's *FutureSex/LoveSounds*, he channelled Prince as he "brought sexy back".

Third album *The 20/20 Experience* dazzles, but it also fails to take hold because Timberlake approached it like a big-budget film: a slew of special effects, but little else.

To its credit, *20/20* does provide an escape from our own, Harlem Shake-soundtracked reality. Lead producer Timbaland cues horns and clinking glasses to illustrate truffle-season opulence.

When Timberlake breaks from this glittering charmed life, he runs to *20/20*'s most exhilarating moments. Don't Hold the Wall is a dank, Bollywood-inspired corridor, while Tunnel Vision finds attempt to fixate on The One turning into a dizzy spell. He sustains his notes as if he's trying to steady his breath, but he keeps losing control.

Tracks

- 1 Pusher Love Girl
- 2 Suit & Tie
- 3 Don't Hold the Wall
- 4 Strawberry Bubblegum
- 5 Tunnel Vision
- 6 Spaceship Coupe
- 7 That Girl
- 8 Let the Groove Get In
- 9 Mirrors

10 Blue Ocean Floor

Clips taken from original discs may contain strong language.

Tracklistings come from [MusicBrainz](#). You can add or edit information about [The 20/20 Experience](#) at [musicbrainz.org](#). Find out more about our use of this data, and also our policy on [profanity](#)

Release Details

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RCA	
DATE	COUNTRY
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Digital Media	

Most songs are seven to eight minutes long, presumably because our hero falls in love and then indulges in lust. However, *20/20* often segues these prolonged outros, inspiring Timberlake to drive already extended metaphors to the ground.

When the sparkling Strawberry Bubblegum recedes into a 60s-style, keyboard-driven throwback, Timberlake adds that he's her blueberry lollipop. In Spaceship Coupe, after his voice has already creaked into falsetto come-hithers and the song has climaxed at an electric guitar solo, Timbaland launches female moans like wind-up toys.

With his return to music, Timberlake wanted to stir up anticipation with the feel of a major Hollywood release. Unfortunately, most of *20/20* falls into a rut; it sets the mood, but then fails to create tension.

When Timberlake released *Mirrors*, critics interpreted its eight-minute length as a sign of ambition. But in full context, *20/20*'s penultimate track reveals itself to be one of this album's simplest. It works, because it hinges on a stunning realisation: "I don't want to lose you now." By then, it's too late.

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