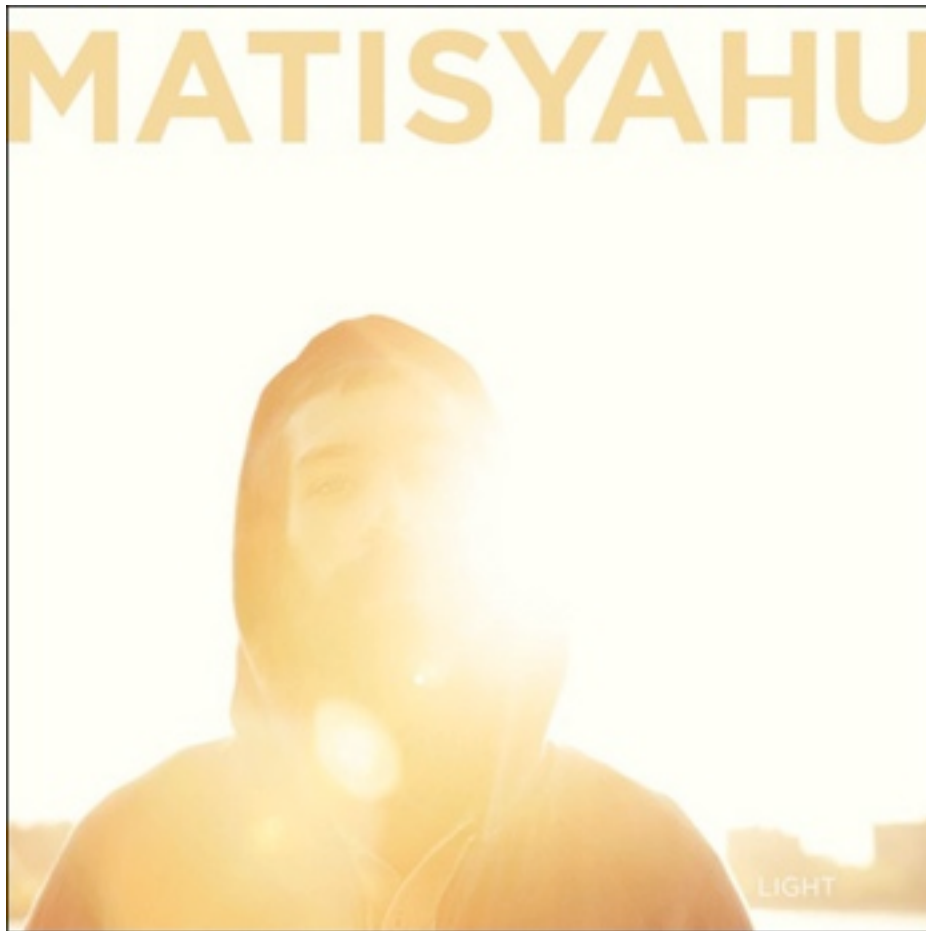


## Matisyahu Shines a New 'Light'

by: [Alan Zeitlin](#) | Sep 29 2009

If the jury was out after "Youth," to see if Matisyahu could cement himself as an artist that could cross over into mainstream, the verdict is now in. Simply put, Matisyahu's new album is light years beyond his previous CD's. No pun intended...ok, pun intended.



With infectious beats, hooks that could catch a 300-pound-fish and varying song styles, "Light" breaks new ground with production that is top-notch and three songs that come at you like a firestorm. The opening track, "Smash Lies," is a smash hit that would sound great blasted on the speakers of your car and on Hot 97 FM. The vocals here display a slick swagger we haven't seen before from the Hasidic star. The chorus "Stand up/ and jump off the list," could be a call to non-conformity in the pursuit of excellence. Fittingly, the song begins with a banjo, which is surreal but killer. Hopefully, a remix of this song, where the speed is pumped up is in the works.

“We Will Walk,” has a driving power with lyrics of great determination. “We will walk until blood runs out/until my heart is burnt,” comes at us to show the singer takes his journey seriously. This theme is also echoed in “One Day,” the artist’s best song to date. The hope for an end to war is neither original nor practical, but listening to the song, there is an unmistakable groove that evokes an idealistic outlook, even if humanity is incapable of throwing down the guns and the missiles.

Matisyahu gets free-wheeling with the verse in “Escape.” “So High, So Low,” is clearest example of the Sublime style pop- rock, much due to the assistance of David Kahne, who worked with that group. “Darkness Into Light,” interestingly goes from a dance hall style verse to a rock ballad chorus. It’s good to see that Matisyahu is exploring himself and not playing it safe, though “Thunder,” would have benefited from more instrumentation. Now a bit older, and no longer a new novelty that went on late-night and rocked a crowd at Madison Square Garden when he opened for OAR some years ago, he is proving that he’s here to stay. He shows off his nuances and versatility going from a soft falsetto to a booming and bombastic bellowing. If “Live at Stubbs” was the meatball and “Youth,” a hamburger, this album is a filet minion.

“Light” concludes with a bare-bones intimate confessional called “Silence.” But this is a hot album that is sure to make a lot of noise.

Album: “Light”

Artist: Matisyahu

Grade: A

With infectious beats, catchy hooks and an anthem about peace that probably his best effort yet,

“Smash Lies,” is a smash hit with vocals displaying a slick swagger that Matisyahu hasn’t delivered before.