



Beck's beats are back. On *Guero*, his eighth album, Beck reunites with The Dust Brothers, the hip-hop producers of his Grammy award winning 1996 cd *Odelay*. Since then he has spent some time genre hopping with *Midnight Vultures*, a soul/funk experiment and 2002's *Sea Change*, his acoustic excursion into sorrow and pain. Now the "cowboy from outer space" has returned with an album of varying styles that all have one thing in common: the beat.

"Guero" is Latin slang for "white boy" and the Chicano hip hop of "Que Onda Guero" (blonde white boy) reflects the influence of his childhood, growing up in the Hispanic neighborhoods of Los Angeles. The title cut "Guero" is a fuzz guitar rocker while the moody "Broken Drum" recalls the dreamy sound of his last album. "Go it Alone" is collaboration with The White Stripes' Jack Black with a spacey chant along chorus. There's a slide guitar in "Farewell Ride", a videogame keyboard sound beginning "Girl", middle-eastern style strings accompany "Missing" and computer generated singing punctuates "Hell Yes." All of this melds with Beck's stream of consciousness lyrics and singing. Surprisingly, only a few songs employ his patented slacker style rapping.

It's a return to form, a progressive mish mash of eclectic styles. Beck is the rare artist in the position to explore new ways reinventing rock. As he says himself, everyone is using the same worn out deck of cards and he sees it as his job to deal a fresh new hand with every album.