

# LADYGUNN

# 12

featuring:

LIZZY CAPLAN

JOSS STONE

ZEDD

YEARS & YEARS

THORA BIRCH

NICOLE RICHIE

DAVID DASTMALCHIAN

ALBERT HAMMOND, JR

# BRITISH EXHAUST

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANGELO KRITIKOS



LADYGUNN #12 2015 \$9.99

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# CONTENTS

LIZZY CAPLAN

NICOLE RICHIE

BEBE REXHA

STRUCTURAL EXPERIMENTATION: CHROMAT  
 WE OUT HAIR!  
 DON'T ASK ME HOW I CAN AFFORD TO TRAVEL  
 AB SCREENWEAR  
 THE BEAUTY MANIFESTO  
 MAIN BEECHES

WAITING FOR THE MAN  
 THORA BIRCH  
 JACKIE CRUZ  
 KETHER DONOHUE  
 JULIE KLAUSNER  
 LOST HIGHWAYS  
 HEROIN SMUGGLER STORY

NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

VANESSA CARLTON

MEL JADE

MELANIE MARTINEZ

JOSS STONE

WOLF ALICE

HOLYCHILD

SHAMIR

MS MR

JESS GLYNNE

ALANA WATSON

RUBY AMANFU

## HEY DUDE

DAVID DASTMALCHIAN

YEARS & YEARS

ZEDD

ALBERT HAMMOND, JR

CODY SIMPSON

THE PINUP

# MASTHEAD

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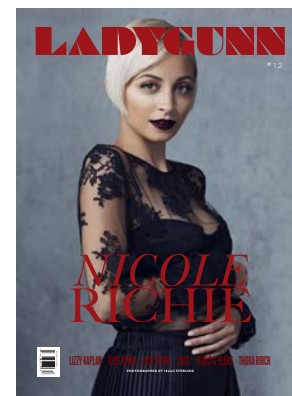
SPECIAL PROJECTS MANGER



PHOTOGRAPH ANGELO KRITIKOS



PHOTOGRAPH SHANNA FISHER



PHOTOGRAPH ISAAC STERLING

LADYGUNN

# NAMASTÉ BITCHES

Finding inner-strength and peace this year has been a both brilliant and difficult task. With so much chaos going on in my head and the world around me, just trying to stay grounded and sane became another box to check off my never-ending things-to-do list. We all go through ups and downs, dealing with crazy people, trying to find our place in the world, in relationships, basically in every capacity as human beings. No matter who you are or where you come from, we all at least have that in common. At times, I felt like I was on the brink of teetering off a tight-rope over a sea of emotions that might engulf me and I was lucky to have found solace in the beautiful group of sound confidants who surround me and helped me rise above the madness. If you don't have those people, look for them. They will come in handy in this life.

My experiences, from the wildly blissful to those unpredictable hours, are constantly teaching me new lessons. With age comes the heightened clarity of people, life and things making the trials and tribulations a bit easier to navigate. I'm starting to think before I act, reign in my temper and put out good work. The confidence and beauty that I am growing with from these actions make me excited for the future. Life can be fucking hard guys, an indisputable fact. So the best thing to do is to live out your wildest dreams with the things and people you love. Fuck anything else. If you put your mind to it in a positive way you can live just like that. The more connections I make and stories this magazine put out, the more I realize that this journey is shared with others. That makes us all less alone. I'm thrilled to see the art, change and passion that is going to come from this.

Some of my favorite moments were spent talking to the people we cover and the LADYGUNN editors about all these subjects. I immediately vibed with cover girl Bebe Rexha about life, love and our careers. This ended up being one of the most real conversations I ever had with anyone in the industry. She is so open and brilliant it felt good baring my soul to some-

one who bared theirs right back. Erica, our Music + Features Editor, spent about 8 seconds deciding if we should make her one of our cover girls. That conversation consisted of mostly, "Yeah", "DUH!", "Omg", and "I love her". Her good friend, the amazingly talented LADYGUNN soulmate, Angelo Kritikos, really captured her attitude and beauty in the awesome pictures that grace the issue. Lizzy Caplan was candid and gracious as ever. I could tell that she is the type of level-headed person that her friends and family are lucky to have. She had a way of making me feel super grounded and intelligent. A) because of her attitude, and B) because the things we got to talk about were so fun and intelligent. The pictures taken by LADYGUNN regular Shanna Fisher are some of my favorite editorial images I've seen in publishing, ever. Nicole Richie is obviously a cultural and fashion icon with a cult fan club. I can admit that I am one of her devoted fans and she more than outlived her glamour and beauty and carefree bohemian spirit. I have to admit. I wore my favorite Rodejeber dress and sandals at the shoot in hopes she might at least compliment me, but we got to bond in other ways on set, like laughing over the same jokes, random outburst and the amazing clothes that stylist team JAK came equipped with. Issac Sterling took amazing pictures that are classic and timeless.

The women featured in this issue are an ode to beauty and bad-assery. They remind me of the raw, unfiltered, fully-emotional and earnest voice that LADYGUNN began with.

Putting this issue together made me feel so much more connected with my team and our talent than ever before. When you cut through all the bullshit, you get to make a magazine from that unique point of view that has always been there. Like the voice that was never lost. Representing what we feel is true in the world, created for artists by artists, there is no other words we can use to express it besides: we love you!

YoXo / Coko



STRUCTURAL  
EXPERIMENTATION:  
**CHROMAT**



photos / Atisha Paulson  
model / Gabriela Bloomgarden @ Request  
shot @ Gansevoort, NYC  
all clothing CHROMAT  
Special thanks to Tony and Connie at Accurate Photo







# WE OUT HAIR!

photos / Brayden Olsen  
stylist / Shea Daspin  
hair + makeup / Jess Plummer  
models / Dani Miller + Chloe Mackey



Grey/turquoise bra and panties, Araks  
Turquoise turtleneck, DKNY.



Purple disc dress, House of Holland.

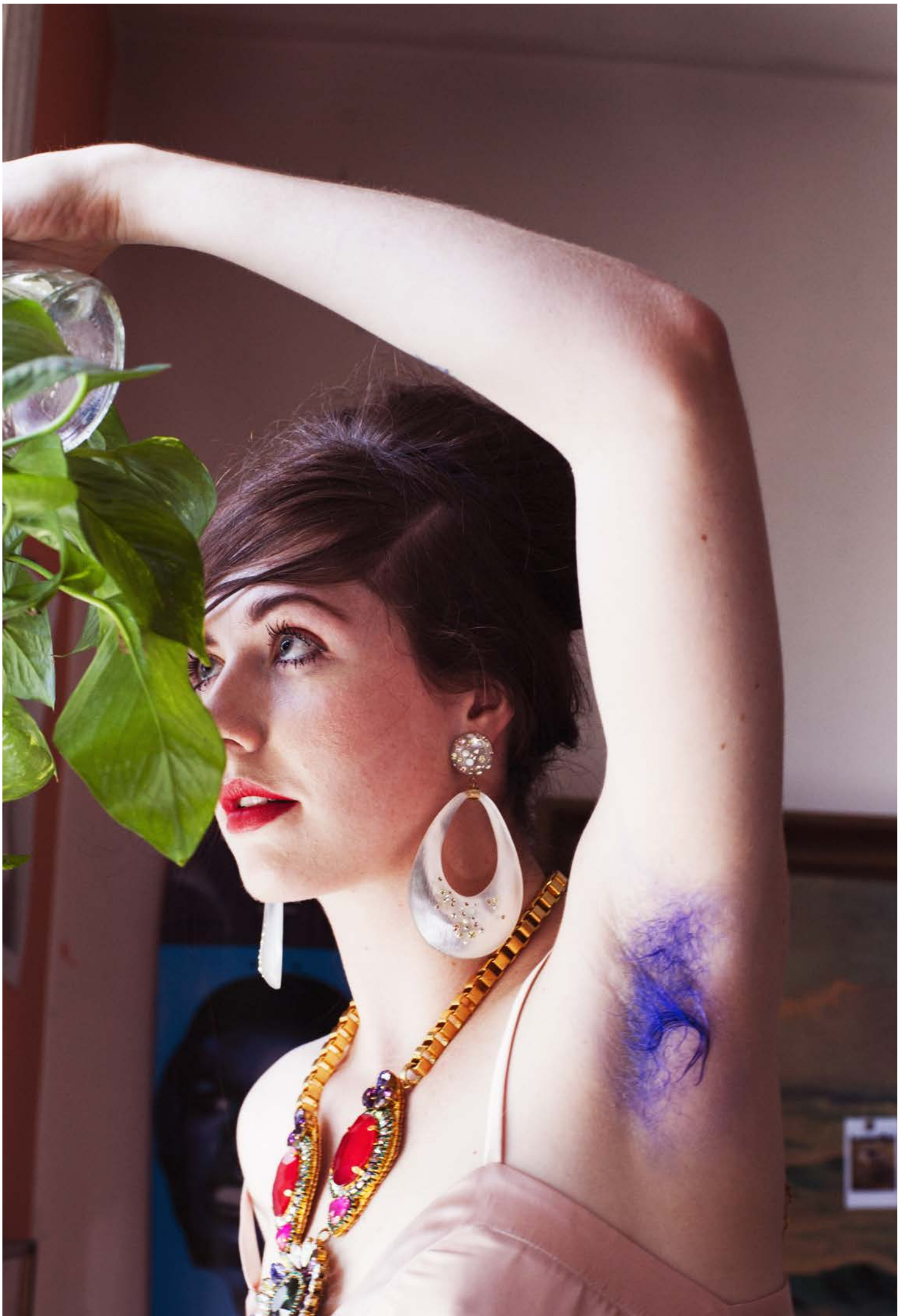


Pink slip, AraksKonstantina

Heart heels, Tzovolo.

Oversized jewel necklace on gold chain, Erickson Beamon

Lucite crystal earrings, Alexis Bittar





# DON'T ASK ME HOW I CAN AFFORD TO TRAVEL

photographer / Shelby Goldstein  
stylist / Shelby Simon  
makeup+hair / Manu Barbara  
model / Thaisa @ 40° Models



Clockwise from top left: Swimsuit, Eres  
Skirt, Novis Hat, Creatures of Comfort  
Dress, Novis Shoes, Matisse Dress, Electric Feathers  
Shoes, Matisse Top, Made in Brazil Earrings, Vintage  
This page: Jacket, Creatures of Comfort Swimsuit, Eres

# AB SCREENWEAR

*photographer + story / Spencer Kohn  
model / Tova Thomas  
shot in Marfa, TX*



Keep your ear to the ground for Ab Screenwear. After their most recent photo shoot in desert town Marfa, TX, Ab Screenwear is ready to take on the jacket market by iridescent storm. Through custom designs, available in three standard sizes, each jacket is a conceptual masterpiece.

Head designer Olya Petrova shipped her career from Moscow to New York after years of experience in PR and marketing. Her fashion design experience includes Ralph Lauren Collection, RRL and Maiyet, but her introduction to fashion was her family's fur business. The line is both a high-end fashion brand and a conceptual project for ready-to-wear future. These jackets will soon be an innovation in fashion technology-while still retaining a high-end style. The new leather jacket if you will.

When you see Ab Screenwear for the first time, you first notice the holographic panels. They metamorphose based on light hitting them and the surrounding landscapes and colors. The futuristic look creates a spectacle in any crowd. The sleeves are made with either cashmere, wool or bonded canvas, which allow for seasonal flexibility. The translucent holograph panels contain body heat better than you would think. The fabric panels breathe. There is a subtle sexiness to the design, a peek at what is underneath.

We traveled to Marfa with model Tova Thomas, of Vision Models LA. Months of planning birthed this shoot, and the product is both an art piece and a lookbook. We started with an idea of opposing forces: the future, the past and a hybrid of the two. Marfa was the perfect location, as it has recently become an art-world hot spot, attracting high profile visitors to its gallery scene and Judd installations. We stayed in the designer hotel, The Thunderbird. It was a desert oasis. Over the course of the shoot, we covered 16 locations and 2688 photos.

Olya believes that a shoot should be a full collaboration. All ideas are welcome, and we were lucky to have Tova join us. We all quickly became friends - there was not a moment of silence on the seven-hour drive into the desert. Conversation was never superficial, and this created a tone for the shoot that proved a real connection outside of a screen.

Screens were a very important reference when scouting our locations. Juxtaposing the natural environment with man-made stark-itecture is a choice made to compliment the jackets. Life happens inside and out of screens nowadays. "Our bodies are our primary interfaces for the world, so is our skin - it is the biggest organ we "own". I love the idea that our most vulnerable selves can be worn on the surface of our bodies - just like a heart on one's sleeve, except not as a metaphor anymore." -Ab







# BEAUTY 2.0: THE BEAUTY MANIFESTO | [www.thebeautymanifesto.com](http://www.thebeautymanifesto.com)

THE BEAUTY MANIFESTO is the love child of one of my favorite creative duos. Meet **Amy Strozzi**, a celebrity makeup artist, and **John Michael Fulton**, esteemed photographer and rising favorite among the starlet set. Together, the two have created a world of carefree, innovative looks that align with the standards of the modern woman. We chatted with one of our favorite creative duos about the project and where the manifesto will go next.

## WHAT IS YOUR BEAUTY MANIFESTO?

Our beauty manifesto is really that anything goes. For this particular project, there are no rules. We are simply exploring different forms of beauty, sometimes its very commercial in feel, sometimes it's experimental, sometimes it's a bit dark. I guess that's the point, beauty has no defined expression to it. You try something, it either works or it doesn't and you move on.

## HOW DID YOU PICK THE MODELS TO FEATURE ON THE SITE?

For our first few sessions we worked with girls we knew from Instagram that have either reached out to JM before, or he has met from previous castings. We needed girls who would be patient with us while we were figuring things out! We've just started shooting personalities as well...some cool musicians and artists. We really just want to work with interesting people who aren't afraid to show their face as bare as we shoot it for our opening look.

## TBM IS DESCRIBED AS A PHOTO PROJECT RATHER THAN BEAUTY BLOG, WHY IS THAT?

I'm sure I'll think of it as a beauty blog of some sort eventually. At the moment it's a side project for JM and I that allows us to practice our craft and for me, try out new products, for him, experiment with lighting & finishes.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES THE BEAUTY MANIFESTO DIFFERENT FROM A TYPICAL BEAUTY BLOG?

I don't think we even compare since we're basically just doing whatever feels right at the moment and then putting it out there. How and what we're showing today may look totally different next time. It's a work in progress for sure.

## WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO START THE BEAUTY MANIFESTO?

Originally we started TBM as a means to shoot more

in general, while at the same time making good use of all the products I always have and often don't get to use. It's a very intimate setting since we shoot in a little space in our house, sometimes it's just us and the model, or sometimes the stars align and one of our super talented friends is available for hair/styling, and it ends up being a big fun creative hang.

We really just want it to be no stress, and a good time for everyone involved.

## THE PHOTOS AND IMAGERY ARE SO BEAUTIFUL, ANY PLANS TO EXPAND THE PROJECT INTO A BOOK OR PHYSICAL OBJECT? (EDITOR NOTE: YOU TOTALLY SHOULD!)

We went into this project with no bigger intention than to just get started and see what happens. It would definitely be cool to see it in print someday!

## WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A GOOD FACE?

It's always good when the model has at least one unique/strong feature so we can utilize it. Whether it's lips, lashes, cheekbones, brows or even a great nose or teeth, just something to play up. It's bonus when they're the type that gives you some weirdness or personality when it's time for that last experimental shot. Some girls are more into the idea of theatrics than others.

## DO YOU PLAN THE LOOKS YOU WANT TO FEATURE OF BASE IT ON THE MODELS VIBE?

I wish I could say we had big plans going into these shoots, but we're only just starting to get there. Sometimes we will just say "Bardot vibes" or "dots" and see what happens. Sometimes I have a great new cosmetic I want to feature so I'll just use a color or brand as the theme. Since we've started shooting personalities and musicians, we also want to make sure they feel comfortable with whatever we're doing so that's more of a group conversation.

## WHAT OTHER PHOTO PROJECTS WOULD YOU GUYS LIKE TO EMBARK ON TOGETHER?

I think we're really going to enjoy shooting more of a mix of personalities, and some of the collabs we want to do with artist friends. We've also got some cool

theme's we've been saving for when we can really execute it well. We'd love to start traveling more and shoot in other cities.

My Dad keeps trying to convince us to make a calendar of our cats, maybe that's the secret goldmine we're not exploring...

## WHAT IS THE MOST REBELLIOUS THING YOU DO IN YOUR JOB?

I think we're in a really cool moment in time where everyone's starting to get really experimental with their looks. Massive exposure to everything gives people so much inspiration and confidence, this next generation coming up isn't afraid to wear heart shaped glitter out in the world and they usually look amazing in it.

I think for me it's more like rebelling against myself, pushing my own boundaries and stepping past pretty into weirder territory. Just doing it and being okay with whatever the results.

I'm also currently obsessed with putting shiny red lipstick on boys.

## CAN YOU GIVE US A FEW MAKEUP TIPS THAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW?

Invest in a great matte red lip color of whatever shade you like best. I suggest Nars "Dragon Girl" or "Cruella" or MAC "Ruby Woo" or "Lady Danger". Those are my go tos.

If you're going to try your hand with glitter, have a roll of scotch tape around to help pick up the mess on your skin or otherwise.

Pointed q-tips are your best friend for cleaning up the eyes and lips.

Clean your brushes!!

*“My perfect day would be sleeping in for a disgusting amount of time. I’m talking 12 hours, with joy. I would get up very late. I would probably eat a lot of food. It would be like gorging myself on very unhealthy, gross things and laying around and either watching really shitty TV or really good movies in bed. Then getting up, taking a shower and going out to dinner with friends. Pretty much sitting on my ass and stuffing my face! That would be my dream day.”*

# LIZZY CAPLAN

*photographer / Shanna Fisher @ Day Reps  
stylist / Jessy Cain @ Wall Group  
assistant stylist / Janelle Jones  
makeup / Sabrina Bedrani @ Tracey Mattingly  
hair / Alex Polillo @ Forward Artists  
writer / Megan Laber  
shot @ Avalon Hotel Beverly Hills*



shirt: Jill Stuart ; top and shorts: Mink Pink ; bra: Tylryn Nguyen Intimates slip on; Louise et Cie ; socks: Damer Socks; bracelets: Ivona Ludjga; nail ring: Broken English; rings: Inez and Vnooth; necklace: Jacquie Aiche

An ideal day for Lizzy Caplan doesn't fall far from the internet memes we resonate with strongly. Netflix, our bed and saying yes to every food craving.

"My perfect day would be sleeping in for a disgusting amount of time. I'm talking 12 hours, with joy. I would get up very late. I would probably eat a lot of food. It would be like gorging myself on very unhealthy, gross things and laying around and either watching really shitty TV or really good movies in bed. Then getting up, taking a shower and going out to dinner with friends. Pretty much sitting on my ass and stuffing my face! That would be my dream day."

All of this makes a lot of sense when you read over the juggling act Caplan's been performing in her Emmy-nominated role on Showtime's *Masters of Sex*. Winner of the Critics' Choice Television Award for Most Exciting New Series, the show stars herself and Michael Sheen as the real-life history making medical duo Virginia Johnson and William Masters. The show is now on its third celebrated season. Set in the '50s and '60s, it covers the immense studies the couple did to bring the medical field where it is today regarding human sexuality, while simultaneously playing out the drama of their long-running affair.

This isn't the Caplan role you've seen before. Her comedy roots began in roles like Jason Segal's disco-loving girlfriend in the late '90s cult series *Freaks and Geeks* and as the notorious high school alt-girl Janice Ian in the forever-referenced *Mean Girls*. Caplan continued to switch from the big screen in underrated comedies like *Bachelorette* to television series *Party Down* and *New Girl*, continuing the trend of playing smart women with a sarcastic bite (hint: a decent summary of Caplan's real demeanor.)

What is the biggest shift she makes going from more lighthearted humor pieces to an Emmy-winning TV drama? Caplan says there's just as much energy and thought put into each new role.

"I don't see a tremendous difference from an acting standpoint between comedy and drama in terms of how I would approach it. At the end of the day, it's about being, for lack of a better actor word, authentic in what you're doing. And because of the comedies that I tend to enjoy doing, they have a lot of dramatic elements and vice versa for the dramas. I feel like I get to use all tools in my tool belt."

What the show *Masters of Sex* is doing for their audience is eye opening, especially to their millennial viewership, giving insight into how 60 years

ago, we were very unaware of the intricate facets of female sexuality, not to mention the quiet ways sexism weaves its way through the storyline, letting the viewer see the vast differences in regards to gender relations. What the show is doing for Caplan is showing the audience that she is nowhere near getting pigeonholed by Hollywood.

"I've done primarily comedies in my off-season when we're not shooting the show, which has been a very nice balance considering the subject matter of the series tends to take a lot out of the actors. Getting to do comedies and going back to do drama has been really fortunate these past three years."

Caplan's character, Virginia Johnson, is a single mother, who never attained her medical degree but pioneered our perception of sexual dysfunction and arousal via the studies conducted with William Masters as his research assistant. As the series goes on, the two use the study to begin a sexual relationship, despite Masters' marital status and the putting the validity of their professional work at risk.

"I think there's stuff in her personal life that's a little difficult to admire, although I do admire the chances she took and the lifestyle she chose to lead at the time where that lifestyle was frowned upon by everybody around her. As far as her work, she left an indelible imprint on our world. Women were told for many, many years that every problem in the bedroom was due to their own frigidity rather than the myriad of other things that could be going on. It's because of Masters and Johnson discovering quite a lot about the woman's body and how our bodies work during sex that ended up liberating tons of women."

Yet as far as the series goes in showcasing how far we've come medically and as a society, one gender issue that seems to have progressed too slowly plays out as Caplan's character tries to keep a balance between motherhood and developing her professional life.

"Virginia has a very, very difficult time with balancing being a mother and working. I think those issues obviously play very heavily on the minds of working moms today, just as much as they did back then. I don't have kids yet, but I think a lot about how that might actually go down in terms of balancing my professional ambition with my desire to be a present and good mother... The main thing that sticks out for me is that we hear a lot of discussions about this, and women trying to have it all, and how difficult that is, yet we don't hear enough about making men feel

comfortable in the role of stay at home dads. Until that is made acceptable by society at large, I don't know how women are ever going to get there."

And this is the thing about Caplan. A conversation with her is real, upfront, honest and opinionated, much like her acting style. When we asked about people in the industry she looked up to as far as inspirations, her leading lady made total sense.

"Debra Winger. I'm obsessed with all that she does. She sort of looks like my mom, so that made me love her even more. I remember watching her movies and knowing how famous she was, and seeing her way, her method of acting was so...I don't know how to describe it accurately. It feels like a very realistic portrayal of how a person would talk rather than an incredible actress. She just seemed so natural in everything she did, just so believable."

Though her acting career and ability to stay real on camera seems to be leading to nothing but good things, Caplan is currently in the works behind the scenes for future projects.

"Yeah, I'm going to get more into producing even though I'm not positive I have the right brain for it. I like the idea of generating my own material. I'm producing a movie right now, and I don't know when we're going to start shooting it but hopefully within the next six to eight months. When it happens we can talk about that!"

While some celebrities deal with the reigning world of social media allowing for low blows and quick turns regarding their public reputation, Caplan avoids it and doesn't really share her personal life with the world in that way.

"Because I don't do that (social networking), I feel like there's a hole in my ability to answer stuff like that. It seems like most of the people I become friends with and work with get the first impression that I'm probably a lot tougher than I actually am."

And that is probably the only statement from Caplan that we'd have a hard time believing. With her quick wit, ability to transition from serious to playful while acting and her undeniable charm that comes from an exuding ingenuity, we're pretty sure Caplan is one of Hollywood's strongest stand-outs, and the possibilities of what she takes on next seem as open as she is.

bodysuit, For Love and Lemons; vintage lace dress, What Goes Around Comes Around; socks, Danner Socks; stone crown, Cult Gaia; rings, Jacquie Aiche; Carbon and Hyde, Jacquie Aiche; Inez and Vinoodh; bracelets, Iwona Ludzka






fur wrap, Skaist Taylor; sunglasses, Garrett Leight California; dress, Idan Cohen; rings, H. Stern, Jacquie Aiche earrings, Jacquie Aiche; ear pin, Jacquie Aiche







Pink with black piping crop blazer- Chanel Black crop top - Jill Stuart

Black knee length skirt- Jill Stuart Black tie back ankle heels- Sophia Webster

Vintage Rope Necklace \$6,000 Vintage snake Ring- Cartier \$14,000

Vintage Ring- Black with diamond and pearl \$2500



***“Because I don’t do social networking, I feel like there’s a hole in my ability to answer stuff like that. It seems like most of the people I become friends with and work with get the first impression that I’m probably a lot tougher than I actually am.”***



top, Elliatt; heels, Elisa Betta; sunglasses, Garrett Leight California; bangles, C. Greene Bangles; colored rings, Inez and Vinoodh; earrings, Coomi; ring, Pearl Collective and H. Stern



# Main

(left to right)

On Jorji - vintage top and vintage Candie's sandals - stylists' own, gold hinge choker LUV AJ, shorts AMERICAN APPAREL

On Ariel - sunglasses GASOLINE GLAMOUR, vintage Peter Max astrology silk scarf available at [STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM](http://STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM), lace top, shorts and platforms stylists own.

On Hannah - pink flower embroidered choker TOPSHOP, denim patch work skirt PHLEMUNS, top - Levis, shoes - Converse, left hand - bracelet WANDERLUST + CO, ring LUV AJ, right hand gold ring WANDERLUST + CO, silver ring - LUV AJ

# Beeches

photographers / Jin Kay Lee + Dana DeCoursey

stylist / Amelian Kashiro

hair / Anna Dunn

make up / Karl Pua

manicurist / Sheila Monaus

models / Ariel Beesley @ Wilhelmina,

Jorji Frasier @ Freedom,

Hannah Stelzner @ NEXT

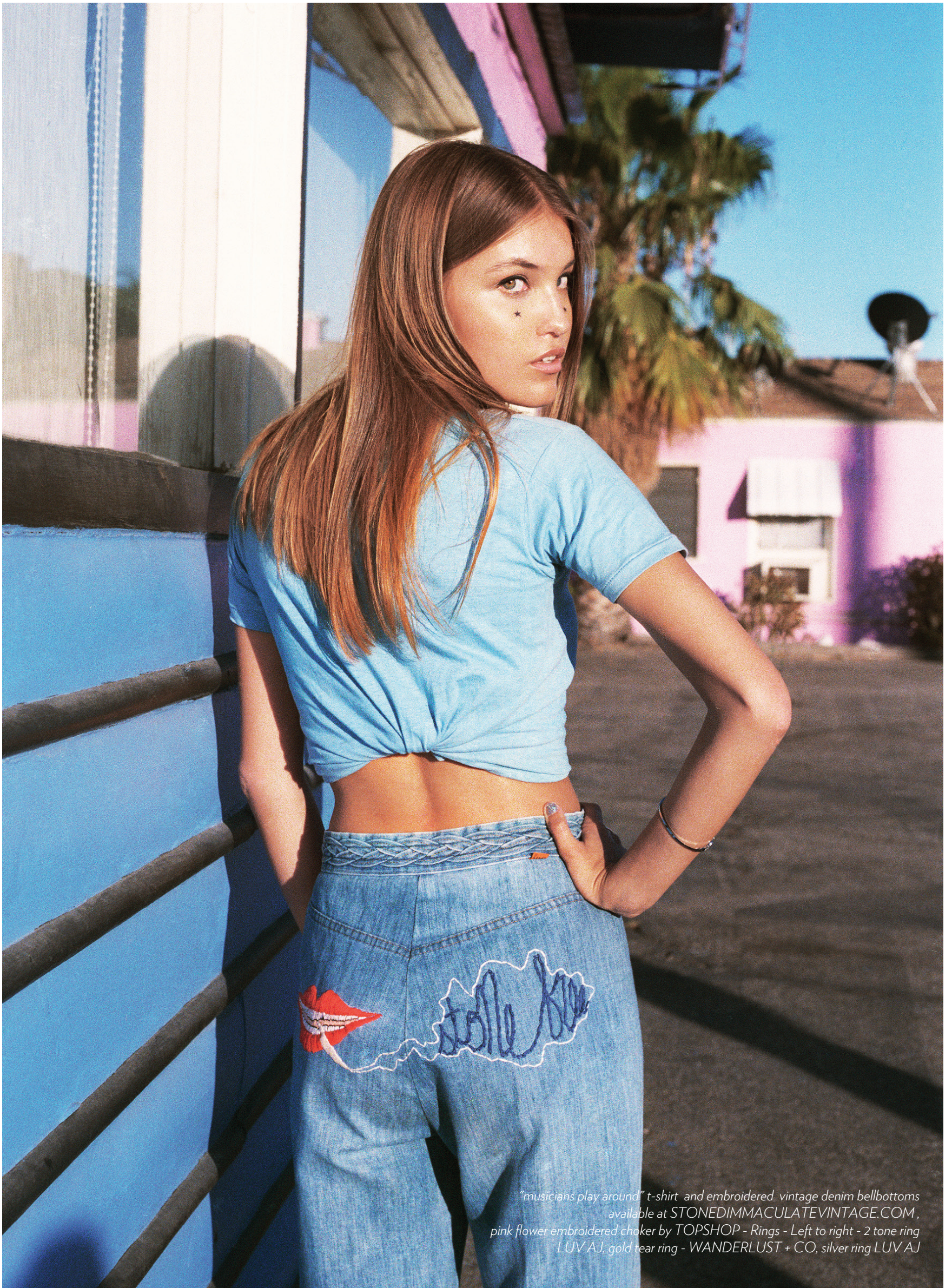








*vintage yellow star enamel rimmed glasses, knit rainbow swimsuit and rainbow indoor roller-skates available at [STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM](http://STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM)*



*"musicians play around" t-shirt and embroidered vintage denim bellbottoms available at [STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM](http://STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM), pink flower embroidered choker by TOPSHOP - Rings - Left to right - 2 tone ring LUV AJ, gold tear ring - WANDERLUST + CO, silver ring LUV AJ*







*Jorji- pink ruffle top by RACHAEL CASSAR, chain link choker with loops by LUV AJ , denim shorts - American Apparel  
on Ariel- rainbow hook eye crochet vest available at [STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM](http://STONEDIMMACULATEVINTAGE.COM) , rose gold necklace by LUV AJ  
and rainbow shorts stylists own*

*on Hannah- foxtail top by GASOLINE GLAMOUR - running shorts American Apparel*



Body Suit, Nasty Gal . Nose Ring – Amarilo . Nail Rings – Amanda Marmer. Rings – Amanda Marmer

***“Music was always my true self. It was the angst inside of me, this thing that wanted to jump out to come out of my skin.”***

# BEBE REXHA

*photos / Angelo Kritikos  
styling / Wilfred Lenov  
makeup / Ashley Bourdon  
story / Koko Ntuen*

It's been a long day. I have a call in 30 minutes with Bebe Rexha, but I'd rather lay on the sofa watching *Real Housewives Of New York*, roll up a spliff and have a glass of wine. Instead I prepare myself for another interview that I'm dreading, because I'm worried it's going to be with another hot-shot, too cool for school musician. When I do a quick Google search of her, she is absolutely beautiful. My husband looks over my shoulder at one point and asks, "are you doing a feature on a model?" I roll my eyes and tell him to go back to his *New York Times* article. Like I said, it's been a long day; I'm a little cranky.

On the surface, my Google search relays a series of images of a beautiful dark haired girl. Is she an Iranian princess, an heir to an oil fortune, married to a Russian billionaire? Through the baubles, red lips, eyeliner, fur and perfect clothing, you might get this impression. A deeper search and a listen to her music revealed a lot more. For one, she is a hit maker. I'm sure you have heard the massive hit "Monster Under My Bed" written by Bebe and pushed to the top of the charts by Eminem and Rihanna. "Monster" sold over 2,200,000 copies digitally and after debuting at number one on the *Billboard* Hot R&B/Hip-Hop chart, proudly settled there all summer long.

Aside from "Monster," Bebe broke free of any one hit wonder stigmas with features on hits like "Hey Mama," a David Guetta and Nicki Minaj smash, Cash Cash's "Take Me Home," Nico & Vinz's perfect day-after-the-party anthem, "That's How You Know" and by writing a slew of other hits for artist including Madonna, Tinashe and Selena Gomez.

When she is fronting her own songs, Bebe is honest and tortured. "I'm Going To Show You Crazy" is a deeply personal insight into her life growing up first generation American. The video shows a leather jacket clad Bebe sitting at a table surrounded by pastel hued preppies with berating voice overs, "Bebe, you're a disgrace," "your music is awful," "this young lady is a major disgrace," "wash your hair!" "Reform school!" All things she might or might not have heard growing up, but to the listener, it's like uncomfortable reading someone's journal full of beautiful rebellious poems.

"I Can't Stop Drinking About You" is a writhing love-sick anthem dedicated to a love that she can't get over and opens up all the old wounds I've ever had. She makes music that you can feel, cry, dance and laugh to. There is something about

her expression that really taps into your head in a therapeutic way.

When I call Bebe Rexha, she is in the studio per usual. Her mom is in town visiting. She has just gotten a text from her ex and is a bit on the heartbroken, maybe even distressed, side. She puts me on hold for a moment and finishes up the end of a song. Through the Skype call, the reverb of her booming voice comes through the speakers, and I literally get chills. She sounds epic.

When she comes back to the conversation, she sounds tired, and for a minute we try to make small talk before we both sigh and laugh at the all the formalities. Then it's like talking to an old friend. We have a lot in common, but furthermore Bebe is so open. We spend the first 30 minutes talking about boys and heartbreak and general life struggles but still feeling blessed. It's hard to believe that she is still considered an emerging artist after years of successful songwriting, but with her debut album out this year, Bebe is finally coming into her own. Fresh off *Warped Tour*, continuous hit singles and a series of projects that are sure to make her a household name, Bebe has found her spot in the limelight.

**What was it like growing up in New York first generation Albanian-American?**

It was amazing. It's a beautiful culture. There is so much positivity to it. It's all about family and loving and taking care of people and putting others before yourself. I've taken a lot of those qualities. It's tough in any culture I feel like, especially in my culture, women are kind of second rate. Your parents are immigrants; they come from another country, so they live in a lot of fear. They are so scared of anything to do with the outside world or the beliefs. So, I'm a girl who is going into the music industry - it freaks them out. My parents still freak out. Especially being a female in Albanian country, where we are a little less respected than men. It's sad, but it's more than me breaking out of Staten Island trying to be an artist, it was a girl who had to break out of all that she knew in her culture, her family, her upbringing and also out of Staten island. All my life, I was told to not speak when men were around. We would have dinner parties, and men would eat first, and a lot of that stuff influenced me.

To me, it was breaking through that to myself. Because I was decided, I can't be scared for the rest of my life and be worried about what these people think. When I did that and fully went after my dreams, that's when my parents starting believ-



Jacket , Joyrich LA. Skirt, Danielle Leigh Davis. Rings, Mishka Piaf . Shoes, Emmett Boots



ing in me, and that's when things started falling into place and making sense. It was terrifying. My parents on one side of the spectrum, the music industry on the other side, and I had to meet somewhere in the middle.

It was scary, especially being a first generation [American] Albanian female. For a guy, it's okay to go out and be promiscuous and open businesses and try new things, and the women are staying at home with kids. It's been tough, and it still is tough, but I just keep going. Music in my passion, and I can't allow fear and old ways of thinking to slow me down. They want to stick to what they know and they live for other people's approval, and I can't be happy like that.

Culture is a beautiful thing. It makes us who we are. I can't blame my mother for being scared of me being in music and thinking it's the devil's playground... because it's what she knew! Once we know that everyone is harmless and mean no harm, and people just want to be loved and be accepted, we found out no one is to blame. People are ignorant to a lot of stuff in the world, but fear will hold you back. I was always a scared girl: I never had sleepovers, I didn't speak unless I was spoken to, and never kissed a guy until I don't even want to say when. To be where I am now, I've come such a long way. I have to push to that next level for myself and other women around the world.

**It's such a juxtaposition to hear you were shy and had all these issues because your music is so strong, was music your alter ego?**

Music was always my true self. It was the angst inside of me, this thing that wanted to jump out to come out of my skin. It was all this frustration even up to today, just peeling back and allowing me to be this true person I always was. The world society always builds these layers around you to be its peeling the layers to who I want to be and who I am. You can call it an alter ego when I go onstage, but for me I just let go and it's the realest me, it's the hardest part to get to.

**How do you stay grounded as an emerging artist?**

It really is about the song and the honesty that comes with the song. It's so small, it's just the song. I try not to let all the other shit get in my ear, people will come in and tell you what they want you to be, but just allowing myself to be free and fearless and focusing on every song is the key. If you think small it's how you get passed all the bullshit.

**What was it like watching "Monster" become a massive hit?**

I'm so weird. It was an incredible moment, and I was very excited, but I was so numb to it all. For me, I got excited the moment when I wrote the song in the studio. When it got popular, I was just like, "cool!" but I just want to do more. I wanted to write another song. It was an incredible moment - it changed my life; it helped people respect me in the music industry. But it's so weird when people ask me how did it feel. Like how did you feel from going to having 200 dollars in your account to all this money? I don't even know how much I have in my account, and I just don't care. I just want to get to the next thing, the next record. I'm on this movement, this mission... and not get caught up in the fame.

**What about "Hey Mama"? Was that another 'OK cool' moment?**

It was funny. David [Guetta] played me a beat and said "I really want a hook to this," and it was a joke for me. Let's just make a song that sounds like - I mean, I don't even want to say. It was so not over thought, so chill. We wrote it in like 15 minutes.

**How come you weren't in the video?**

The reason I wasn't in the video was because previously I wasn't featured on the song. Industry bullshit got involved and blah, blah. I just told David, "hey, this is my life, this is my passion. My passion is being in the studio, being

onstage and changing people's lives, and that is the greatest thing for me. You know the high of being on stage, you know what it takes." I mean, I started at 14 or 15, grinding in this industry, and he understood. They shot the video at that point and put me on the feature later. So he pulled his weight and worked it out. I got to the IHEARTRADIO thing with them, and that was cool. It's all good. I was in an Uber today and "Hey Mama" played, and I was like fucking around, "Is that Nicki singing the hook?" And the cab driver was like, "no it's Bebe Rexha." I was like OMG. That was amazing.

**Do you have any power mantras?**

My friend recently texted me because he knew I was going through a breakup and all these changes, and I told him I was having a hard time and he wrote me, "No what a powerful time it is for you. You can choose to see any period of your life as something negative or as a gift, because people, things, and relationships leave to make room for the blessing waiting for you." So I just tell myself, things in life will change, things will not always go the way you want them to go, but you can choose to see things as negative or you can choose to believe there is something greater than you that is making room for better things. I also tell myself, "in the end, things will be okay, and if it's not okay, then it's not the end." That one really helps me.

**What was it like being in Black Cards with Pete Wentz?**

It was hard, honestly. I was 19 or 18. I never traveled the world. I was so sheltered, and then all the sudden, I was thrown in this world. I was a young girl, insecure. Labels are telling me I need to get in bootcamp shape, and I wasn't there yet. That really fucked with my image, like "am I fat?" It taught me a lot about the music industry. Pete taught me so much. It was tough; it put me in a bad space after. I thought everything was over. I learned how to be a fighter. Shit, I traveled the world; I wrote over 60 songs; I was with my band every day, music executives, music managers, labels, then BOOM, it was gone. When it was over, everything disappeared. It was the darkest period of my life. I remember I was in my parents house for a year straight, crying, sad and having panic attacks. Then I made a makeshift studio in my parents house. I spend 16 hours a day learning how to write and produce. I sat there every day, day after day after day. I probably wrote so many shitty songs. It taught me I really fucking love what I do. I really love music. The music business hasn't always been the nicest thing to me, but it's that like that saying, "everything that you love will hurt you." You just have to choose. If I had to choose anything, human or non human, it would be music any day of the week.

**Now you are headlining the Warped Tour!**

That was incredible. I still have a long way to go. I don't worry about the money, worry about the fame, worry about anything. I just want to freaking write songs that I love and songs that make people forget. Just that 3 minutes 30 seconds to forget the pain. We are all going through some sort of pain. We are all going through something no one knows about. We all get our hearts broken, are all going to our prayer closet to cry and pray and hope for better days.

The thing is this - I can't promise anyone happiness, but I can promise escape for 3:30 in that song, and if I can do that, I'm happy. I've gotten that from Tracey Chapman, Lauren Hill, Bob Marley, Coldplay and Kanye records. What music gave to me, I want to give to other people. Life is short. I just want people to have a good time through my music. Maybe you want to party, or it may be a sad song, maybe an anthem, whatever it might be, I don't want to put myself in a box anymore. I just want people to have an amazing time and enjoy their lives. I don't want to be a gimmick. I just want to write the music that I want to write and hopefully people love it and if it helps them. That's all I can do. It's all about the music and the message. When you see the greats, Madonna, Michael, Prince, there is so much more so than just the gimmick. They aren't empty vessels; they are light. That's what I want to be.

When I ring up Natalie Imbruglia for our interview, I can't say I'm all that surprised to learn that the singer is curled up poolside in the South of France. It's a fitting image, imagining her basking in the warm European rays at some chic chateau or luxury resort as she takes a press call. After all, this is Natalie Imbruglia, she of global musical superstardom, and the Australian actress-turned-singer who single-handedly broke the airwaves—and a million hearts in the process—with her 1997 smash single “Torn.”

Despite her massive breakout in the late 90s, Imbruglia has kept a somewhat low profile over the past few years, focusing on philanthropic endeavors, brand endorsement deals, and theater and television appearances, including stints as a guest judge on *X Factor* in both Australia and the U.K. But Imbruglia has always been a singer first and foremost, and she made her proper return to music this past summer with *Male*, her first album in six years. Much like how her breakthrough “Torn” was a cover of another artist's track (the original belonging to American alt-rock band Ednaswap), *Male* finds the artist returning to this familiar territory, with a twist—the record is comprised entirely of covers of songs originally made famous by male artists.

“I just had never done anything like that before and I thought it would be interesting to do,” she justifies when I ask her why she decided to exclusively cover songs by men. “Originally I was going to do my favorite artists, but as I started creating my list of songs I realized that you can't really narrow down your favorite songs of all time.” Imbruglia adds that working on the album—which she describes as “organic, stripped back, and quite straightforward”—helped her to discover new inspiration and “new artists that [she's] now a big fan of.”

It's also refreshing to see the artist return to an album format in general—her last record, *Come To Life*, was released back in 2009—especially considering today's partiality towards EPs and flash-in-the-pan single releases. “In the modern world of music you just put singles out, so I feel a bit old fashioned in that I like to make an album that's a journey,” Imbruglia explains. “For me the songs have to go together, there has to be a feel and a mood to it. It was no different with this. I have to find my truth in a song to be able to sing

it believably and have people connect to it. Part of what I think is my gift is not just singing, but how I communicate a lyric. I think it's the way I deliver a song that makes you feel, ‘She really means that.’”

And if you're wondering if taking on songs by male artists was part of some grand statement, it wasn't. If anything, it was just more of an exciting challenge for the singer. “I thought with female artists, I just couldn't touch it. Why would I try to redo a vocal? It was just too much for me. So this is less about comparing the two [songs], and more like a different take on things!”

While “different” is always good, there is one thing that certainly hasn't changed since the singer's debut—that emotionally-charged vulnerability of hers. “I don't think [the vulnerability] is a misconception,” Imbruglia muses when I present her with the trademark descriptor. “When I perform I go to a vulnerable place. A lot of my songs have shown that side, but I don't think it's been intentional. I don't think too hard about it. But as an observation I would say there's a lot more strength in my personality that I haven't shown. In my life there are a lot of masculine qualities and traits to how I think and how I am in business.”

Of course, that emblematic vulnerability has never been more palpable than on “Torn,” the video of which features the then 22 year-old singer wearing an oversized hoodie (from her own closet), playfully shaking out a dark, shaggy pixie cut, and gazing apprehensively into the camera lens with big, startling glacier-blue eyes. Imbruglia urges that the profound sense of naked confession observed by so many viewers was not contrived.

“All the things I'd been through in my life had led to that moment. I was vulnerable and I had a lot to prove, but I'm a survivor,” she reveals confidently over the phone. “I was changing careers from being in a soap opera to trying to do music and I wasn't the first person to try that, so I had a lot to lose. You can't fake something like that. People felt the raw vulnerability going on in me because I was really scared about what I was doing, but I was also a fighter. So [in the video] you get this sort of vulnerability mixed with, ‘I'm gonna show you!’ It was just one of those truthful moments

that connected with people. It's beautiful to be a part of something like that.”

Yet even after achieving worldwide success with the Billboard Top 40 No. 1 single, Imbruglia couldn't shake her nerves. She had good reason to be anxious—the world was watching intently and the industry was eager to hear another smash a la “Torn” from her follow-up record. The pressure was on, and she could feel it. “I don't think you'd be human if you didn't feel the pressure to live up to that! The moment I realized it went global I was already panicking about the next album. I was like, ‘Guys, I didn't write that song, calm down, I'm just starting out,’ so all of that was running through my head. I felt this immense pressure to live up to this image that I didn't feel worthy of. So that was very real for me, and completing the second album was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.”

Despite the initial panic, the singer released her sophomore album, *White Lilies Island*, in 2001. “It's the one I'm the most proud of,” she shares. “It's so nice when people come up and tell me it's a special album to them, because I put everything into that and it wasn't about whether or not it was as successful as ‘Torn,’ because I knew that was never going to happen. It was just about writing songs I was proud of and having the courage to put something out there in the face of people maybe rejecting it and still standing solid in how I felt about it artistically. That's the place I got to. When you put everything into something, for a very long time you have fans thanking you for it and appreciating it. That's more important to me than whether or not it's trendy or cool right now.”

For someone whose biggest hit to date has served as a beacon of musical timelessness, bypassing the trends of the now seems smart. And anyway, forget the current state of things; Imbruglia currently has the future on her mind. The artist is looking forward to her U.K. tour with Simply Red in December, and, true to form, is already dipping her creative toes into the next album. “I've already started [on it],” she reveals. “I'm having a really great time with it. It'll have more electronic sounds, but still be very organic and mellow. I'm experimenting and trying different sound-beds and songwriters, but you can't plan [ahead]. More and more I try to live in the moment, and not think too far ahead, because anything could happen.”



# NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

*writer / Erica Russell  
photographer / Phil Dunlop  
stylist / Cristina Chirila  
makeup / Karina Constanine @CLM UK  
hair / Philippe Tholimet @ Streeters London  
photographer assistant / Sarah Lloyd*

top, Top Shop. skirt, Nafsika Skourti. shoes, Prada.



# VANESSA CARLTON

writer / Alyssa Hardy  
photographer / Ruby June  
stylist / Kim Mesches  
makeup / Aya Komatsu  
hair / Michael Moreno  
location / ACME Studios

When I was 14, I saw Vanessa Carlton in concert. It was 2004, when the popularity of her most famous song, “A Thousand Miles,” had just been overshadowed by her new hit, “White Houses.” I, like plenty of other teenagers in the early 2000s, had latched on to her lyrically driven albums, with many of the lines ending up in my AIM profile. (Yeah, I know.) My older sister had won tickets and decided to take me as a surprise. I was thrilled to be mashed into the crowd of dedicated fans, eagerly waiting to hear a 23-year-old Carlton on the piano. When the moment came for her to play the song that had brought me and everyone else who was squeezed into the small venue to the show, she played the first few recognizable notes and said into her microphone, “I’m going to be playing this for the rest of my life.” Then she continued, the crowd singing every word.

I was surprised. Her completely innocuous end-of-tour statement struck me as a moment of realness in a time where everyone else playing on the radio was so manufactured that any step out of line seemed odd. To most people, that song was a musical dream come true, and in many ways it was. “A Thousand Miles” was a hit that was not only super popular on the radio at the time, but also drew a crowd of loyal, heartbroken young female fans, and a level of success that afforded Carlton access to parts of an industry she may never have had. On the other hand, though, it also held the potential to put her in a place where she would forever be the girl behind the piano, singing about making her way downtown.

Fast-forward eleven years later to today, where Vanessa Carlton has a certain levity about her as she walks onto our photo-shoot set dressed like a 70s rock star, with long, dark wavy hair and a shiny brown Dachshund in tow. Before we even begin our official interview, she gushes to the team about her new life in Nashville with husband John Macauley, lead singer of the band Deer Tick, and her adorable 6-month-old baby girl. Being a new mom and wife isn’t the only novelty in her life right now, though—she is gearing up for the release of *Liberian*, her new album that has a completely different sound than the one that made her famous in the early 00s.

Some early reviews I’ve read about her new work have said to “forget the Vanessa Carlton you once knew,” and in some respects, they’re right. After all, a lot of things can happen over the course of fifteen years. However, if you look at her past self as its own separate artist, you miss the evolution of a musician who, despite her early success, may have only just figured out what kind of music she actually wants to be making. According to her, “I’ve kind of just been doing my own thing. I’ve really slowly been figuring myself out, and going back to the origins of why I like to make music. I think maybe people said the same thing about the record I did in 2011, but this has definitely gone further down the rabbit hole. I don’t know, it’s been a long time. I’m old! I

released my first record in 2001. I mean, if you were to take this snapshot and that snapshot, it probably seems like two different people, but at the same time not at all. People change, and people evolve. My fans have been with me through all of my different projects and, organically, this record makes a lot of sense.”

And it does. While there are certainly artists who have taken the same sound and made it work for decades, there are others whose music speaks to a moment in time, evolving as they do. One of the songs off the new album, “House of Seven Swords,” indicates a trippier, more mature version of the singer-songwriter that so many are familiar with. The lyrics are built around a metaphor, the same way she’s written in the past, but what makes this song unique is how much more complex the sound is. “For this album, I learned so much about crafting arrangements and sonically [achieving a] certain aesthetic from Steve Osbourne,” Carlton reveals. “He has been my great teacher the last five years. I think we really wanted to have a concept that I wanted to hear in an album format, so that when the record comes on you feel like it’s a break from your life, where you go to a different space. Sonically speaking, I wanted it to feel really dreamy. It was really intense. The songs were like puzzles. ‘House of Seven Swords’ took a long time to figure out, but once we cracked it, it was total euphoria.”

Drawing parallels to her early years is a no-brainer. In all fairness though, the shadow of her former self, as well as the possibility of a relaunched spotlight while juggling a new family, would be enough for most people to retire early. “I think that [level of fame] took me by surprise in the beginning of my career,” the singer muses. “Speaking honestly, it absolutely was a cool thing that I was able to figure out what to do with it, but it brings up a lot of questions. Why am I a part of pop-culture right now? Is this the type of career I’m supposed to have? Is everything I do now relative to this success? How am I perceived? I think it’s a lot of energy coming at you, and then there’s just a drop. My reaction to it was that I wanted to be left alone but at the same time, I didn’t want to feel like I was failing. It was a mess of emotion. I think it took me a couple albums after that to get back on track. Now it’s about going back to what I want to do. It all stems from an authentic place that as an artist, I care about, and then whatever happens after that is it what it is. Sometimes things feel exploited, but when that feeling creeps in you just have to remember that ultimately you are in control of your head space. Don’t take it so seriously.”

After all, this is precisely why she is at the perfect moment to release her latest record. The last track on *Liberian* is called “Ascension,” and it is a two-minute-and-thirty-seven seconds-long dreamy piano sequence that is calm, meditative and mature. Most tellingly, the song’s title speaks so clearly to this current moment in Vanessa Carlton’s career, where her music is rising above her past, but never leaving it behind.

# MEL JADE

writer / Alyssa Hardy  
photographer / Eric T. White  
stylist / Alison Mazur  
makeup / Cedric Jolivet @ See Management  
hair / Jerome Cultrera @ See Management

About 10,000 miles away from where I sit in New York exists a quirky singer with hair that changes color faster than the time it took you read this sentence. Mel Jade is as vibrant as her surname suggests. Along with being titled the limbo champion of an island in Fiji, this Australian “underground pop” star personifies everything you would think an eccentric, independent singer would be. Her music is catchy but has a uniqueness that only her own words could explain: “It’s hooky, bassy, glitchy, dreamy, and purple.” Don’t let that description last throw you, though. Mel doesn’t just define her music in colors because she likes the idea of it; she has synesthesia. (Yes, that same thing Pharrell has.) According to her, synesthesia is “where your senses cross and you see sounds or words as colors,” adding, “I kind of thought everyone had it until recently, because as kids my sisters and I would often argue about what color the days of the week were.”

Whether or not her ability to hear in color is a gift or a burden, it adds a whole new level to the experience of her music in which listening feels like watching. Her newest album, *Dreamsick*, is sort of like jumping into a colorful fantasy world. One of the tracks, “Luxury,” has Lady Gaga-like pop elements, with lyrical hooks that reveal exactly what it’s like in her alternate reality. One line, “I live like a Celine campaign, diamonds in the swimming pool,” is like describing a Tumblr-esque pipe dream come to life.

“I’m a very visual person,” Jade explains. “When I write, I’m already seeing everything in colors and pictures and scenes from imaginary movies, so making videos is really fun for me.” Judging by her video releases over the last two years, she’s got a knack for making her music come to life. “They don’t take that much time because I usually shoot them really low key and guerrilla style, sometimes just on an iPhone. I have done two professional videos for the new album which was a really exciting, new experience for me! It’s cool having a whole team to help get the shots perfect. Another bonus is that they get all the proper permits so you don’t have to run away from the police!”

Her video for “Bliss,” another song off the new record, is the perfect example of the kind of visual and musical combination Mel Jade is known for. Quick cuts from scene to scene show her range of persona and obvious playful sense of style which, similar to her ever-changing hair hue, is malleable. “Whatever I’m feeling at the time is reflected in everything I do. I’m liking things

a little darker and simpler. *Dreamsick* is more about reality and the fantasy of suburbia”—which is the perfect place for someone who claims the Internet as her home.

As pop stars go, her reach spans considerably outside of her hometown of Australia. “I love Australia and I love Australian music but the commercial pop scene mainly consists of ex-reality show contestants singing what my friend calls ‘2 dollar shop songs.’ The best stuff is in the underground here! We have so many awesome undiscovered indie bands and bedroom producers, I wish they’d all get played on commercial radio. The American pop scene is huge! I don’t even know how to compare it to anything, it’s so diverse! America has been really kind to me so far, a lot of my followers are from the U.S. and they’re really awesome and supportive. I definitely want to spend more time in America.”

America loves its pop stars, but are we ready for someone that hasn’t been bred as a walking, talking musical machine like so many “artists” we already know? For Jade, her “guerilla” style approach goes beyond her videos: it’s been like that her whole career. “My upbringing wasn’t musical at all. I come from bricklayers, librarians, church ministers and doctor; absolutely no musicians. I was this alien child singing and dancing and teaching myself piano and writing constantly from a really young age, so no-one knows where it came from! The first song I made up was a tragic ballad about a drowning seahorse when I was three. It was inspired by bathwater. I was very much in my own fantasy world growing up, and I probably still am actually. I don’t think my upbringing affected the style of music I make but it definitely affected how D.I.Y. I am with everything. I had nobody to guide me through the music industry so I just jump into everything on my own.”

As a record, *Dreamsick* is like taking a walk through Mel’s digital world of pop-normative rebellion, and it’s refreshing to say the least. Without a record label, using just the Internet as her liaison between fans as well as the outlet for sharing her work, she is certainly paving the way for doing it yourself in the pop industry. If our conversation told me anything, it’s that she’s a rule breaker with an honest love for music, and that she’ll get her voice out to the world exactly the way she thinks it should happen. Now that the album is out for the world to digest, it’s only a matter of time before you see her everywhere. In typical Mel Jade style though, her post-release plans are a bit more nomadic than that. “I just want to write more music. It’s all I ever think about.”

“I love Australia and I love Australian music but the commercial pop scene mainly consists of ex-reality show contestants singing what my friend calls ‘2 dollar shop songs.’”







# MELANIE MARTINEZ

writer / Mikhael Agafonov  
photographer / David Lekach

Melanie Martinez is a playful one, in the most literal sense of the word. At times it feels like the 20-year-old singer, who dropped her debut record *Cry Baby* in August, is the embodiment of the vintage dolls you've been obsessing over on Pinterest. So it's a no-brainer when we select the Family Arcade in Los Angeles as a backdrop for Melanie's photo-shoot.

"I absolutely love arcade games," she tells me over the phone. Instead, it's the real-life scheming and tabloid worshiping she has no interest in. We chat on the same day the whole VMA battle between Nicki Minaj and Taylor Swift erupts on Twitter, so naturally I ask Melanie about her opinion on the #trendingtopic. "To be completely honest with you, I hardly know what you're talking about. I don't really care about any of that, unless my friends literally show it to me in front of my face," she says. "So I'll just say that I think everybody should be friends and there shouldn't be any fights!"

For a person who doesn't follow pop culture much, she surely has been backed up by not one, but two pop entities of seismic proportions: First, on the third season of *The Voice* in 2012 (she was part of Team Adam and left Week 5), and then when her accordion-heavy song "Carousel" was used in the trailer for FX's *American Horror Story: Freakshow* last fall. But as she'll tell you, singing competitions are hardly her thing. "I just did it because I was 16. I wrote songs in my bathroom in Long Island and wanted to get out there, but didn't know any other way. As I was the youngest on the show, I learned a lot from the other contestants." Horror hits closer to home though. When asked about what character in any movie she'd like to become, Melanie has to take a minute to think before stating the obvious: "I would definitely be in a horror movie or a Tim Burton movie. It has to be creepy."

Turning creepy into cute seems to be one of her biggest skills. Everything about Melanie—from her gothic Disney princess looks to her Margaret Keane-esque take on indie pop—adds vibrant layers to her dark pop identity. Even her striking black-and-white hair is a self-described act of rebellion. "My mom never let me bleach my hair so I told her I'm gonna go all Cruella De Vil when I was 16, but she did not believe me. When I came home from the salon, she freaked out and didn't talk to me for a week."

The artist is equally headstrong about her artistic vision and adventurous in the studio, sampling soap bubbles on one of the album's standouts, "Soap," and using enough toy sounds to make her record the perfect soundtrack for a late-night Toys R Us hangout. "The story of the album is basically the story of my life in a little bit more twisted way," she explains. "If I just made an album about everything being mature, it would be like any other dark album. So mine has all the frosting and sprinkles, but also has this dark chocolate core." She also wants her album to have a lasting aftertaste: "I definitely want to put out a music video for every song. Even it takes two years I'm gonna save up and go broke to make sure that I have videos for all the songs that I like," she adds.

"My album is a concept record about this little girl, *Cry Baby*. But my artist life and



my personal life are pretty much the same: I always act and dress the same way," Melanie reveals, noting the 50s, Peter Pan, and Japanese fashion as influences and picking Neutral Milk Hotel's *In The Aeroplane Over The Sea* as her ultimate growing-up record. But does she actually cry a lot? "Last time I cried was two days ago. I was writing a hook for a hip-hop song and got really frustrated. Then my friend said some things that made me re-think everything I was writing. And I just gave up and started crying," she laughs.

Even if the said song doesn't work out, by now she has enough material to please her fans, which have started calling themselves "cry babies," naturally. "I try to stay away from calling my fans anything. I look at everyone as an individual person, so I don't want to categorize them. They're all unique and they all have names," she insists. So, here comes the challenge—can she give a shout-out to her most devoted cry babies? Yes, she can: "Brian, Courtney, Becky, Evy, Nava!"

Who knows, maybe by the time her fans have kids on their own one day, they'll be tucking them into bed to the sounds of a Melanie Martinez lullaby record. "I feel like my debut album is kinda on the edge of being a dark lullaby record, but a straight lullaby album would be very cool too," she agrees. Well, the world's your playground, Melanie.



# JOSS STONE

*photos / Spencer Kohn  
story / Dominique Joelle  
makeup / Eric Vosberg  
hair / Yanni Boyiatzis  
styling / Kim Mesches*

Joss Stone returns to the scene with her seventh studio album *Water for Your Soul*. She is joined this time around by collaborators Nitin Sawney, Damian Marley, and Dennis Bovell, reflecting an intriguing departure from her signature soulful sound. Stone chats with us about wants, needs, and, of course, watering the soul.

**What moved you to create music?**

You know what I think? I realized when I was...well, when I first started writing this record, how important it was for me to make music. Because before I thought I was doing it just because I, you know, I enjoyed it. It's fun, it's a good way to live, and it gives people good feelings, so why not? But then I was traveling and I didn't make music for a sad few months and I started to get really moody. I don't know; I didn't realize! I didn't realize why. The guy that I was with at the time, he was like, 'What the hell?' He eventually just said to me, 'Oh for God's sake just like write a song or something!' And I was like, 'Oh shit!' I just realized that it's not just fun for me it's actually necessary. It's turned into something that I need to do in order to stay happy.

**You've had a lot of really great accomplishments over the years. What mantra do you tell yourself to get out of bed each morning and into the mindset to create?**

You know, I just think...I kind of try to remind myself each day how lucky I am, and that I should be grateful for everything that's going on. And I don't just mean in my music career; I mean in my life in general. You know, so...my family, and my friends, and my dogs, and, you know, where I live: the fact I've got a house, and all these things that make me so very lucky. That makes you get up in the morning.

**Definitely. Your new album is titled *Water for Your Soul*. What is "water for your soul," and where can the rest of us get in on some?**

Well, buy the record and then get in on some. [Laughs.] Okay so... I guess the explanation for that title is everybody has a soul that needs watering. So it's like, you know, you plant a seed, if you don't water it, it's not going to grow. So, you have to personally figure out, what is your water? You know, my water is music and animals, and friends and things. I need to be around, like--completely around love mostly and--I believe that love is water for the soul. But, you know, if we're going to get more specific, it's like, well, what is it that you like to do? Do you like to dance? Is that your water? Or is it, you know, cooking? Or is it, writing? Or reading? Or doing mathematical equations every Saturday morning? Whatever it is, it doesn't matter because it's your soul. It's for you. So, you know, I hope that this piece of music--for those that love music--I hope that it becomes a part of their water.

**This album is somewhat of a departure for you musically speaking because it contains reggae, and hip-hop, and world. What or who influenced your decision to move in that direction?**

You know, I think it's the world tours especially...encouraged me to involve different sounds, different styles. And you know, it was basically an education, you know, mingling around the world, collaborating with all these different people is my musical education. So I'm finding different instruments and going, 'Oh my God! I love that! I want to use that!' You know, why not? And then meeting this guy, Nitin Sawney; he taught me a lot about different sounds too.

He's actually Indian and I've never been to India but he's teaching me about the sound.

**You're putting out this record on your own label, Stone'd Records. How does that feel?**

Oh, it's great! I'm glad to do that, you know? I'm really glad to have the choice. And the fact of the matter is, if I didn't have that choice, if I wasn't actually putting it out on my own record label, I wouldn't be able to make the music that I have made on this album because they would have said, 'I don't think so,' you know? And I've come across that before, and it's not very nice. So now I have a choice, and I feel very proud to have that.

**That's really exciting that you don't have to limit yourself or anything like that.**

Yeah! I think it helps. It makes me a happier human.

**I'm also wondering: what would you ask yourself in an interview?**

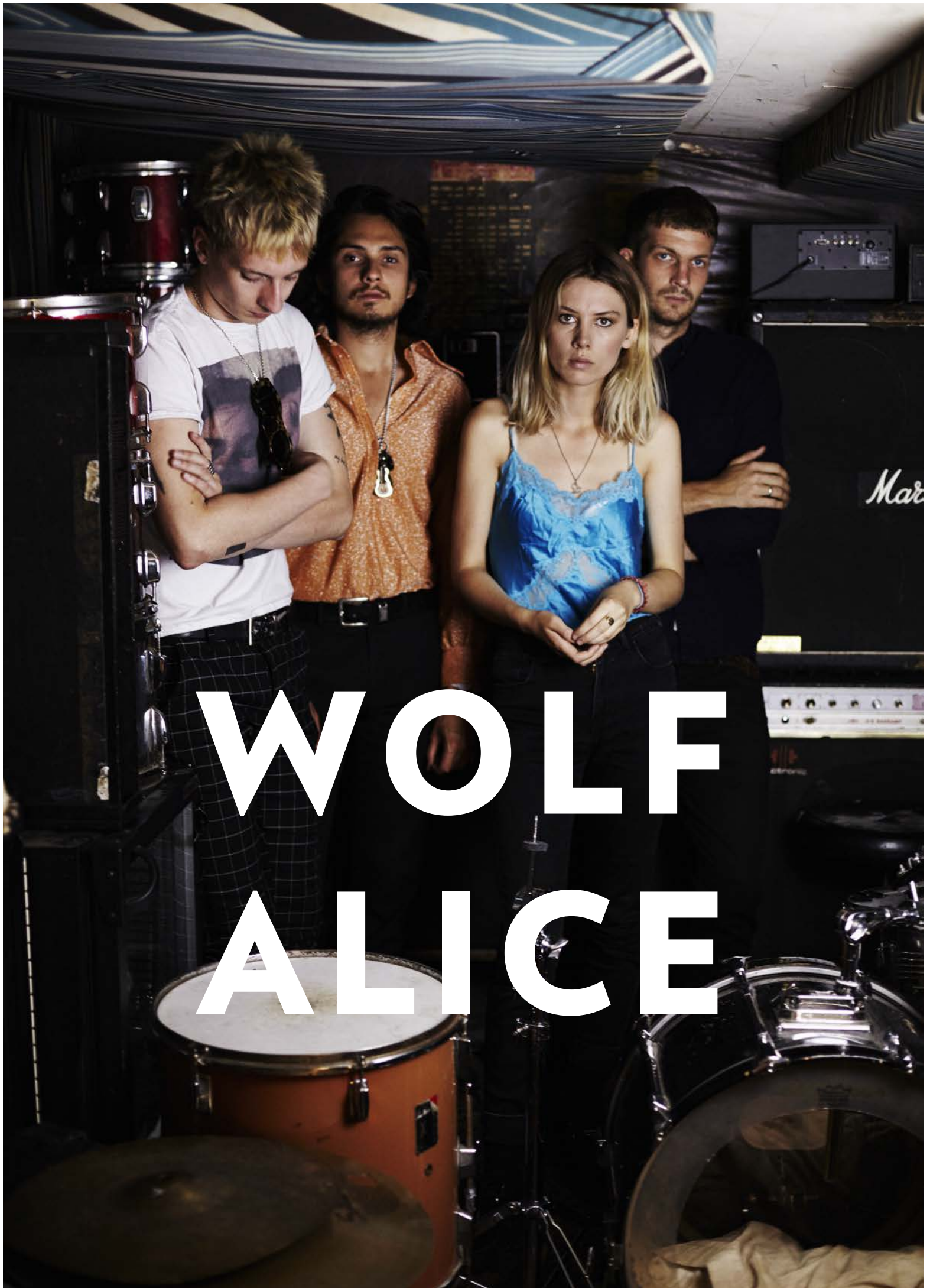
Oh! Do you know what? I was asked a question when I was younger, like, I was asked one question a lot of the time, and I didn't have an answer. Well, I did have an answer, but it wasn't really a very good answer. The question was, 'What advice would you give yourself if you met yourself earlier?' I kind of take that question as, you know, what advice would you give to a young artist basically? That's what they're saying, in a roundabout way. So my answer was, I don't know, I can't remember what it was. It was, you know, try to be happy or whatever. Try to make the right decisions, and things like this. But it's not very specific, is it? So it's not really good advice. So I kind of got to a place now where I know what I would say. I would say, figure out what your 'want' is, and then don't forget it. It's really quite simple that on this path in this life, sometimes we end up making decisions based on something that [has] nothing to do with our 'want.' You know, like, is your 'want' to make lots of money? Or is your 'want' to make lots of music? Or is your 'want' to be very famous? Or is your 'want' to have lots of children? Is your 'want' to have a big house? Like, what is it? So figure it out. And so far, my 'want' has not changed, you know? I just...I want to be free, I want to make lovely music, and, you know, the last thing I want to do is be told what to do because there's no freedom in that.

**How do you maintain your sense of self and stay true to your vision?**

I don't know, kind of just by choosing to be happy. Yeah. I mean, I now know what certain things bring to me, so I know what it's going to be like if I tour for three months. I know what level of happy I'm going to be if I tour three months opposed to three weeks, you know? So I base my decisions on what I know now. So it's like, okay, well...if it's something completely brand new I say, 'Great! I'm going to try it,' and if I like it, I'll continue to do it, if I don't like it, I will stop doing it. It's so simple.

**Yeah, people definitely complicate these things.**

Yeah, man! Big time! Big time.



writer / Austin Maloney  
photographer / Rebecca Thomas  
hair +makeup / Camilla Hewitt @ Frank Agency

The video for one of Wolf Alice's early singles "Fluffy" serves as a dramatized version of the band's history. In it, singer Ellie Rowsell and guitarist Joff Oddie play an acoustic duo singing gentle folk tracks about their cat into a webcam. It's sweet, cute and completely bland. Tuning in are bass player Theo Ellis and drummer Joel Amey, playing a pair of gutter punks. They're so disgusted by what they see that they pay the folkies a visit, vandalise their innocence and bring out their capacity for audio violence. The four are then transformed into a mean, growling rock band.

It didn't happen exactly like that in the real world for then band, but it's not far off. Rowsell and Oddie started out in an acoustic folk duo, playing London's open-mic nights. Frustrated by a sense that the project wasn't really going anywhere, and a desire to try out new, more muscular sounds, they recruited friends Amey and Ellis. The four became a fully-fledged band, and Wolf Alice was born.

Flash forward to the present and Wolf Alice are quite the big-fucking-deal. Their debut album, *My Love Is Cool*, got to number two in the UK charts, and they've been playing bigger and bigger festival stages to bigger and bigger crowds. "It's amazing" says Ellis. "The week the album came out was such an amazing shared experience for the four of us, playing Glasto and flying to do *Conan*. It felt like we got to do the real cliché band bucket list in a condensed crash course. It's hard to actually portray just how grateful we are for the support from journalists and fans".

It's not surprising that the band have that support, because *My Love Is Cool* is an excellent record. Stylistically,

it swings from the caustic grunge of "You're A Germ" to the slick groove of "Freazy" without missing beat, and features some of the sharpest song-writing you'll hear this year. Song-writing is important to Wolf Alice, and they prefer to avoid a strictly ordered approach.

"Wolf Alice is yet to find its set song-writing formula. I'm not sure we will ever have a routine to writing. Sometimes someone will bring a very competent demo that we will then go through and record together, other times we will get together and build something from scratch with a theme in mind. We're very much a band of four individual songwriters having the freedom to write and share ideas in different ways is the best route for us. Song inspiration can stem from anything, a strange turn of phrase, a book or a film, an experience. It can be hard to constantly feel like you have to have experienced some kind of great life event in order to write a song, so drawing on other stories or events can help you to create something".

*My Love Is Cool* was a long time in the making. Wolf Alice had been a buzz band for a few years, but kept things ticking over with EP releases (*Blush* in 2013 and *Creature Songs* in 2014) instead of putting out a debut record. When the time came to finally put together that debut, the band was intensely aware of the importance of getting it right.

"We did want the album to have a cohesive atmosphere for sure. We spent quite a long time on track-listing, it was important that the flow was right. I think that was a key element in it having the full effect as a body of work." That desire to have a cohesive atmosphere also meant dipping into the band's back catalogue and resurrecting tracks like "Fluffy," "Bros" and "Your Loves Whore," which the band had been playing in various forms for years. The songs were rebooted for the debut. "Exploring them further sonically in a production sense was more the exciting idea for us. The structures of all the

songs on the record have adhered to our original demos. Mike (Crossey, the album's producer) helped us to play with the textures within the songs a lot, which can give older tracks a new lease of life".

As strong a record as *My Love Is Cool* is, it's as a live act that Wolf Alice really roar. The initial buzz around the band was largely generated by their relentless touring and their wild performances at the UK's small venues. This year has seen them stop by an enormous collection of festivals and bring their music to new and bigger audience. A particular highlight was their set at Glastonbury, which saw Rowsell sprawl across the stage during an intense performance of album bonus track "The Wonderwhy." And they're also had the chance to inject late-night US television with some high-voltage rock when they brought "Moaning Lisa Smile" to *Conan*. Ellis says that the live aspect is a vital part of the band's identity: no live shows, no Wolf Alice. "We relish playing live. It's how we cut our teeth and taught us an infinite amount about our songs and who we wanted to be as a band. I think it's half of what the band is. It seems very basic for us that half of our worth is proven in the studio and the other half through touring. It's always cool when someone explains to you at a show how a song has effected them. People use songs to medicate themselves emotionally sometimes, it gives you a different perspective on your own songs. People singing lyrics back at you is always insanely gratifying"

And with a formidable new record to bring on tour, the future certainly looks bright for the Londoners. And Ellis is looking forward to it. "I'm excited, about anything and everything"



# HOLYCHILD

*writer / Erica Russell  
photographer / Aubrey Devin*



Fear not, sinners: HOLYCHILD is here to save your soul and redeem pop music with their fizzy debut LP, *The Shape of Brat Pop to Come*. Comprised of singer Liz and producer Louie—who met during a college dance class and quickly became BFFs—the duo crafts lyrically sharp tongue-in-cheek pop with an intellectual twist. “We are very sarcastic in a playful way,” explains Liz of their shiny, satirical sugar-pop. “Brat pop is absurdist pop music that addresses gender roles and expectations, as well as our culture’s obsession with fame, beauty, youth, money, and self. It’s almost teasing but... I definitely feel victim to the issues we talk about in our music.”

“Yeah, I feel like we’re extending the conventional connotation of ‘brat’ to mean something more along the lines of not being complacent,” adds Louie. “We feel oppressed by the myriad of inequalities we observe in the world or experience firsthand. Brat pop is essentially rebellious pop music that pokes fun at these injustices.”

The almighty dollar bill is one of those injustices, a typically touchy topic that the band does not shy away from discussing. As independent musicians, HOLYCHILD have seen their fair share of financial strife. When asked what needs to change in order for emerging artists to be able to have quality of life, Liz struggles to find the answer. “I don’t know. Today I feel cynical, I feel like we’re all fucked. Sometimes I have strong ideas for things like this but today I just feel stuck in this capitalist mentality where everyone is in it for themselves. Hopefully someday we can all transcend competition and be powerful and generous.”

“I think artists at all levels—not just Jay Z and his Tidal accomplices—need to come together and fight for greater transparency and equality in the digital age,” muses Louie. “For starters, the payouts from digital service providers such as Spotify, Pandora, and YouTube should reflect more closely the payouts artists receive from radio stations. Right now these payouts are abominably low. I feel like in order for that to change, the onus is on us, the artists, to unite and figure out a more sustainable approach to making a living from music in the 21st century.”

It’s incredibly refreshing to hear a band talk so candidly about money, something that is generally considered a taboo in polite conversation. But why are we so afraid to talk about it, anyway? “For me it’s based in fear,” Liz explains. “I don’t like talking about money because when I don’t have it I fear people will pity me, and when I do have it I fear people will take advantage of me... I am trying to be more honest with my interactions with people these days, though.”

Louie agrees. “Money is so complicated! On one hand I feel like our culture unconditionally worships money, which yields all sorts of irrational behavior. On the other, I feel everybody either consciously or subconsciously knows that this obsession is shallow, short sighted, and absurd. In the end, we’re left with this bizarre dichotomy where most folks’ knee-jerk reaction to money—and sometimes mine too—is to be secretive or guarded.”

The conversation on money and luxury continues in the bold, satirical music video for the band’s bombastic single “Money All Around,” which Liz herself directed and was inspired by VH1’s *Pop-Up Video*. “The objective was to lay out the tenants of Brat Pop in a sarcastic way. In the past I have been more subtle, but people didn’t necessarily understand what we were saying, so with this video I wanted to make it very clear... I wanted it to be a piece of work that could hold precedent for the themes on our album.”

But themes of wealth are not the only frames of reference found on the record. Feminism is a prominent overarching subject, as is the breakdown down socio-structural gender roles. “One personal destructive aspect of gender roles is not feeling comfortable with me being myself if it exists outside of the box I’m meant to fit in,” Liz laments. “Though on a micro-level, I have interacted with many men who embody stereotypical gender roles and feel entitled to my body. It’s interesting because every time one of these men really hurts me—whether it has been my dad abandoning my sister and I, or another family member molesting us—I can see they too are very hurt and uncomfortable by the situation. Defined gender expectations are detrimental to the culture on a whole because they enforce inequality. Separate is not equal!”

True to that sentiment, Louie also feels that the girl power movement should be something that boys embrace just as passionately as the girls behind it, and that the cause is meant to encompass all marginalized groups. “We’re not into exclusivity,” he reveals, adding, “The inequality felt by virtually all females in the world extends to all minorities. We stand for greater equality for minorities of all stripes.”

And while finance and feminism are explored on the album, as well as sexuality, pop culture, and obsession with self, when asked which one thing listeners should take away from the music, Liz doesn’t skip a beat. “Everything is sad, everything is beautiful, everything is tender, and everything is ugly. The world is a paradox.” A paradox, just like HOLYCHILD.



writer / Olivia Inkster  
photographer / Spencer Kohn

Oh, the age of 20—a time when many of us were struggling between our dwindling adolescence and the reality that adulthood was looming. We didn't know who we were and we definitely had no idea “where our lives were going,” much less where we were going that night. Well, for me that's true, but I suspect I wasn't alone in this, considering I had plethora of hoodlum friends who allowed me to stay a “teenager” for a few (too many) additional years, whether due to confusion, fear, insecurity, or plain apathy.

Shamir Bailey, known simply as Shamir, would not have been a part of that lost tribe on in-betweeners that so many of us held membership cards to. The twenty-year-old artist, singer, performer, and songwriter seems to have always known who he is and what his image and sound should be—are, actually are—which is simply, purely, and unapologetically “Shamir.” Never one to bend to critics,

teachers, or record label executives, through his career has retained his sense of self, which is fluid and encompasses many things.

That's his authentic truth: refusing to be labeled. Shamir shuns a boxed life and prefers to inhabit a free-form existence that's evident in everything from his voice, to his actions, to the way he dresses, to finally, his music. Speaking powerfully for himself and as himself on his debut LP *Ratchet*, the artist's own openness has brought doors swinging wide open with him. Here, the mature and very busy young artist talks candidly about his upbringing, his tour, and one dangerous encounter with an African bird. One thing's for sure, though—Shamir will continue to “do him,” and like him for it. All of him.

**I see you're from a suburb of Vegas. I feel like I need to say that with emphasis. What was it like growing up there?**

No one does that who lives there! It was normal, we're from the suburbs. It wasn't crazy or anything. It wasn't a “crazy Vegas” up-

bringing. We just happened to be near it.

**Did that influence your interest to enter the entertainment or music business? That's certainly a hub for many types of show business.**

Not too much, really. The thing about Vegas is it's all about entertainment. Not too much unique art or artists come to Vegas. It's not really like that. I mean, it's easy to get a gig being a lounge singer or something like that, no offense. But not too many artists, especially ones from here, go that route.

**Holy shit—you're only 20! You'll be 21 in November?**

[Laughs] Yeah, but it's actually useful, because everyone is older. I've learned a lot, but I don't feel that young, because I've always done this. I don't feel like I'm doing anything crazy. It lets me surprise



people. It sort of catches people off guard.

**Any big plans for that milestone birthday? I mean, you are from Vegas.**

I'm performing, unfortunately. But I'll be in Austin, so I'm totally going to eat a bunch of tacos and drink a bunch of margaritas. You have to do that when in Austin.

**Are you a Netflix junkie?**

I'm totally a Netflix junkie. I love *Orange is the New Black*. I was on tour when [the latest season] came back on, so I finished that in two days. Netflix on tour is a life saver.

**Most artists, musicians, etc. have worked some other odd job or day job—like a waitress or something—while they're on the way up, you know. Have you ever?**

Yeah, I mean, I started doing music as Shamir when I was 18. Actually, I've worked two real jobs. I worked at Ross, the department store. And then I worked at Topshop. I love Topshop. It was great and so much fun. But then my music picked up, and I tried to hold on and still work there until it just became impossible. That's how much I liked it. Before that, though, I volunteered for a summer at a bird sanctuary. It was mostly birds like ostriches and chickens and actually, even goats. It was really fun. But one day, I was trying to feed this one bird, an African Macaw, and it tried to bite me! I was like, "What?! Why?! I'm giving you food! You're literally biting the hand that feeds you!"

**Who works at a bird sanctuary?! That's so cool, and I'm sorry, but that's also hilarious.**

Yes, it was crazy! I didn't stay there too long after that. It's a good story to tell, though.

**If you could tour with anyone, who would it be?**

Um, I'm already going to be touring with them soon—Marina and the Diamonds! I'm so stoked.

**That's amazing. Good for you! How did that come about?**

Yeah, it's super cool and a dream come true for me. I've always loved the music and I've always wanted to play with Marina, and it happened naturally, weirdly enough. We met up, and it just ended up so chill. We ordered the same drinks and bonded over that. That led to now. It was so simple and happened just naturally, so I was ecstatic.

**Stylistically, who are some of your major influences?**

I'd say that I pull from every genre. We listened to all kinds in my household. Growing up, it went from punk to disco to pop to hip hop, but it also included classic, timeless singers like Nina Simone and Billie Holiday.

**Northtown, your first EP, was released summer of 2014 to a lot of great feedback, and it seems you haven't slowed down at all.**

It has gone by so fast—a whirlwind. My first song was released just January of last year. It is crazy to think that in the last year, I got signed and recorded an album, and gone on tour. I love writing and wanted to make a project. It all happened really, really fast.

**Radio.com also included you in its "New Music To Know: Best of 2014, So Far" profile, noting that you "combines the honest songwriting of Taylor Swift with the theatrics of Lana Del Rey to make something that sounds far wiser than [your] 19 years." Those are two pretty big names. How did that feel?**

[Sighs, then laughs] Yeah, those are two huge names, like you said. Just...wow. I'm lucky and excited to continue on performing and writing and even be associated with such major, influential artists.

**You signed to XL Records right after that. And in May this year, your first LP, *Ratchet*, came out.**

It doesn't feel like a long time coming though. I thought it would feel like that. But suddenly it was just here. So before the EP, I had good material at hand—maybe three or four of the songs, I'd written a year or two in advance. I write really fast. I don't spend more than an hour or two on a song. I'm always writing. Always. I just have to get it out. I just let it go and do it. It comes to me automatically.

**Is it comforting to have that level of support now that you have major backing with XL Records?**

It's all been very natural. As a team, it's a very small one. They're all my friends, not this huge machine. It's going well. That's why it is going well, because we're having fun, making music, and want to put out a good product.

**You seem to enjoy mixing genres of music, and I know you probably hate this now, but your voice has also been called androgynous. You're a bender.**

Yeah, I'm in the middle. People use the word "androgynous" a lot. I prefer the term "counter-tenor," which is all very true in regards to my voice. It's weird to see and hear people talk about it so much, though. When it comes to my singing, my singing isn't thought about. It isn't "supposed" to be anything or one thing. That's what comes out, you know? I didn't try to sing in a specific type of way. I never did, I don't. If anything, I try to sing straightforward.

**Is your family incredibly supportive and proud? What is their reaction to all of this?**

My mom was always supportive from the beginning.

She loved all kinds of music, so she was all for it when

I got more involved with it in high school. I was in this punk band... We went to SXSW and everything. I still thought of music as a hobby then though, a sort of "Plan B." My mom is the one who told me to take a break and work and focus on my own music. It wasn't even supposed to be a thing on my own... I was supposed to be with my band, but we had free time in between things. So I was just working on my own stuff in between, and it began taking over. So, my family has always encouraged me to explore. My aunt was in the music business when I was growing up, so there were always musicians around. They're proud, but this was always normal for me, you know? Music was always important.

**I was going to ask you if you visited New York often, but I just saw that you were bartending on *Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen* on Bravo. Um, hello?! Tell me about that.**

That was just so crazy. I love Laverne Cox. She is super nice and like, she said, "I love you!" She'd read one of my articles. I didn't expect that. She was just so articulate. I was so surprised that I was asked [to bartend], because that's a completely different vibe for me. I know someone at the show, so it was super cool. And then I went out after that with some of my friends. It was a great night.

**What's your drink of choice?**

Vodka soda. Yeah, I keep it simple.

**What do your friends think about all of this recent press?**

They still think of me a crusty punk rocker. Throughout all of high school, I was in my band, I played, and that's what they knew me as. I'm still friends with those people. Whenever I come back to Vegas, I hang out with two of my best friends. I've known them since 8th grade. Those same five people I was always close with, those are the same. They're happy, of course, but they know me. I've always been this way.

**What's next for you?**

For now, I'm opening for Marina. After that, it's the European tour and then my North American tour. That's in the fall—October and November. I'm coming to New York City to headline this fall, maybe in November or so? It'll probably be at Bowery or something. And well, after that? Just years and years of making music. That's the goal.

**OK, now, you can't ask me this question back. Just warning you, Shamir. What are you wearing right now?**

I'm wearing all black! A black t-shirt and black jeans. It's not very "California," I guess. I wear a lot of black though. That's just me.



# MSMR

*writer / Shannon Kurlander  
photographer / Angelo Kritikos*

MSMR are a vision in pop; outfitted head to toe in vibrant colors as vivid as their music. They are far more than just pop props. Lizzy Plapinger and Max Hershnow are their own bosses. The duo design their stage-ready wardrobe, write all their own songs and record under Plapinger's buzz-worthy label, Neon Gold. MS MR return to their DIY city roots for their sophomore record *How Does It Feel*; writing and recording in a small, windowless Bushwick studio. The album is a surreal and psychedelic assertion of their creativity, aided with the special appearance of pop forces like Tove Lo and MNDR.

**There seems to be a lot of pressure surrounding an artists' sophomore record; was this the case when writing and recording *How Does It Feel*?**

We think we did a really good job of not succumbing to the pressure of the second record – or at least as well as anyone can. Our process centers around making music that feels right to us above all else, so staying true to our instincts and emotions is built into the way we write. We also made some important choices: after an aborted experiment writing in a big studio upstate with unlimited music making tools at our disposal, we realized that we needed to replicate the environment of the first

record as much as we could to retain total creative control and gave us the freedom to experiment. So we went back to our roots and rented a small, windowless, no frills room in Bushwick and recorded on a bare-bones setup: a keyboard, two synths, a microphone and a laptop.

You'd think writing music in such a technically primitive space would be creatively restrictive, but there's actually something liberating about creating music within limitations: our music's escapist qualities are only heightened and strengthened in that environment. And in a very practical sense, the fact that we paid for the space ourselves gave us a buffer between our process and the label and our friends: by the time we were ready to start sharing the music with our team we were confident in what we had created.

That's not say there weren't moments or days when it was hard to break free of own psyches and fears about the next steps...we gained a certain amount of success and credibility on *Secondhand Rapture*, and the most challenging part of the process was writing a second album that felt like a continuation of the ideas we'd started on the



first album while also showcasing our growth as musicians. Ultimately we realized that it's about strong, honest and emotional songwriting – once you have the song everything else just sort of falls in place around it.

**This time around you co-wrote with artists such as Tove Lo and MNDR: why collaborate and what was the process like working with such big names in pop?**

We're extremely proud of the fact that we're a pop act that writes our own music, and there's a lot of power in the fact that we wrote and produced *Secondhand Rapture* almost completely alone, a rare feat in pop. But because we have only ever made music with one another (and our drummer Zach, who wrote and produced most of HDIF with us), we were curious about writing with other people while still being super protective of our sound and process. After we'd written the majority of album we decided to experiment with co-writes for the first time – we came at them from a position of confidence already knowing the sound and story of the record, but had hit a creative wall and need to inject some new energy into the process.

We decided to approach Tove Lo, MNDR and Justin and Jeremiah Raisen because we admired their work and were already friends so there was already a foundation of familiarity and respect. Ultimately each session was a massively positive experience – it was incredibly helpful to have outside perspectives, but they really only augmented and reinforced our musical identity. We left feeling like we'd been pushed outside of our comfort zones in ways that led to some of the breakthrough moments on the album.

After bumping elbows and performing alongside great acts at festivals like Lollapalooza; who are some of your favorite artists to watch right now?

It's such an exciting time for music and one of our greatest pleasures as a band is to be able to explore new music at festivals after we perform! Last month we saw Tame Impala perform at Splendour in the Grass in Australia and even though we've seen them a million times it NEVER gets old. We can't recommend it enough – it's absolutely mind blowing... the music sounds absolutely flawless, not to mention the visuals are awesome and reinforce the epic spectacle of the show.

Another one of our favorite artists is the French singer Christine and the Queens. We've seen her a bunch of times and it's always incredible, from massive festival stages with huge production to tiny club shows. She feels like the second coming of Michael Jackson – her performances blend gender and genre, and you can't help but dance and sing along with her (and her amazing backup dancers), no matter if she's singing in French or English. There's a seemingly effortless grace and ease to her voice and presence that is entirely enchanting, captivating and inspiring.

I read somewhere that the stage is where you truly feel the most comfortable - in what other spaces do you feel totally complete?

Lizzy: I think the stage is genuinely where I feel happiest and if you've ever seen a MS MR show whether we're at a dive bar, a great venue or a festival stage I have a huge smile splashed across my face. There's something so incredibly powerful and intimate about sharing your music with people. I don't care if it's a small crowd or so many people I can barely make out faces - I want every single person to feel like I'm singing and connecting directly with them. That space definitely gives me its own kind of comfort. Other than that I love being home in New York! Especially being with all my friends in my back yard or around the corner at Commodore eating queso and having beers. After living this lifestyle for a few years it's becoming less about places and spaces that make me feel complete and more about my friends and being able to bring them together wherever we are in the world.

Max: For me there's something incredibly satisfying and almost addictive about being in the studio writing new songs. At the beginning of a session there's the feeling of limitless potential, and at the end of the day you have something so specific to you that didn't exist eight hours earlier...it's like magic.

**How important is visual aesthetic to MS MR?**

The visual element of MS MR is incredibly important. The music has and always should come first, but we've always viewed MS MR as a multimedia project, and being able to explore our interests in fashion, videos and photography is really fulfilling and something that has continued to distinguish us as a band. We control every element of the project, and we love that no matter what medium you're experiencing our music through you're seeing into a universe of our direct creation. We love our surreal, psychedelic, jewel-toned world and welcome anyone and everyone to be a part of it.

**It seems you both really embrace the DIY attitude from writing your own music to designing your own clothes. What is another project you would love to take on?**

We're especially loving making our own tour outfits right now! It's great to have a direct extension of creative vision literally on our bodies for everyone to see, especially on a festival stage where sometimes the clothes on our back are the only way we have to set a tone on stage.

Lizzy: There are so many other areas I would love to experiment in! I would love to do art installations/sculpture, and hope as our stage production evolves I may get the chance to. I'd also love to do something in mens fashion.

British singer-songwriter Jess Glynne has experienced a whirlwind of accomplishments in her fresh career that most new artist only dream of. In the past year alone, the young songstress has topped the U.K. and U.S. charts consistently thanks in part to a string of hit collaborations that include “My Love” with house producer Route 94, “Not Letting Go” with rapper Tinie Tempah and, most notably, “Rather Be”—the infectious, international smash-hit with classical-dance quartet Clean Bandit which earned her a 2015 Grammy for Best Dance Recording.

As a solo artist, she has continued with the same amount of success, taking the No. 1 spot in the U.K. charts with “Hold My Hand” as well as a Top 10 space with “Right Here.” It’s not too shabby for a 25-year-old, North London girl who once auditioned for *The X Factor* and used to spend her younger days listening to Destiny’s Child, Aretha Franklin, and yet another well-known North Londoner by the name of Amy Winehouse.

But listening to Glynne’s “Hold My Hand” as well as her most recent single, “Don’t Be So Hard On Yourself,” it’s easy to understand her swift climb to stardom. Her songs possess a resilient message of hope and courage that are empowering, and her soulful vocals are simply impossible to ignore. To celebrate, we spoke with Jess about her early beginnings, and her August-released debut album, *I Cry When I Laugh*.

**What would you consider your big break, and how was the journey that led to it?**

I don’t know if I could pin-point an exact time that I would say was my big break. It wasn’t easy; I worked really hard in different jobs as well as doing music. I met Janee Bennett at a music course I was doing and it was when I started working with her that things started to change for me!

**Your songs have a very positive, empowering message of courage and hope. Where does this optimism come from?**

To be honest, my dad has always been optimistic and always told me and my sister, “You get out of life what you put in,” so I have tried to live by this. There’s no point dwelling in sadness. You need to look onwards and upwards. This can’t always apply, but for me in creating this album I didn’t have a chance to dwell in my heartbreak so I chose to look forward.

**You have a fresh, colorful and very comfortable unique style; how important do you think fashion is in music?**

I think it’s really important as that is how people see you and, in some ways, define you as you.

**In this early stage of your career, how does it feel to have a Grammy-winning song, four U.K. No. 1 singles, all with a debut album yet to come [at time of interview]?**

Hearing all of that in once sentence still doesn’t seem real! I still have to pinch myself. I feel so grateful to be here and to have such amazing people [around me] who have worked so hard with me and [who have] supported me through everything. I really wouldn’t be here without my team.

**How involved are you in the concept and story of your videos?**

**Specifically, the heartwarming visuals for your latest single, “Don’t Be So Hard On yourself?”**

I am very involved. Me and my good friend Jo’lene Henry, who is also my creative girl, came up with the idea of the story and discussed it with the director who then developed it and brought it to life. This song in particular is a really deep, important message from me. I was going through such a strange time when I entered the industry and this song is about that. It’s about seeing hope through sadness.

**In the past two years there’s been a resurgence of house-inspired musical acts, like Katy B and Kiesza. Have you felt pressure from the industry to distinguish yourself from the pack?**

I haven’t really, because I’m a soul girl and that’s what it has always been about for me.

**You’ve mentioned Amy Winehouse as a big inspiration before. Are there any other artists who have made an impact in your life as a writer and as a musician?**

There are so many! Lauryn Hill was a massive influence for my writing. Whitney Houston and Mariah both inspired me to sing big, and soul legends such as Etta James, Aretha, Al Green and many more gave me the urge to make soul music that people could feel.

**You’ve been touring festivals for quite some time now and more people are aware of your music. Can you describe how you felt the moment you heard the audience singing your songs for the first time?**

I felt so emotional, it was one of the most exciting overwhelming feelings. Standing on a stage with a huge crowd singing your song, that you wrote, word-for-word, just shows that all the hard work is paying off and [that you’re] reaching the people.

**As you embark on your first ever headlining U.S. tour in support of your debut album *I Cry When I Laugh*, what can we expect from the show?**

You can expect a big, lively, soulful show full of character. I’m going to bring all the songs from the album to life with my gorgeous band and my amazing backup singers!

**What has been one of the biggest rewards you have experienced as a musician so far?**

I think it has to be receiving a No. 1 record in the U.K. with “Hold My Hand.”

**Which song from the record was the most fun to produce?**

I think it has to be “Gave Me Something.” We brought a choir in and it was one of the most exciting things I’ve ever done. I always dreamt of having a choir on my record and now I do—and on quite a few songs.

**Finally, what’s the message you would like people to take away from the album?**

I want them to listen to the album and see that this record is about hope and that it’s okay to feel hurt or sad or be broken, but never forget to believe. There will always be light at the end of the tunnel.

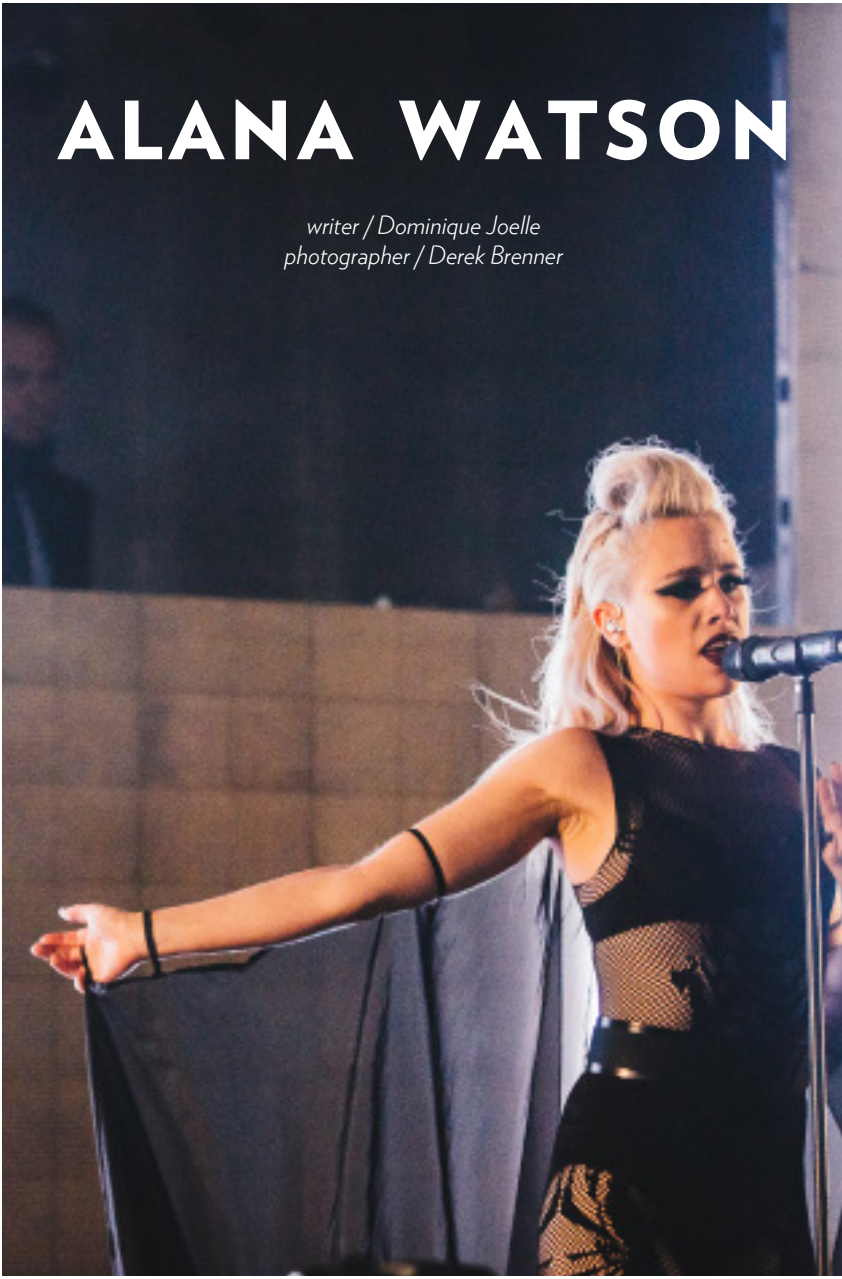


# JESS GLYNNE

*writer / Jay Loyola  
photographer / Simon Emmett*

# ALANA WATSON

writer / Dominique Joelle  
photographer / Derek Brenner



Hailed as the first front-woman of contemporary EDM, NERO's Alana Watson sits down with LADYGUNN for an honest chat about her band's latest album, *Between // Worlds*, and what it means to be a woman making electronic music.

**What sort of responsibilities do you feel you have to take on as a front-woman in a genre of music that has been criticized as sexist? Is there any pressure to be a role model of sorts?**

Great question. I could probably go on about this subject for a while, so I'll try and keep my response as succinct as possible. It's true that there are far fewer female performers, producers and Dj's being recognised or revered in the electronic music scene when compared to their male counterparts. This lack of recognition doesn't correlate with the amount of talent out there. This could be due to a number of factors; are the record labels not signing these women musicians, are the press emphasising this sexism? I have seen lists of 'the most influential EDM artists' in magazines where women are completely excluded. Whatever the reason, I feel that it's my responsibility to keep doing what I'm doing. By being in the public eye and making a success of what I do, I'm showing the press, the record labels, the general public and other women who want to break the scene that women in this field can be as successful as men. Give the girls a chance. We're as good as the next man!

**You're a fully qualified midwife -what sort of lessons from that life have you taken into this new chapter with NERO?**

I was a fully qualified midwife. Unfortunately, I couldn't keep the number of working hours up whilst I was touring in order to withhold my qualification. I struggled initially with the idea of giving up midwifery in order to become a full member of Nero. It felt like I was giving something really important up (the ability to help people and improve someone's experience) in order to do something which didn't mean as much. I have since come to terms with this, and I realise that making music and giving people a good night out can do a great deal for people. I like to think that I'm still helping people but in a different way.

**Who is Alana and what is her purpose?**

She is a chiffon and leather-clad fembot from a retro-future who was sent here to promote love in a post-apocalyptic dystopia.

read more [LADYGUNN.COM](http://LADYGUNN.COM)

# RUBY AMANFU

writer / Koko Ntuen  
photographer / Simon Emmett



Ruby Amanfu's voice and song-writing is a favorite among the music elite such as Hozier, Brittany Howard, the Duhks, Kelly Clarkson, Wanda Jackson, Jack White and more. The Nashville based ingénue and Jack White-approved songstress started at an early age, graduating from the prestigious Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School and in her sophomore year of high school, was the youngest member ever of The Nashville Symphony Chorus. Hollywood heavyweight Reese Witherspoon is a friend and a fan just last week giving Ruby a shout out" on her personal Facebook page, "Loving this, lady Ruby Amanfu. Your voice! So beautiful."

Ruby grew up in a conservative family only allowed to listen to Christian and classical music. She found solace in Cindy Morgan who she says had a way of expressing herself in a spiritual way without a religious tilt was an influence. Artists like Sting, Peter Gabriel James Taylor, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, and Dinah Washington later had an influence on her "I listened to a lot of music that was before my time, but I always kind of felt like an old soul so it really stuck."

Navigating the music scene is no easy task. When I ask Amanfu how she has done it for so many years she says, "I think one, a lot of patience and learning to limit expectations, I've seen the whole change, I've seen it almost crumble then be rebuilt in a way that is a new way of thinking, it's not always easy to rethink something that you depended on for survival. This industry continues to change and only the ones who are willing to change are surviving it."

With *Standing Still*, Ruby is front and center with a collection of cover songs, including tracks by Bob Dylan and Kayne West. She chose to record live with her band in just five days in a remote log cabin in Tennessee."The reason I wanted to make a record where I was living with the people I was working with is because I wanted to take all distractions off the table. We would wake up and make bacon and eggs, then record our first a song, then break for lunch and record another song, then have dinner and drinks and another song, then we'd make a big bonfire!"

Out now, Ruby Amanfu's new solo LP *Standing Still* is a brilliant soul warming album that showcases Ruby as the darling musician she is and is sure to be enjoyed by the masses..



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**WAITING  
FOR  
THE MAN**

*photographer / Omar Macchiavelli @Aura Photo Milano  
stylist / Maela Leporati @Aura Photo Milano  
model / Maria B @The Lab Milano  
hair / Valerio Sestito  
makeup / Martina Lattanzi  
producers / Johanna Persson Cordioli  
& Aleksandra Nestorovic @Aura Photo Milano*

shirt and trousers, Giulietta .necklace, losselliani.





jacket, Cristiano Burani. turtleneck MauroGrifoni. trousers, M Missoni boots, Au Jour le Jour. bag Ballantyne.





shirt and trousers, Cristiano Burani. bag KAEMA.

# NICOLE RICHIE

*story / Erica Russell photographer / Isaac Sterling  
stylist / JAK makeup / Beau Nelson @ The Wall  
Group hair / Gregory Russell @ The Wall Group  
manicurist / Steph Stone set design / Amber Day  
photographer assistants / Brian Lipps and  
Wesley Wheeler Swartz shot @ Quixote Studios*



Once upon a time, the name Nicole Richie may have evoked the unmistakable image of an early 00s Hollywood club-bound party girl, swathed in a tight, hot pink mini dress, rocking an orange-hued fake tan, and with a teeny-tiny Louis Vuitton hanging from her shoulder. Yes, before Miley, before Lindsay, there was Nicole, star of Fox TV's fish-out-of-water reality TV mega-hit *The Simple Life* alongside hotel heiress BFF (at the time) Paris Hilton.

After becoming an American pop-culture household name and resident tabloid darling thanks to her wild child antics on and off the show through the mid-2000s, Richie did the most difficult thing a celebrity could possibly do—she re-branded herself, and quite successfully.

Today, Richie's name rarely conjures up images of her rambunctious, 20-something earlier self. Instead, a new image has emerged, that of a hard-working entrepreneur, an esteemed fashion designer, a bonafide red carpet style icon recognized for putting the quintessential "boho chic" look on the map. She's also a loving mother, a dedicated wife, and somewhat of a Suzie Homemaker, placing pride and emphasis on her beautiful home and love of gardening. Of course, Richie hasn't strayed too far from her television roots: she's also the star of VH1's pseudo-reality docu-comedy series *Candidly Nicole*. And yes, the girl is still as funny as ever.

With the second season of her hit show under way, and her House of Harlow fashion empire growing by the moment, I spoke with the reality-TV-turned-fashion queen about everything from raising chickens to social media to the influence of music on style.

**Hey Nicole! So *Candidly Nicole* went into its second season in July. I imagine it must be validating to have a show get picked up for a second season! A lot of shows come and go and they don't live on. How do you feel about it getting picked back up? Do you think it's a cool little testament to the success of season one?**

It's so exciting. I started this show out as a web series because I didn't even know how many people were going to be into this concept. When I first met with Telepictures, they really wanted me to do a TV show. It's why I did the AOL episodes. I just really wanted to test the waters and see if this would be something people were even gravitating towards. Then, to get picked up not only on AOL for a second season, but then VH1, it's just so exciting for me. I have the best time doing this show. I get to have fun, I get to learn, and I'm around all my friends, so it's just so much fun.

**It's a really upbeat show. And though it's upbeat and funny, it's still kind of intimate and gives glimpses into what you're up to in your life. We get to watch you do all of these things that maybe you haven't done before, in different situations and scenarios... So on that note, have you learned certain things about yourself that maybe you didn't know before doing this show?**

Well, I've learned certain things because I'm constantly putting myself in a situation where I don't have a lot of knowledge. Actually doing that, yeah, I've been learning all the time. It's weird, things have been happening in my life and on the show kind of around the same time. When I was learning about chickens, I was really in the process of getting chickens. So I'm learning about chickens [on the show], and becoming more aware of what I'm eating, becoming more aware of my body in my life. But it's all kind of happening at the same time.

**You have chickens? How cute! I didn't know that...**

Ha ha, thanks! They are super cute.

**Are you raising them for eggs?**

Yes, they lay eggs. I get about five a day, and they're just beautiful and colorful.

**I love that, that's so cute. I always wished I lived on a farm or had a big garden.**

I know. I wish I lived on a farm too! I really do.

**Well then, speaking of chickens... [Laughs] From what I hear, you're very environmentally-minded and health-conscious. Does that resonate?**

Yeah, it does for sure. I'm not an extremist but I love growing my own food. I grow my own vegetables for health reasons obviously, and also I just love watching these things come to life and caring for them and watching them grow. It's super cool. I love it, it's my favorite hobby.

**But you're so busy. You have your brand, your show, and all these other endeavors, so I really love that you make time to be able to nurture your home, yourself and your family by doing little things that make you happy. How important is it for you to be able to put time aside for those things?**

It's my first priority. My first priority is taking care of my home, and that includes my family and my garden and my chickens. I love it! I like a place and a space for myself and that's what that is.

**I think a lot of people honestly lose sight of that so it's great to hear. So, getting back to the show—is there a particular moment or episode during this season that is a stand-out for you?**

There's definitely a few. I'm trying to think like how much I should say... Well, it's the idea of forming a gang, but forming it in the right way. [Laughs] It's actually positive.

**I'll keep an eye out for that! Now, obviously you've led a very high profile life and have had cameras on you for, I can imagine, a good chunk of your life, especially filming *The Simple Life* and other things. Doing this show, does it ever feel strange to have cameras back on you? Or is it comfortable?**

Well, in terms of *The Simple Life*, that show was one of the coolest parts about it. It took us out of our regular lives for thirty days and that's what the whole show focused on. As many shows as I've done, I always been able to maintain a level of privacy that I feel like even *The Simple Life* didn't even have access to. I've been able to really just have fun and *Candidly Nicole* is not really a reality show; it's more of a mission-based comedy. It's a job, you know? I love it and I have so much fun doing it. But as far as cameras on me, that's very much my professional life, so I'm able to appreciate that for what it is, but it's definitely not my entire life.

**Can you take me through the brainstorming process of deciding what to do for the show?**

The show is based off my tweets; that's where the concept comes from. Basically, I am always using Twitter to make fun of myself for not always



velvet suit, silk blouse and shoes, Barbara Bui.



metallic gown, Houghton. shoes, Barbara Bui.



"I think it's unfair to say that social media or the Internet is necessarily good or bad. You know, like everything else there are good parts and there are bad parts. It really depends on the individual and it depends on what they're using it for"



being caught up on the latest and the greatest. [Laughs] I get a lot of responses that are like, 'Me too!' That's where the whole idea came from. When we started the show we would pick one tweet and we would focus on that for an episode.

***It's actually kind of genius. Your Twitter account in general, in my opinion, is one of the funniest, entertaining accounts there is. Can you talk a little about your relationship to social media and technology in general?***

I don't know exactly what my relationship would be. Like I said, I use Twitter to kind of make fun of myself. I really use it in that kind of spirit, sort of sarcastic and humorous, and I use Instagram in the same way. I love photos, so to me it's definitely a lot of fun. I think it's unfair to say that social media or the Internet is necessarily good or bad. You know, like everything else there are good parts and there are bad parts. It really depends on the individual and it depends on what they're using it for. I don't feel one way or the other about it. I'm just able to use these social platforms in a very fun way and that's been my experience with it.

***I find that I get very caught up in the need to update on certain things. I'll be like, should I tweet about this? Should I talk about that on Facebook? Sometimes I find that I'm becoming too dependent on my phone or I'm forgetting to be in the moment. Do you ever find yourself having that struggle?***

As far as technology goes, then the answer is yes for sure. It's not necessarily social media for me, but it's just being on my phone in general. I find myself getting sucked into this idea that I need to answer every email and every text right away. It's almost like that's what people expect of you, of course. But it's very important to me, especially when I'm around my family, to be present and not have anything around me to drag me anywhere else. I really love to be present. Sometimes I will just turn my phone off because I definitely want to be here.

***I think that's very healthy. I also think that this show is progressive in how it interacts with social media, engaging in conversations that are going on online. The other thing that's important to note about this show is that everything is really grounded in humor and, no pun intended, being candid and open. Do you feel people take things too seriously or forget to laugh in their daily lives?***

Thank you! Yes, for sure. I think laughter is the most important thing for me.

***Why bother doing it if it's not going to be fun right?***

Absolutely! That is the entire point.

***Let's talk a little about your fashion company, House of Harlow 1960, which I see all the time in out shopping. You had a debut pop-up event over the summer at The Grove in Los Angeles. Where are you with the brand as of now?***

The pop-up at The Grove was such an amazing experience for me because I got to look at the store as a blank canvas and really take the opportunity to paint what House of Harlow really is—what

the brand stands for, what my inspirations are. We designed the entire store. Marsha Gordon, who has been my best friend since I was two, did the interior decorating. It was just the best experience ever.

***If you had an inspiration mood-board for your new products, what would be on that?***

Music is the first inspiration for me. I love classic rock; music of the 60s and 70s. I'm always definitely led by music. From then on it varies season by season and that's what differentiates every collection.

***We have to chat about music now! What artists are on the Nicole Richie playlist?***

Oh, there are so many! I love The Turtles. I love Janis Joplin. I love Eric Clapton. There are so many.

***Are you on Spotify? You should do playlists!***

I know! I should. I just learned you could do that. I have Spotify but I only use it to look up things.

***Oh, you've got to do it now, I feel like people would really vibe with your taste in music. And you know, Spotify's one of those places where you can get completely lost. You just like kind of go down the rabbit hole with finding new music...***

I didn't even know this was an option! All I do is just look up the music I already want to listen to. I had no idea that you can use it to find new music to explore. See, I'm learning things!

***Now you've really got to! It's so good. Now, other than Candidly and House of Harlow, what other projects are you working on or would like to work on?***

I'm going to start going into home wares and possibly children's apparel next.

***That'll be really cute! Finally, when people think about who Nicole Richie is, I think that people immediately think business woman, entrepreneur, designer—someone who wear those hats. What wisdom or advice would you bestow on other women trying to make it on their own in those worlds?***

First it's about finding what you're passionate about, what you'll love doing. You'll know that based on how you feel doing it. The second step is figuring out, how do I make a job out of that? That's new for us. This whole thing where you create a job out of your passion is something we didn't have back in the day. My best friend Katherine started Who What Wear, and it's so interesting to see her as the head of this company that didn't even exist ten years ago. The fact is people now have—especially in the design and entertainment space—so many options for expressing themselves. And look, I just found out how to share music on Spotify, so I'm definitely not the person to say how to do these things, but it's the younger people that are inventing all the different things. And that's just so amazing to see.



# THORA BIRCH

writer / Erica Russell  
photographer / Ben Cope @ 7Artist  
makeup / Mynxii White @ The Rex Agency  
hair / Brooke Rodgers @ Artmix Creative  
styling / Wilford Lenov @ Celestine Agency

It's a difficult thing interviewing someone you've grown up watching on film decade after decade. For one, there's the expectation; the fantastical image of person that you yourself have conceptually quilted together using fragmented, fictionalized personas observed on screen. Then there's the realization; the subsequent comprehension that an actor is not his or her roles, but is instead a wholly other individual with a life completely removed from the characters he or she has portrayed on celluloid. In other words, throw your expectations out the window, because you sincerely have no idea who this person really is.

It is with this knowledge that I wait for Thora Birch, she of indie film fame and "child actress" categorization, to ring me up for our interview on a Saturday morning. Once she does, I realize that that I do, in fact, know who Thora is, just as much as she is a mystery to me. And I'm ready to get to know her properly.

It'd be misleading to claim that Birch's beginnings were unassuming—if anything, Thora, whose name is derived from Thor, the Norse god of thunder and lightning, was destined for something special. Born in Los Angeles to former adult film stars, both of whom appeared in the culturally iconic *Deep Throat*, the young actress quickly rose to fame during her childhood in the 90s, starring alongside Harrison Ford in *Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger*, *Now and Then* alongside Christina Ricci, Melanie Griffith, and Demi Moore, and—perhaps most iconic in her canon—a beloved little Disney Halloween flick called *Hocus Pocus*, a film which saw then-10-year-old Birch's feisty Dani hold her own against a particularly on-her-game, spellcasting Bette Midler.

While those roles elevated Birch to prominence, they were, for the time being, just kids' stuff. In 1999, the flip switched when she starred in the Academy Award-winning drama *American Beauty*, playing the daughter of Kevin Spacey and Annette Bening's suburbia-suffering couple. The critically acclaimed film became an essential tentpole of 90s filmography, closing out the decade with poignant cinematic, cultural food for thought and launching Birch's career into the stratosphere, solidifying her status as a Hollywood darling. Despite the celebrity, however, Birch is wise to reveal that award shows and talk-show appearances aside, the most fulfilling part of fame has been the extraordinary opportunities it has awarded her.

"Just being able to work in different parts of the world like Bulgaria and Prague, that would be one thing about my career in general that I really appreciate," she explains, refreshingly earnest. "Being able to go around to these bizarre

places and have very interesting experiences while making movies all over... And it's rare, too. It's something unique to a few industries, [being able to travel globally], but definitely the entertainment industry is one of those."

Since hitting her stride in the early 00s—Birch also went on to star as sarcastic teen Enid in the cult film juggernaut *Ghost World*, based off Daniel Clowes' beloved graphic novel of the same name—the actress has spent most of the past decade dabbling in indie films and writing, even going on to produce a film of her own, 2012's "small indie comedy" *Petunia*. It is actually in this film that Birch claims to have found the most challenging role in her career, Vivian.

"It was difficult for me from the perspective that I really did not like the character I was playing," Birch reveals. "Mainly, I like the people I'm playing or I understand where they're coming from; I get them. She was just somebody that, if I encountered them, I would be annoyed by, let's just put it that way," she adds, laughing. "To really abandon myself and get in the headspace of someone who is naturally awful was a challenge. It was something I hadn't been used to, and it's harder than playing somebody who is bad that's fun, like a villain, because you're not playing that—you're playing somebody that you just really don't freakin' like! But if you're playing Hannibal or something like that, that's fun because it's a little bit tongue-in-cheek."

Currently, Birch is occupied with an assortment of exciting projects, including working on an indie book, developing a screenplay she's written, and filming a "small indie thriller in Germany." There's also a big budget, sci-fi fantasy film that she's just signed onto that, while she can't discuss specific details, she describes as a "weird, out there mix of space, psychology, and *Lord of the Rings*." (Consider me sold!) But regardless of where the winds take her, Birch will always be, to me, an inimitable character actress, and someone who has effortlessly created visceral, personal connections between the roles she has played and the viewers who have watched her, captivated.

"I think people have connected to different roles for different reasons," the actress explains. "In one sentence to go from Dani to Enid... that's a huge leap! Then there's people that love both. That's just how it is with an audience, but I would say that I think people have responded favorably to certain characters because in one way or another, it was a type of character they all recognized and knew... I guess people just like the way I brought those particular characters to life." Now that I really know her, I couldn't agree more

# THORA BIRCH, IN HER OWN WORDS: A CHARACTER RETROSPECTIVE

illustrations / Agata Królak

editor / Erica Russell



HOCUS POCUS - DANI  
(1993)

That shoot was one of the most fun I've ever been on because it was a big production. The sets were just amazing; they actually built the witches' house on a massive stage. It was like stepping into that kind of world every day. Even though we shot in the summer, it was nice because it was constantly Halloween, which has always been one of my favorite holidays. Dani herself was fun, she was kind of like a smart-mouth and I guess that kind of mirrored my personality at the time, I admit. It was just a lot of fun. Working with Bette was amazing.

NOW AND THEN - TINA  
(1995)

There's this period in every pre-adolescent girl where they have a lot of energy, exuberance and are just really optimistic and hopeful about everything. She kind of had that exuberance. She had dreams and ambition. She had a larger-than-life personality because of that. That was fun. It was a little more outside of how I was personally, but it was a blast to inhabit that headspace and time period, which was something I was really into at that time. That was my favorite decade when I was that age. That was another one where it was four girls, focused on their friendship. There weren't a lot of films like that around that time that focused on female bonding, so it was nice to be a part of that.



GHOST WORLD – ENID  
(2001)

If somebody identifies themselves as a “Thora Birch fan,” it usually has something to do with Enid. It’s pretty cool to have one of those in your back pocket, like “I’m that character!” It’s really about her personality. But Dan’s entire graphic novel was like that, a world within itself, but also it’s really about Enid and Rebecca. When I first read it, I was taken away by the way she looked at the world, how she dealt with it and interpreted it. That was something I thought was very unique as far as being portrayed on screen. I was like, wow, okay, I can’t say that in my real life but if I do this, I get to say that. That’s what made me really want to be a part of Ghost World and I’m glad I was. Working on set with Terry and Dan, their personalities were perfect for that whole experience. And it’s become kind of an offbeat classic, I guess. The people who love it, they really, really love it. Then there’s the other side too, and I can understand that because it’s not for everybody. But the people who like it and get it, they love it—it’s nice to have that kind of devotion behind it.



AMERICAN BEAUTY – JANE  
(1999)

Jane was someone who was in a situation that was incredibly uncomfortable for her. Just being herself was uncomfortable for her. To watch her open up through the course of the film for me was interesting because that transition was something that came about more on the days we were making [the film]. It’s not something I saw immediately when I first read the script. I thought if anything, maybe Jane was a little one-note, but she did have her ups and downs. On that one, it was really about the experience. It was a movie about things that happen in real life. It was a real family, a real every day kind of life they were living. It wasn’t about being kidnapped or being hunted by witches or going on a summer trip, it was none of that. It was just about everyday life. It was one of the darker things I’ve ever done. The role was a good role but it was really the story, the entire story. Being able to work with the director, Kevin, and Annette, and making that break from kid roles to young adult roles... it was a transition. It turned out really, really well.



THE HOLE – LIZ  
(2001)

I really liked that duality element of her personality and the fact that you got to have a little fun tricking the audience for a portion of the film. To me, that was exciting. I can totally understand how an obsession can be taken too far. We shot that in the U.K. right outside of London in the summer. It was really a fast ride and a lot of fun, but it was pretty intense, too.



Clothing courtesy of Gypsy Warrior

# JACKIE CRUZ

writer / Gillian Fuller  
photographer / Spencer Kohn  
styling / Alyne Halvajian & Michelle Sylvestri  
makeup / Alyne Halvajian  
hair / Marc Mena

When Jackie Cruz auditioned for *Orange Is The New Black*, she had no idea that it would become her big break. The character she'd auditioned for, a nondescript Latina named Flaca, was only supposed to appear in one episode, a few at the most... That was nearly four years ago.

Now, with three seasons of *OITNB* under her belt—from which she's emerged a beloved frequently-recurring character—Cruz is well on her way to becoming Hollywood Royalty, a title she's fought for relentlessly.

As such, we can expect to see, and hear, a lot more of Jackie Cruz in the coming months. The actress stars in the independent films *13 Steps* and *Cleveland*, both set for release in early 2016, and was recently promoted by Netflix from a recurring character to a series regular on *OITNB*. In what little free time she has left—an increasingly small portion of her day-to-day—Cruz pours her heart into music, and is working on her second (as-yet unnamed) EP, the follow up to her 2010 release *Hollywood Gypsy*.

I spoke with the Queens-born entertainer about her passion for music, working on *OITNB*, and what it means to be a Latina in today's Hollywood.

Before *Orange Is The New Black*, you hadn't yet had been cast in a major role. Can you tell us about the audition and how you got the part of Marisol "Flaca" Gonzales?

When I auditioned for Flaca, all they asked [for] was [a] "Latina" [actress]. They told me to come in with no makeup—I was so scared by that! [Laughs] I had to read two lines and I practiced them for like, weeks...I tried to imitate one of my friends that I know who has this crazy, unique New York accent and [when I auditioned] I imitated her. Two weeks later, [they told me] that I'd gotten the part.

**So Flaca is based on your friend in real life?**

Yeah, her name is Karina Correa... I remember telling her, "I'm going to play you on TV one day," because she's so hilarious. And it really happened!

**Part of what makes *OITNB* so successful is how diverse the characters are. How does it feel knowing you're making a difference in the way minorities are represented in Hollywood?**

I think it's about time! It was hard for me to get roles [for a time] because I didn't look like the type that [directors] were looking for. They had this image in their heads that Latina is only Mexican. I was competing a lot with real Mexican women—I'm Dominican—and felt like I never looked the part. So I love that *OITNB* is showing Hollywood that "Latina" and "woman" can come in every size and color. I feel like we're opening the door, not just for us, but for the [women] watching us who want to act.

**You have a couple of films in the works right now. Can you talk a little about them without giving too much away?**

I [just started] working on an independent film called *Cleveland*. It's my second film—I shot a film in Canada that I'm hoping comes out next year for the film festival. It's called *13 Steps*. I play a Mexican who runs away to Canada because the cartel killed her family. It's actually really interesting; I learned a lot about the cartel. [I'm also in talks for] a movie called *All The Golden Boys*. I hope I get to do it. I'd play a Dominican (which I've never done before) and hopefully work with this amazing actor, Amaury Nolasco from *Prison Break*. I'm crossing my fingers.

**You're a musician as well. Are you working on anything right now musically?**

I'm working on my second EP right now, as well as a cover video for Selena's "Como La Flor." Selena inspires me, she was an amazing woman and [this year] is her twenty-year death anniversary so I wanted to do something special in her honor. I filmed the video already but I need to re-do the vocals because I initially recorded it in my living room. We shot the video in Harlem. I was scared to sing in front of strangers [at first] but kids started to sing along with me, older people too. It was a beautiful moment. I actually teared up a little bit. I can't wait to release it.

**Who are your musical influences?**

I love old-school music: Elvis Costello, Etta James. That's what inspires me, that passionate, soulful kind of music. I wanted to become a singer and an actor when I saw *The Bodyguard* with Whitney Houston. I was just a little girl at the time, singing [her songs] in the bathroom. She was so passionate and her voice was so special to me that I believe it was what [inspired me] to become a singer.

**Which do you prefer—making music or acting?**

Music is my first love, but acting is also my love. They're both very special to me. [With music] I feel more vulnerable because I'm singing my songs and if people don't like them, I feel like it means they don't like that part of me. When I act, I'm [playing] someone else so if I mess up, it's okay because that's not who I am. But I can't say which I love more. I can tell you that I don't care if I make a dime. I haven't made a dime singing, ever. But I don't care, I just love to sing. And I'm lucky that [I get paid to act] on *Orange* because it's something that I love to do. I feel very grateful.

**Last question: If you ever went to prison for real, what would you miss the most?**

Oh, I would definitely miss my family. I won't say that I'm super needy, but I need hugs, like, all the time. And love. So being away from the people I love would definitely be the hardest thing.



# KETHER DONOHUE



writer / Anna Furman  
photographer / David Lekach  
styling / Devon Nuszer  
makeup / Lysette Castellanos  
hair / Ashleigh Childers

You may recognize her as the bossy songleader Alice in *Pitch Perfect*, or from the hilarious dance videos she Instagrams. But Kether Donohue is blossoming in a new direction—as the sassy, outrageous character Lindsay in FX’s critically-acclaimed *You’re the Worst*.

I chatted with Kether in the midst of wrapping Season 2, and we spoke about growing up in New York, Meryl Streep, and the joy of free fro-yo.

#### **Can you tell me a bit about your upbringing?**

I was born in New York and am very New York. For the first three years I lived in LA, I didn’t change my 917 area code or driver’s license. I literally waited until a cop pulled me over to change my license. I grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in a lower middle class family. My mom’s a school teacher and my dad used to be in the car business, but now he’s retired. He’s a Vietnam vet from Cuba.

#### **When did you start acting?**

I enrolled in an acting class at Weist-Barron Kids Love Acting Program when I was nine. An agent visited the class and took a meeting with me and my mom and signed me! My first audition was for the movie *Madeline* and I didn’t get it. At one point my parents couldn’t afford to keep me in the class and the teacher—her name was Sharon Richardson—let me stay in for free. I called her when I booked my first pilot but she didn’t work at the school any more.

#### **What led you to acting?**

I just always gravitated toward it. I loved performing as a kid. When I was really, really little I wanted to be a weather lady or a camerawoman. I would sit in my room alone and turn on the TV and talk to myself, like, “Today it’s partly cloudy with a chance of rain.” I loved telling the weather. I don’t know why. I was a very strange child. I acted for different reasons at different periods of my life. When I was very little I liked being a little show off. And then in high school I loved being the class clown. It was fun to be the comedic relief. In my early twenties I started appreciating the magical aspects of acting and realized it could be a healing tool. It became a spiritual cleansing process.

#### **Who would be your dream actor or actress to work with?**

I know this is such a typical answer, but who wouldn’t want to work with Meryl Streep? I really don’t understand how she exists and is real. I really just want to see her in action. She once said that “process is clunky” and “sometimes when you’re rehearsing it looks like bad acting.” That’s become my mantra: that the creative process is clunky. I also really want to work with Charlie Kaufman. I just find his movies quirky and offbeat and very much in the wheelhouse of things I like. Also, I’d love to do a sex scene with Michael Fassbender. That would be phenomenal.

#### **How did you come to play Lindsay on FX’s *You’re the Worst*?**

I booked an Audi car commercial with Claire Danes that premiered at the Emmy’s in 2013 and the director of the commercial, Jordan Roberts, referred me to the *You’re the Worst* casting office. When I auditioned in LA there were literally hundreds of girls. I was just a girl on a limb that [Roberts] had asked to read. When I went in it just clicked—it fit, it worked. It was one of those great auditions that you walk out feeling good. Three hours later they called and said they wanted to test me for the role. When I got to the test it was a chemistry read with Aya [Cash]. We did a lot of takes and it was a lot of fun. It just felt like we were on set. I’ve tested for pilots where network executives in business suits sit in the room and they don’t laugh and it’s awful and scary. This was a very low-key, casual, fun, environment.

#### **You just wrapped filming Season 2. What was your favorite scene to film?**

What you’re going to watch in Season 2 is pretty crazy. Lindsay dances a lot and I like to dance in real life. Also, eating a lot of fro-yo. I get so excited when we shoot in the fro-yo joint because I get to eat fro-yo all day. The other day, in between takes, the props guy Cody took the fro-yo away from me and I was like, “Cody, what’s happening?” He’s like, “Kether, I’m concerned for you, you’re gonna get sick,” and I was like, “Well, it’s not your place, Cody.”

#### **So you don’t have a stunt double on deck to eat your fro-yo?**

Oh my God, never! I would make sure to have it in a contract that I get to eat my own food.

#### **What do you do when you have a day off?**

I run to the Korean spa as fast as I can! I love the Korean spa more than anything. I just love going with a really close girl friend, sitting in the steam room, catching up, getting a massage, going to brunch, sharing a bottle of wine, and having a nice dinner. I also love driving. Sometimes I just get in my convertible and go.

#### **What’s next for you?**

I have a film coming out called *One Shot* that Topher Grace produced and stars in. It’s a musical comedy starring Taye Diggs, a really great actress named Alona Tal, and Lauren Lapkus. And now I’m just auditioning like a mad woman to get another job!

**“To be in my own show and to be able to make the shows I want to make, write the episodes I want to write and have people pay me to not only do it but to actually make it happen. It’s crazy; it’s the best thing ever. “**

# JULIE KLAUSNER

writer / Koko Ntuen  
photographer / Katy Pritchett  
styling / Regina Amato  
hair / TAMAH @ The Wall Group  
makeup / Christine Symonds @ The Wall Group

Julie Klausner might be the funniest difficult person you know. On the Hulu helmed series *Difficult People* she lives up to this role trading crude jokes and making uncomfortable situations hilarious and even more uncomfortable with fictional and real life best friend and resident funny guy Billy Eichner. Sample jokes include, “I can’t wait for Blue Ivy to be old enough so R. Kelly can piss on her.” A joke that got the show on tabloid headlines and Julie a heap load of shit from Beyonce’s loyal army and more conservative demographic. In episode 3 of the first season she is confronted by Andy Cohen for calling him an “Organ grinding monkey in Gucci,” and then asked promptly to leave *Watch What Happens Live* with Billy in tow. If you think these are crazy antidotes you are in for a long haul. The show spent a season making laughs that might have turned network TV on its head.

The fiery red head grew up in Scottsdale 45 minutes from NY and made a brilliant career for herself in writing and comedy penning such projects as her 2010 memoir, *I Don’t Care About Your Band*, her podcast *How Was Your Week*, and her cruel but absolutely entertaining New York Magazine’s *Real Housewives* show recaps. In *Difficult People*, Klausner and Eichner star as parallel lives versions of themselves but less successful and completely unfiltered. Billy plays a fouled mouth waiter/struggling comedian and Julie is the right hand woman playing a sarcastic TV recap writer with two basset hounds and the nerdiest boyfriend you ever say. The two met in real life when Julie sent initiated an email to him and they realized they were both mutual fans and wanted to collaborate. Later Julie went on to write for *Billy On The Street*.

“I started writing for him during season one and have been there ever

since. We found that we have a very similar sensibility and we had a great working relationship, got along very well, had a really great way of communicating and natural chemistry,” says Julie.

The two carried on their comedy chemistry after Julie wrote a spec for the series her show and ask Billy to play her best friend. Then comedy empress Amy Poehler got involved. Julie explains further, “She picked out the title *Difficult People* and she helped shape the actual series. Needless to say it was a pilot but she kind of challenged me to think about what the characters would be in my world, in Billy’s world. With her help we went around and pitched, we got to make a pilot and then we got to sell it as a series.”

The show is an unfiltered, no holds barred fiasco, where nothing is off limits and the dialogue and scenes very unique to Julie’s brash but relatable tone. “Without sounding too Disney princess status, it’s really just a dream come true to write things that actually get made and to show up on set and to see things that I just previously just imagined come to life. To be in my own show and able to make the shows I want to make, write the episodes I want to write and have people pay me to not only do it but to actually make it happen. It’s crazy; it’s the best thing ever. “

Julie’s career is certainly one to follow and one a lot of brave writers can learn from. Her advice, “There’s no shortcut and a certain point you have to stop networking and snoozing and put your head down and do the work. A lot of what takes to succeed is a quiet and boring. That’s the work. The best way of getting a chance to perform is to write yourself an opportunity. I think people who can write, should write.”

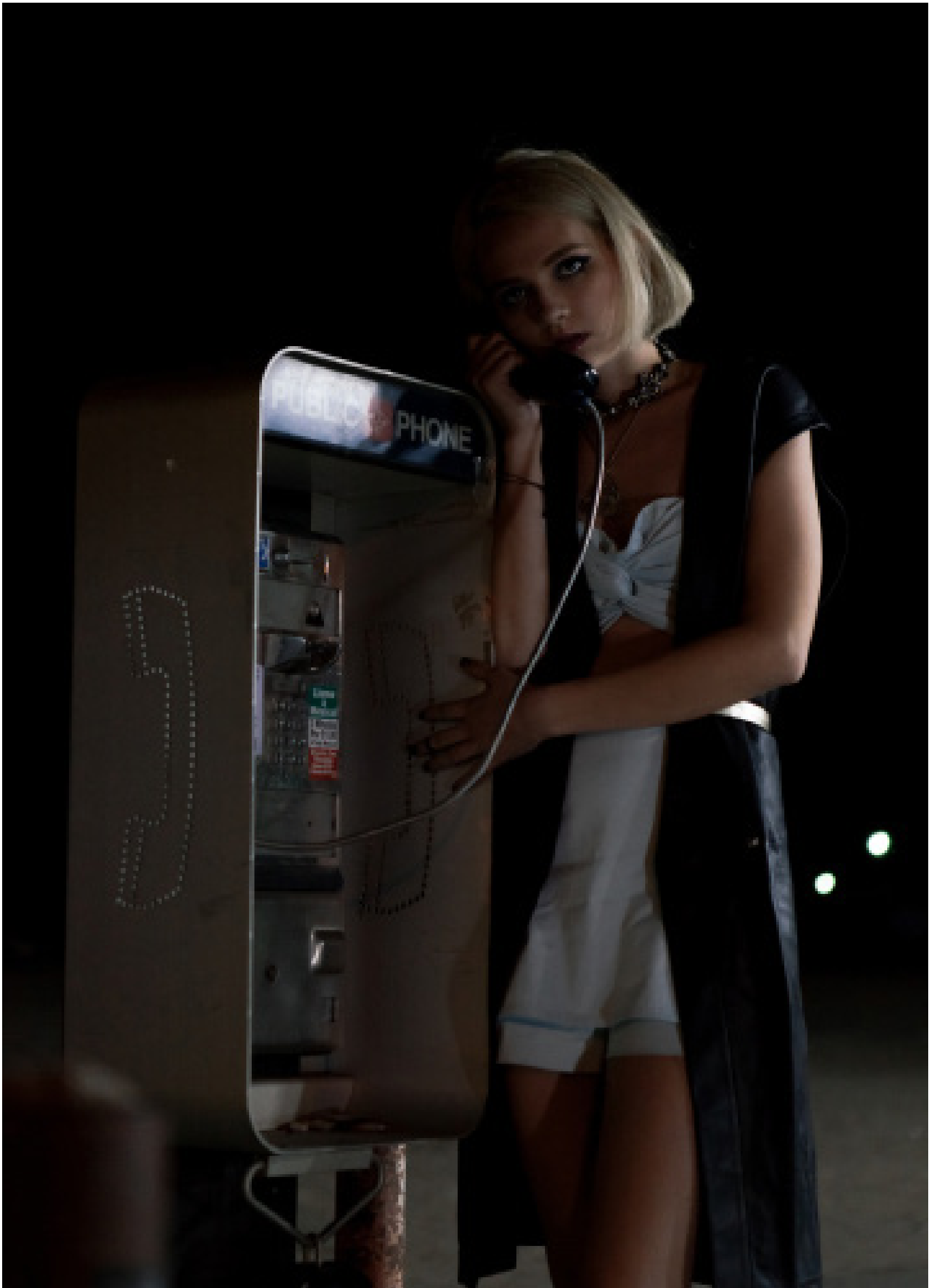


Jacket: Vintage Pendleton Shirt: H&M Pants: Zara  
Shoes: Swedish Hasbeens Sunglasses: Vintage Christian Dior  
Belt: Urban Outfitters Bracelet: Artelier Rings: Jay Nicole Scarf: Vintage



# LOST HIGHWAYS

*photographer / Ammo Bankoff  
producer / Eduardo Cardenas  
stylist / Stephanie Sasso  
hair+makeup / Megan Sutherland  
model / Clem Creevy  
production assistant / Shawn Ahmed  
photo assistant / Jason Levins*



baby blue top and shorts, Dahui Li. leather vest, Oak. choker and earrings, Deepa Gurnani, chain necklace, Nissa. belt, Vintage .



faux fur coat,Boohoo. lilac top, Parker. leather dress, Parker. platforms, Boohoo. necklace , Deepa Gurnani. earrings, Nissa.



top, Parker. t-shirt, Oak. metallic skirt, Boohoo. chain necklace, Nissa.





leather dress, Marios. bra (over dress), Bodybinds. skirt Vintage. cuffs , Nissa .

**“HE DIDN’T SAY I WOULD BE  
BRINGING BACK 34 GRAMS OF  
HEROIN IN MY PUSSY.”**



story / Gina Tron  
illustrations / Agata Królak

NAMES HAVE CHANGED TO PROTECT THE SUBJECT.

"He didn't explain, he didn't give me the deets. He didn't say I would be bringing back 34 grams of heroin in my pussy," Terry said. "He didn't tell me that."

Sitting on a porch in Barre, Vermont where Terry lives on furlough she recalled how she got arrested for trafficking heroin.

Her friend told her to take a ride with him to New Hampshire. "He said he just wants to pick up a little bit of dope. He said, 'the dope around here sucks. Lets go for a ride.'"

Terry said he wasn't clear about how much dope he wanted to pick up or how exactly it would be transported back to Vermont.

An informant told police that Terry's friend was on his way back from Nashua, New Hampshire with heroin.

Terry described the police officers that pulled them over as nice.

"I think they knew I was roped into something."

She said when the K9 unit pulled onto the scene, she began to sweat. Her friend's heart was beating so hard the police officer could see it through his shirt, according to an affidavit from Vermont State Police.

The police knew there were narcotics somewhere because, according to Terry, the dog "He could smell it on the seat," she recalled.

The police then made an educated guess that the drugs were inside of Terry. They told her that they could either take her back to the barracks where she could remove the heroin. Or, it could be removed from her at the hospital.

"I pretty much threw myself under the bus," she said. She said a search warrant is needed to remove something from a body. She regrets willingly removing the heroin at the barracks. "You don't know what your rights are because they don't tell you."

She was busted with 34 grams of raw heroin. The local newspaper wrote that the value of that was \$22,000 but Terry said it would more likely be worth \$40,000 on the street, once it was cut with other products. She was promised \$1,000 and a few grams of free heroin for the trip.

When her picture was published in the paper alongside an article about her arrest, she was humiliated.

"It was the worst day of my life," she said, with tears in her eyes. "I don't want to be known around the town I grew up in as a fuckin' drug smuggling addict."

Not long before the smuggling incident, she had relapsed. Terry attributed that set back to the death of her dog. Before that, she was clean for six years.

"Its a fucked up situation. I just wish I could take it back," she said, while crying. "It's the only thing I want is to take back that mistake. If I could have one wish, I wouldn't ask to be rich, or anything like that. I just want to take back that mistake."

With the kind of charge she had, it's really a 30 year felony. But being a first time offender and never being in any kind of legal trouble before, Terry said she got off easy.

She was in a correctional facility from March of 2015 to May.

"It's not in units. They put drug felons and baby killers and cold-blooded murderers in the same place," she said.

Her roommate, for a few days, was a known murderer in Vermont.

"To take somebody's life in cold blood like that is way different than making a mistake and muling drugs," Terry said. "She would look at me a lot and rock. When she was my roommate I couldn't sleep."

She described the atmosphere of the jail as animalistic and cruel.

"I've never been bullied (back in school.) I was never picked on, but in jail I definitely was. People would intimidate me, I think it's because I cried a lot. I'm tiny."

Terry said one girl kept calling her a rat, while out on the jail yard.

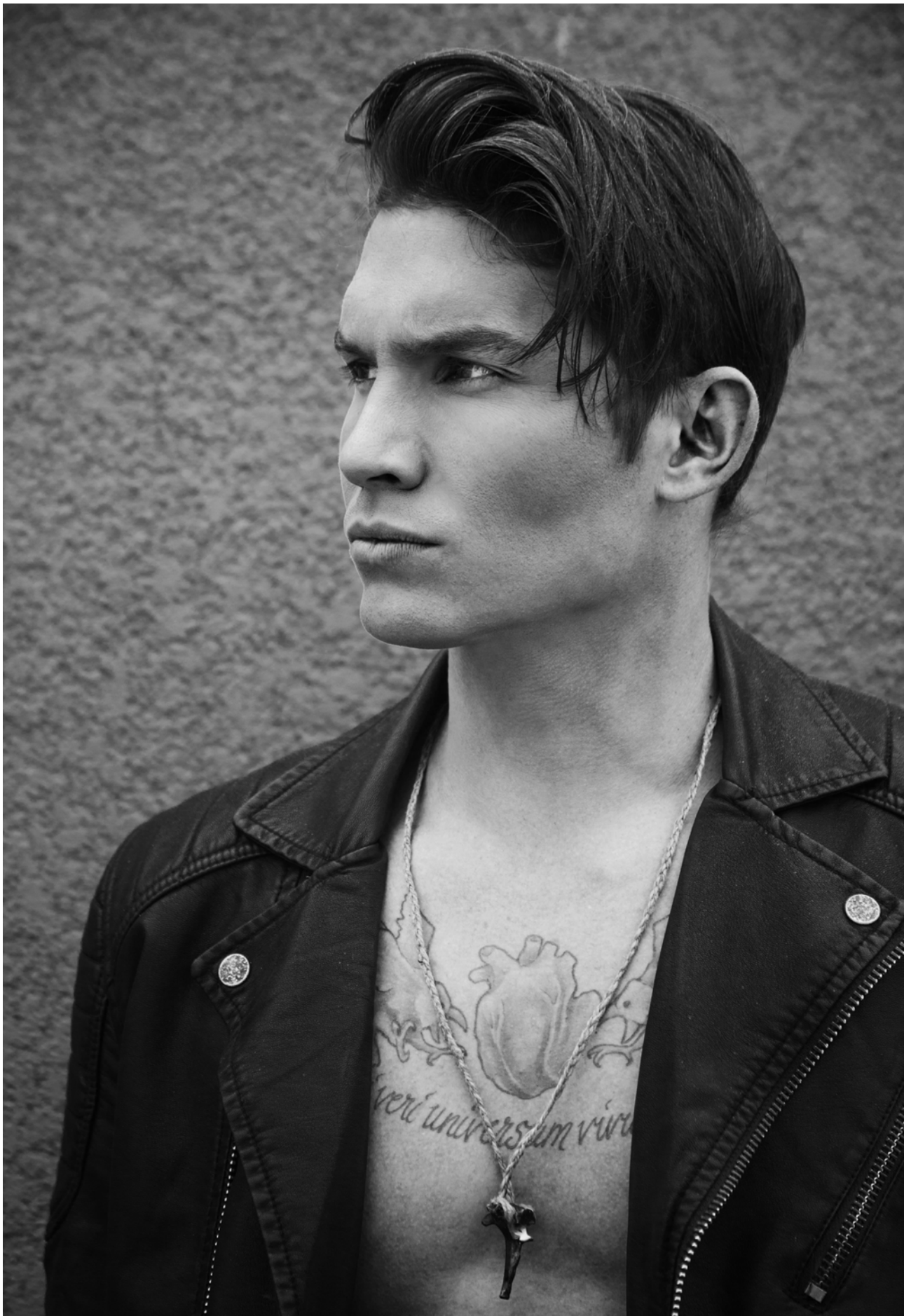
"Finally I stood up at the stainless steel picnic table and said 'I ain't no fuckin rat. 'She swung at me and hit me."

When she did eventually make friends, they were not honest.

"Any friend you're gonna make, number one she ain't gonna tell you her real story. She's gonna blow smoke up your ass. That's why I remembered everyone's name in there and I Googled them when I got out." When she looked up their stories, they were much different in the news than what was told to Terry.

"I didn't think this was where my life would be when I was 33 and I certainly didn't think, and I don't want to sound pretentious or that I'm better than anyone else, but you don't ever think you're going to be in that kind of place with those kinds of people."

She now works seven days a week doing multiple jobs and spending as much time in nature as possible.



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[www.theorganicface.net](http://www.theorganicface.net)



# the organic face

Noreen Diani is the creator and founder of **The Organic Face**. With more than 18 years experience working in the beauty industry, Noreen recognized the need for a more organic chemical free cosmetics that didn't compromise on performance or durability for camera ready make up. Working with many faces, Noreen came across many with skin allergies and reactions to a lot of chemicals in make up products today. Noreen, being an allergy sufferer herself decided to create a make up line safe and chemical free. Noreen began researching chemicals in many of the products she was wearing on her face and came across some disturbing findings. This is when she decided it was time to start creating products with out nasty carcinogens in them.

## HOW DO YOU FEEL YOU DISRUPTED THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY?

The Organic Face is the next generation of beauty. We are disrupting by educating the consumer by making them aware they have a choice it's their body.

## WHAT MAKES TOF POWERFUL?

TOF is about empowering the minds of the consumer. We hear at The Organic Face are educating Women and Men about what they are actually putting on their bodies. We eat healthy, exercise and we have the internet at our finger tips. Researching was a powerful tool that I used to educate myself and that is what brought The Organic Face to life.

## WHAT ARE THREE MUST HAVE TOF PRODUCTS WE SHOULD ALL HAVE IN OUR DRAWERS?

The three must haves of The Organic Face everyone should have in their drawers are:

1) Luminous Liquid Foundation makeup uses powerful natural peptides to brighten complexion, even skin tone and minimize fine lines. Get results you can see and feel instantly. This silky-sheer, buildable formula allows you to control your desired coverage level to hide any imperfections. With its ultra-smoothing properties, it instantly re-texturizes to give you the picture-perfect skin you've always wanted, with no caking, flaking or heavy makeup feel.

2) Lash Explosion Mascara is made from the finest organic ingredients and infused with conditioning botanicals and minerals for healthy lashes. You'll fall for our proprietary blend of organic green tea fibers that give you gorgeous length and fullness – with no harmful chemicals. The rich, long-lasting pigment doesn't smudge, cake or flake, and can be built layer by layer to give any look you want – all the way from natural daytime eyes to the smokiest, sultriest evening looks – get ready to get noticed! You will absolutely adore how this long-lash mascara coats, thickens, and lengthens lashes.

3) Addiction Lip Gloss is a super-shiny organic cocoa & shea butter-based gloss glides on effortlessly for sheer, smooth, and non-sticky shine – with a range of long-lasting all-natural mineral and plant-derived colors you'll love. Your lips will love it too – our intensely hydrating antioxidant-rich formula is 100% chemical-free; keeps your pout pretty and soft for hours with no fading – it smells and tastes good, too. Happy smooching!

## WHAT IS NEXT FOR TOF?

We have just launched TOF 4 Men which is a full line of grooming products for men. You can visit the site at [www.tof4men.com](http://www.tof4men.com)

# HEY DUDE

DAVID DASTMALCHIAN / ZEDD / YEARS & YEARS / CODY SIMPSON / ALBERT HAMMOND JR.



HERE YOU GO  
GENTLEMEN!  
#1

THE NEW SECTION 4 GUYS. ABOUT BOY STUFF, FEATURES ON OUR FAVORITE GUYS, PINUP EDITORIALS, GADGETS, MENSWEAR, STORIES + MORE! ;)

writer / Mary Ritch  
photographer / Nikko La Mere  
stylist / Wilford Lenov  
groomer / Melissa Sandoval

When I talk to my favorite British electronica-synth-pop band, Years & Years, they are on their way to vacation in Ibiza after a successful year of hit records, touring and the release of their debut album *Communion*. The album was met with glowing reviews in the UK and worldwide. The guys are in vans on the way to the airport playing, “pass the phone” with me, the excited writer. When I talk to Olly I sing him my favorite Years & Years song, “King.” When he says, “You sound pretty good,” I freak out on the inside but continue to chat with him about the journey they have been on this year. With a steady presence in the media and songs that climbed the charts, they have garnered an international fan base devoted to their almost religious like pop melodies and soul-awakening music.

The band’s frontman and resident heartthrob Olly Alexander has also become a leader in the LGBT scene, advocating for gay rights and transforming social norms of what a “normal” relationship is. He says, “It’s important for people to see that you can be happy as a couple, and a young gay couple... I think I would have loved to have seen one growing up.” Between his social media stardom and public relationship with boyfriend Neil Amin-Smith from Clean Bandit, I’m sure he is an inspiration to many.

The way the band started is a modern day *Behind The Music* story. Mikey Goldsworthy met Emre Turkmen online. After vibing they decided to start a band. Australian-born Goldsworthy moved to London to begin the project with Emre

and shortly after his move he heard Olly Alexander singing in the shower the day after a massive house party, and the puzzle was completed.

Olly says, “I had a party at my house, and my friend was friends with Mikey so he was there. He told me he had a band called Years & Years and I wanted to be in it so bad. In the morning, I was in the shower singing, and Mikey liked my voice...”

Years & Years live shows are constantly praised by live reviewers. On stage, they are radiant and bare everything. You can tell they enjoy making music together and the way their music harmonizes when they interact is a deeply personal experience, akin to watching a super dramatic play. Olly encompasses a stage persona that is somewhat Messiah-like and makes you feel like you are being born again into his world. The music sits in every part of your body. He says that although we are in a modern age, he is inspired by classic performers and lists Michael Jackson as a huge influence.

The band just wrapped up their UK tour and are about to take over the world one communion at a time. Check them out and be reborn!

More on [LADYGUNN.com](http://LADYGUNN.com)



# YEARS & YEARS

Mikey Goldsworthy: button down, Skin Graf, pants, Bravery For All, shoes, Nike. Olly Alexander: shirt, Neuw, shorts, Zorro, shoes, Supreme Being. Emre Turkmen: button down, Matière, shirt, Original Paper Backs, jeans, Levi's shoes, Neuw.







# ZEDD

*writer / Tiffany Diane Tso  
photographer / Isaac Sterling  
stylist / Jeffrey Lewis  
groomer / Bobby Elliot*



Anton Zaslavski, more popularly recognized as ZEDD, released his second studio album *True Colors* this summer, featuring well-known singles “I Want You To Know,” featuring Selena Gomez and “Beautiful Now,” featuring Jon Bellion. Known for producing EDM tracks, concept album *True Colors* showcases ZEDD’s range of style.

“Halfway through making this record, I realized how different each song sounded,” Anton explained to me over the phone. Of course he was in Ibiza on his way to the airport, squeezing in our conversation on the ride over. “I liked the concept of every song becoming a color. At some point, that meant I had to kick one song off the album that to me sounded too similar to another song, and I wanted all of them to be very individual.”

For the release of *True Colors*, whose inspiration 25-year-old Anton claimed was not the Cyndi Lauper song as he embarrassedly admitted to never hearing the song before his album of the same name, ZEDD teamed up with alternate reality gaming production company 42 Entertainment to give fans an experience of a lifetime. Ten songs were released at ten landmarks in ten cities, each themed with a color. His initial idea was to rent rooms across the country, paint them one color and serve food of the same color. When 42 Entertainment got involved, the production warped into a magnificent tour of America’s landmarks.

“Addicted to a Memory” released with a purple-themed event at Longhorn Cavern State Park in Austin, Texas. “Straight Into the Fire” released with an orange-themed party in a desert near Joshua Tree. “Transmission” was accompanied by a black-themed party on Alcatraz Island.

Some songs like “Straight Into the Fire” were very straight-forward to assign a color to,

obviously emanating warm hues. ZEDD’s process in matching his music to colors may have been inspired by the idea of synesthesia, or more specifically chromesthesia, the association of sound with colors. “I think everybody has a little bit of [synesthesia],” Anton said, “especially when you make music.” He explained the process of making a song sound “warmer,” and adding space and reverb to make a song sound “colder.”

When presented with the ideas of auras and what color might represent him, Anton responded with the perfect answer: Rainbow. “I have a lot of different sides and like a lot of different kinds of music.” Anton was raised by musician parents in a musically-dominated household. While he resented the piano lessons as a boy, he says he is now thankful for his parents’ support and cultivation of his musical knowledge. As a teenager, while other parents might have pressured him to go to university, his dad who had been in a band encouraged Anton to pursue music as a career.

“I’m not one-sided. I’m not all EDM,” Anton, who cites inspirations from Skrillex to Queen, continued. His second studio album sets forth to showcase exactly that, with collaborations with artists including the rapper Logic, singer Troye Sivan, production duo Botnek and bands such as Echomsmith and X Ambassadors.

As a producer, ZEDD has gotten to work with a breadth of artists, both in studio and separated by oceans. While he prefers to work in the same room as the artists he is making music with, many of his songs have employed less traditional tools like Skype due to conflicting tour schedules. “Illusion,” which features Echomsmith, was done over the phone, and Grammy Award winning “Clarity” from his debut album involved Skyping with Foxes. “That’s how a lot of records are being done

these days.”

In this modern age of social media takeover, music is evolving outside of the studio. Anton recalled hitting Logic up on Twitter and telling him that he loved his work and wanted to work together. Logic responded asking ZEDD for some beats; ZEDD sent Logic a song; and he recorded it within the next hour and sent it back. That is how “Transmission,” a truly diverse medley, which also features X Ambassadors, was birthed.

Fans can look forward to many future collaborations, some rather unexpected. “I’ve always wanted to make music with John Mayer,” Anton said in response to questioning about future artist collaborations. “We’ve met a bunch of times and just jammed. Now that I’m going to be working on another record, eventually we’re probably going to get together and write some music.”

Dream collaborations Anton mentioned included Radiohead, Muse, Katy Perry and Adele.

Currently on his *True Colors* tour, Anton has already confirmed that he is bringing a “mini-studio” with him in efforts to keep making music on the road, hoping to collaborate with current tourmate, French producer Madeon.

“I think that’s what excites me the most. There are so many artists I haven’t worked with yet, and I will discover more, so I just want to keep going.”



# Dastm

A man with dark hair, wearing a green sweater, is leaning on a bookshelf. He has his hands clasped and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a well-stocked comic book store with shelves of books and posters. A large red graphic is visible on the wall behind him. The text 'David Alchian' is overlaid in large white letters.

# David alchian

writer / Koko Ntuen  
photographer + stylist / Kristy Benjamin

David Dastmalchian is looking for a babysitter. It's a sunny Wednesday afternoon in West Hollywood, and he is on his cell ten feet behind his publicist, talking into the phone with a domestic tone while simultaneously smiling at us in a "sorry this will just be a minute" type of way. His perfect teeth are not the first thing I notice about him of course. He is staggeringly tall, pale with beautiful dark features and incredibly handsome. Handsome in that weird quirky boy in high school that makes you laugh, introduces you to records that you will cherish for life, and has all the type of underlying problems that make him impossible not to fall in love with.

My projections of him aren't that far from the truth. In critically acclaimed *Animals* (2014) a semi-biopic of David's past, he portrays Jude, a heroin user living out of his car with his girlfriend, hustling their way through days of seediness and concrete on the Chicago streets in order to fulfill their heartbreaking addiction. David wrote, produced and starred in this film, cementing his star power and ability to navigate Hollywood beyond his acting abilities. The movie shows a realistic depiction of addiction that makes it human.

Aside from *Animals*, Dastmalchian's work in the industry has been versatile, poised and consistently incredible. David moved from Kansas to Chicago to pursue acting at The Theatre School at DePaul University, while there he was somewhat of a wunderkind, proving his theatrical chops on stage before landing his debut film role in blockbuster hit *The Dark Knight*. From there, his acting resume has soared, and he has become a critics' darling with roles in Denis Villeneuve's *Prisoners*, *The Employer*, 2012's *Girls Will Be Girls*, *Saving Lincoln* and this summer's blockbuster *Ant-Man*. David has an ability to make small roles bigger than they seem. He breathes a new life into them with a magnetic force; reviews for movies that might not even have his name on the poster often mention him as a main attraction when reviewing the film. Dastmalchian will be appearing in Michel Franco's *Chronicle* alongside Tim Roth, Albert Arizxa's much anticipated *Malware*, as well as a string of other projects that are getting him ready to become a household name.

During my time spent with David, he is both charming and incredibly hilarious, as we navigate Melrose from apartment enclave to Golden Apple Comics, where the cooler than thou staff try to act as low-key as possible while giving away being starstruck with their eyes. He has the ability to leave a room and leave everyone in his attendance wanting more or at least another conversation in the nearby future. When he talks about his wife, his eyes sparkle. He sings her praises, showing us his silver skull wedding ring and

telling us the love story behind it. When he talks about the couple's child, everyone melts. Funny, intelligent and a lover of comics, what is not to love about David? We have a feeling that there will be plenty of fan clubs with the same motto soon.

**From *Animals* to *Ant-Man* is such a broad transition, how did you get in the character head space to act in a blockbuster?**

I always feel like the building blocks for putting together a character kind of come from the same process for me. It's a continually evolving process that changes from job to job. *Animals* is a really specific type of project, where I had the benefit of years of pre-production and development and having had written the script, as well as a deep personal history of some of the struggles the character Jude faces. When it came to *Ant-Man*, I was not very familiar with computer technology and the life of being a computer hacker or a tech criminal, like my character Kurt is. But I prepared for them. I found a way with both characters to connect with the other people in the script. I want my characters to grow from the beginning to the end of a film. Even though these movies are so different, I feel like both of these characters do that.

**Do you ever feel like you have to compromise artistically when you are a part of a blockbuster production, especially since you are coming from a theatre, indie, writing background?**

You know, I've been really fortunate. I've never felt that I have been pushed to compromise neither my choices as an actor nor instincts as an actor. I will say that I've just been incredibly fortunate and blessed to continue to get casted in projects that are directed and populated by artists that are very collaborative. I mean from Chris Nolan to Peyton Reed to any one of the number of incredible directors I've been able to work with, I always feel like my choices have been really well cultivated, guided and shaped. I've been very, very fortunate.

***Animals* is one of the best movies I've ever seen. Was it hard reliving any moments from your past when you got into character, and when you were writing the film?**

Wow, thank you for that. I'm so proud of this movie, I'm so incredibly grateful for the people that made it, especially Collin Schiffli, our director. I believe the film that he made, shot, edited and designed is a better film than the screenplay was a script. So I feel so lucky and blessed that something I wrote grew into something even better as a film, that's your dream as

a writer.

To be honest with you, yes, obviously there's so much history for me personally as David Dastmalchian in the world of addiction and homelessness and heroin, but remember that Jude and Bobby, and any other person in the film are characters that I created and are there for amalgams of personal history and also the liberty I had as a fiction writer. There's a million pounds of truths and heartaches in that film, and there's very little that you see these characters experiencing on screen that I did not personally experience one way or another. But I felt so safe working with Collin, Kim [Shaw] who plays Bobby, and with the entire company that was there with me everyday. It was a small company, cast and crew. They were my family. My wife was there; my best friends were there. We were all surrounded.

Collin's preparation was so diligent, he had done such a wonderful and technical preparatory process to get ready to shoot that there was never this need to just throw me in a historically, emotional volatile scenario just to get a good reaction out of me. It was much more methodically and well thought out. That's the art of filmmaking. That's what makes Collin such a great director. There is a skill that comes with preparation and manufacturing moments. It doesn't matter what I, David, am feeling in the moment as an actor, what matters is what the audience is experiencing when they're watching the film. If they're believing, it doesn't matter if I have to hold my head a certain way so he can get the best shot of light on me through a reflection of a rear view mirror. That's the magic of movies. It was an incredibly safe place for me to act in.

**Were any scenes in *Animals* direct references from your past?**

I would say there was definitely a moment in the film. I don't want to give anything away, but when I'm playing Jude, I'm really considering doing the lowest thing that you can see Jude do, which was a certain type of stick up, and I'll leave it at that. Hopefully people can go see the film and they'll see what I'm talking about.

Once, I did find myself one day sitting in Lincoln Park in Chicago, where the film is set, actually considering what the worst thing I could do to be able to get money faster, because I was not able to keep up. It was at the point where the bottom had not only dropped out, but I had dropped out with it, and I was at the bottom of a very deep hellish well. There's many moments, I shoplifted CDs, the way that my character does in the film, and I lived in the car like my character does. I stalked around the Lincoln Park Zoo as my



shoes, Vans.

character does in the film. There's a scene with the police on the West Side, a really ugly interaction with two vice cops, that was a scene that I literally took almost word-for-word from what really happened to me, including one officer putting on a pair of leather gloves which he called his "beat down" gloves before giving it to me pretty bad.

### **What is the most challenging part when considering new scripts?**

For me now it's a really complicated process. There's this whole system that goes into our decision, I say our because my team includes myself, my wife, my agent, my manager and my collaborators. A lot of decisions are based on criteria that includes first and foremost; Is this a script that I respond to? Is there a character in it that I respond to? If I respond incredibly to it, what am I willing to do to be a part of it? Sometimes that includes taking little to no money and sacrificing time that I don't have. Also now that I'm a father, I want to continue to produce my own projects. Certain times I have to consider, is this a project that I think I can do a good job in? And if so, is there a payday that's going to make it worth while? Who is involved? I really don't care about who the film maker is or whether they've made a famous film or not. I want to look at their short films, their music videos, stuff that they've done before, so I can get a sense of who I'm about to go spend my time with. My time, all of our time, everyone whose time is on Earth and elsewhere, has so little of it. I mean these lives are so short, and the way that we spend our time is so important, and I think you have to be really open to possibility, but you also have to be a really strong advocate for yourself and where you're going to put your time and your energy.

### **How was the audition for *Ant-Man*?**

It was insane! It was lengthy, yes. I auditioned in January of 2014 for Sarah Finn Casting Office, she and her casting associates. They brought me back for Edgar Wright who was the director at that time. I was wearing a big beard I thought at that time fit my character, and I wore the wardrobe I thought fit my character, and I had the dialect that I thought would be fitting for my character, because this character was a role I normally would not be considered for, so I was very cognizant of that. I was very excited about the chance I was getting to go in and play a character I never had gotten to play before, and so I really went for it. After my second audition, which was for Edgar Wright, I was informed a few weeks after that I was going to be testing for the film, which is when you go to the studio, being Marvel's studio at Disney, and actually filming a scene with people who've already been casted. At that point, it was Paul Rudd as *Ant-Man*. I went to my screen-test. The first one was canceled, I left SXSW early, where I was promoting *Animals*, to go to screen test and they canceled! Oh my goodness. For the rescheduled test, I flew back on my day off from working

on a show for the BBC Worldwide in Vancouver called *The Intruders*. Mind you, my wife is 8 months, 4 weeks, 9 days pregnant, so she's about to have a baby. I did a camera test with Paul Rudd, Michael Peña and a bunch of other actors and Edgar. I found out soon after I was getting offered for the role, and we signed contracts, then Edgar left the film! Then I had to go through a whole other waiting process to see if Peyton Reed, who ultimately directed the film, wanted me to be a part of his vision for the film, because the script changed and his vision took over, and thankfully I was included.

### **Name one other actor who has really captured the essence of Stan Lee's Marvel universe.**

You know, they've done such a good job with casting, I think. But if I'm going to pull out a really clutch example, from the Marvel Universe that we know and love now, I really feel like [Robert] Downey Jr. just nailed Tony Stark in *Iron Man*. Stan Lee's universe and all the other great writers, illustrators, colorists, etc, for the past half a decade, half of a century, they brought to life these stories that were colorful, that were bright, that had a lot of humor, that had very high stakes. The heroes' journeys and all the great stuff that we love. I read my comics every month, they kept me coming back every single month to read more. I really feel like Downey Jr. really nailed it. I also feel like Hugh Jackman just absolutely embodied Wolverine. I love what [Mark] Ruffalo did with his version of Banner and The Hulk, I feel like he really nails that wry kind of tone to it. It's excellent. I was not a huge reader of the *Guardians of the Galaxy*, but I have to say that I felt Chris Pratt and that whole team on *Guardians* brought something right on screen that I felt every time I would read a Marvel comic book.

### **What are your favorite Marvel heroes?**

My favorite Marvel heroes are the Moon Knight, I always felt like that was who I wanted to be when I grew up. He's a fascinating character, very dark, almost similar to like a Batman of the Marvel Universe except that he does have some magical powers, because he's connected to Konshu, this Egyptian God. I was also very into Morbius, Dr. Michael Morbius, who was the living vampire. He was a doctor, and he was infected with vampirism and battling his vampiric nature while also trying to do something good. Even though he and *Spiderman* fought many times, he's actually a good guy, and he wanted to do something good with his life. The first series that I ever collected was the West Coast Avengers, which I would say included probably my first comic book crush when I was in the third grade. I don't know, for some reason I thought that Tigra was really hot. That's kind of gross now looking back at it, but I thought she was super hot. I also loved Mockingbird. Anyway...

### **What are your favorite indie graphic novel and comics?**

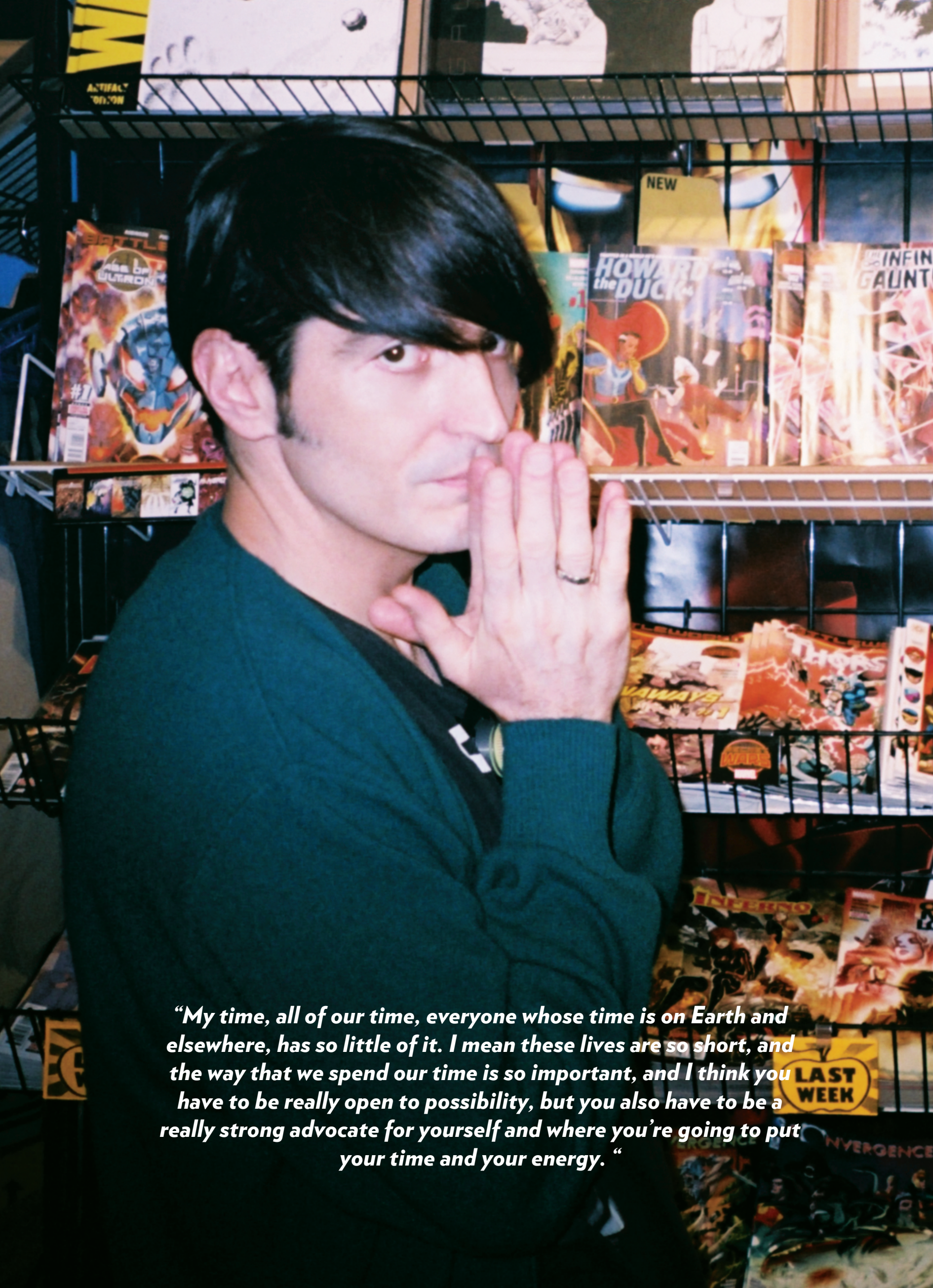
Indie-wise, there are guys that cross the board back and forth between indie and mainstream, and I think that like Brian Wood is one of the best voices out there for that stuff. He wrote one of the better series I've ever read, I recommend anybody who hasn't read it yet, go pick it up. If you're looking for what indie comics can represent, there's a series called *Local*. It was a short-lived series, I think they did 12 or 13 of them but it really just nailed the tone of great storytelling and what comics can achieve when they're not necessarily dealing with superheros. I am a big Daniel Clowes fan. I mean there's so much good indie comic stuff to be had, but I think that's a really good starting point.

### **What's the nicest way you ever asked a girl out?**

I met this incredible girl while I was in New York for a very short time. I lived in New York for about a year, while I was shooting a really cool short film. It was like a zombie film set at fashion week, and we were shooting all around fashion week. One day, this incredibly hot, just drop-dead gorgeous girl was hanging around the set shooting behind the scenes pictures as a favor to the director, because they were friends. I really liked her instantly, but I was just too nervous to ask her out. I guess it was obvious, because at the end of the day, she asked me for my phone, and she put her number in it. So I guess she kind of asked me out. When we finally did go on a date, I asked her out by calling and saying, "you like a good burger?" So we went for Dumont Burger in Williamsburg, and we had this incredible day together. She was getting her wisdom teeth pulled, and I sent her flowers. I've never done that before, sent somebody flowers, and I barely even know this girl except one date. I was falling for this girl really fast. At the end of the first date we had, I was coyly trying to figure out if I could get a kiss, and we were standing on Bedford Avenue, and I said to her trying to be gentlemanly, "if we weren't in the middle of Bedford Avenue right now, I would totally kiss you," and she denied me, laughed, got in a cab and took off back to her apartment in Queens. I was devastated.

Well, fast-forward 2-3 years later, we went on a date at the exact same spot in Williamsburg, Dumont Burger. We're on Bedford Avenue, and I said to her, "you know if we weren't standing in the middle of Bedford Avenue, I would ask you to marry me," and she laughed and flipped her hair like she did when we were on our first date, like she was going to call a cab. Then I got down on my knees, and I pulled out a ring, and she almost fainted and she started crying. I said, "I mean it, will you marry me?" She said "yes." And that's how I got my wife to marry me. That's the nicest way I think you can ask somebody to marry you. That's a long answer to your question!





***“My time, all of our time, everyone whose time is on Earth and elsewhere, has so little of it. I mean these lives are so short, and the way that we spend our time is so important, and I think you have to be really open to possibility, but you also have to be a really strong advocate for yourself and where you’re going to put your time and your energy.”***



# ALBERT HAMMOND JR.

*story / Koko Ntuen  
photographer / Matt Licari  
stylist / Liz Rundbaken  
grooming / Ian Scott Dorey*

Top & Pants, Opening Ceremony. Shoes, Converse.

Albert Hammond Jr. is one of the guys who sits at the upper echelons of the cool kids' table. From dating super models, now being married to a girl who looks like one, and being in THE iconic rock band (The Strokes anyone?), he has done a lot. All while looking like a 70s heartthrob. This might be eye roll inducing but his music will soften your jealous heart. Full of melodic riffs, toe tapping beats and songs reminiscent of record players and pull our posters, he has made us a fan. We talked to him about his new album, being a rock star and what he's into.

**Tell us about what you've been doing recently. You just finished a project?**

Yea I just finished my third solo EP called *Momentary Masters*, and I've begun promoting, and we've already booked fall and winter tours in America, Japan and Europe, so I'm just figuring all that stuff out.

**What was your favorite part about recording your latest album?**

I guess having the band we toured the EP with last year, having them be a part of the process was amazing since the EP I recorded myself all the parts, and I was able to branch things out to other players. They were able to come with their ideas towards songs, so that definitely helped.

**You sing, play keyboards, play guitar, what other musical talents do you have?**

I can, for demos play base and drums. I can figure out parts. I don't know if I would play them live, I wouldn't say I was a good musician in that respect. I can get by with a guitar.

**How does it feel to be considered a solo artist now? How does that change your whole music perspective?**

I guess that's what this record's about, to see if I can be a solo artist, to see if I can stand on my own two feet.

**How does this album differ from your other solo albums in the past?**

Albums always capture different moments you're in. As a solo artist, whoever I play with can change parts of how I sound. I mean, not everything. I feel that's the biggest difference, I have a band so I have that sound. I feel like I found more of a voice.

**And how does this band differ from The Strokes?**

With The Strokes we came together before anything and dedicated ourselves to each other, it's a different vibe. You can't really compare 15 years of friendship and working together to finding people to play music with.

**Was that your first band?**

I always dabbled playing music with other people growing up, but that was my first like real band. Kind of lucked out on that one. [Laughs]

**Your new album has a very polished feel to it.**

I let Gus Oberg, who co-produces my stuff, push me in different places depending on how he's feeling. I think together without knowing it, we were just trying to do a record to be entertaining, to be heard by people. Ben Baptie mixed it and helped put everything together. There are so many steps, so it's hard to define in a sentence why it feels like that. Maybe all the players, plus him, plus where I was. I definitely felt it when I was singing. I worked hard on the melody and the lyrics so they could stand up into the recordings. Sometimes I would sing stuff that was okay, some really sucked [laughs]. But the recordings were always really good. It was fun, it was challenging.

**What do you enjoy the most about performing live?**

Well definitely having a new album, I'm excited to push it. Also having a back catalog of songs people know and like, I get to enjoy both. I'm trying to convert people. Half the audience is there because they want to be there. Some people are there just seeing if they'll even like you. It's connecting people, its right in the moment, you're playing music live. It's pretty intense.

**Have you ever had an emotional breakdown while playing live? Like freaked out because you were really happy or really sad?**

Yeah, I got choked up once when I was playing. My mom had came to the show. I told her that I was going to sing this one song and dedicate it to all the encouragement she gave me over the years, and I didn't realized how much it would choke me up. Before I sang, I had to wait like one second more before I turned around, because I had a thing in my throat. Yeah, I wasn't expecting that.

**Do you ever write music with your dad?**

I don't. At an early age he definitely helped give me a good sense of work ethic. I think he almost gave me a sense of fear about it as well to make sure I wanted to do it because I loved it and not because I was trying to be famous or something. So that was good. It definitely kept pushing me; I think it still does. He's starting to play a lot of shows now. He plays like 80 shows a year, he's getting bigger and bigger.

**Do you think you'll ever record something with him?**

I did a little thing with him. I don't know, its like one of those things where I just like having my dad and not sharing that part of my life. I imagine he would like to, but I just... Maybe now is a better time I could do that. When I was younger, my insecurities were too hard to deal with and then also work with a parent. [Laughs]

**What got you into music? When did you first realize you wanted to play?**

I fell in love will Buddy Holly. I also saw some musical where they tell a story and sing songs on stage, its not like they're singing the story like *Jersey Boys* - I don't know I can't ex-

plain it, but it was good. I was so young, and it was so long ago. But really I just fell in love with the idea that someone, this guy Buddy Holly wrote songs and sang them, and that was what he did. He seemed so fun as a character. I was like, 'I want to be that character.'

**What is your creative process now? Where do you find yourself writing the most music and lyrics or thinking of melodies?**

It's just little baby steps. A little bit every day, and you go from extreme nothings or everything's terrible to things are really good, and you know exactly what you want to do then back to I don't know what I'm doing. I think it's just that conversation you have in your head constantly. I don't know when things just come out, I don't know how that comes out. They just do. Hopefully I can record them so I can always go back. [Laughs]

**Do you ever feel vulnerable baring your all for people?**

Sure. I woke this morning feeling like I spoke all day. Usually that happens after I'm talking about myself all day. Then I'm just like, 'Oh did I leave anything?', or sometimes I want to change your mind; nothing is set in stone. I don't know, I'm just figuring things out. It can also happen when I record. I love a record then I'm like, 'I don't want to release it!' That's just life I guess. Whatever happens, whatever I get from it, from the process of writing and touring and playing live, is worth whatever feelings of being vulnerable.

**What are you looking for to the most with playing Momentary Masters?**

I just can't wait to play the whole record! It feels like I can play just that record and go tour and it'll be a fun show. I've been practicing it a lot, the guys in the band have been practicing, so I just can't wait to get in a room and play it together. Then get over that hurdle of the beginning, then just being really good and sounding a little different from the record, because we've played it so much. That's the exciting part.

**How long did it take from writing everything to getting the done deal?**

Well with the writing, I can't really tell because it's always happening. For the album, we started in the summer. We did a week, I had three songs roughly sketched out. It went well. We did another week in September then a week in December, then I did like 2-3 weeks in December and January, then we mixed and mastered in February. It was pretty fast considering it was only six weeks, but it was spread out because everyone does other work. I can't get my guys whenever I want.

**And lastly, tell us what a dream day would be like for you. Like you just woke up and can do anything and everything you want to do. What would you do?**

I mean it depends. Sometimes I feel like I live those days, it depends how I'm feeling you know. If I have full energy, the day was nice, I'd go for a long motorcycle ride, eat some good food and watch some good TV.



# CODY SIMPSON

plaid, Azul by Moussy . leather jacket , Early Morning Rebels  
opposite: tank top, Asos . beanie, Urban Outfitters

photos / Angelo Kritikos  
story / Jasmine Lake  
stylist / Wilford Lenov



You probably know Cody Simpson as the heartthrob musician with sun-streaked Aussie locks and delectable pop hits to match. But take a listen to just one of the tracks on his new album *Free*, and it is apparent that this young adult has something to say. *Free*, released independently through Simpson's Coast House Records, marks a new chapter for the musician. It's fresh nostalgia, equal parts pop rock and blues.

LADYGUNN chits and chats with Cody before he hits the road for tour. We get the real on his music muses, funky fashion and what it means to pick a flower for a girl. Cody is not playing by the rules anymore, and we are cool with that.

**This album feels so personal. Tell me a bit about your songwriting process and what inspires you.**

*Free* is my first album, my first project distributed through my very own Coast House records, the first time I've had the creative freedom to find my feet as a musician, singer/songwriter and guitar player. The songwriting process flowed quite freely. I'm 18 and developing all of my views and philosophies on things: the world, life, the environment, politics, etc.

I think I'm inspired by whatever is around me at the time and whatever is relevant in my mind. Whether it be a woman, an idea, an animal, a friend. It doesn't really matter; poetry is a free-flowing activity and can almost adopt different meanings during the development.

**"Flower" is such a beautiful song, it gets me every time. What is this story about this track, what is it about? What kind of woman is worth picking a flower for?**

The song is actually a metaphor for the first time I got high with a girl. A cool chick that I knew I was never going to date or marry or anything, but we were into each other at the time and wanted to just sit back and listen to tunes and watch the ocean. The verses of the song were freestyled kind of randomly to symbolize free-flowing ideas and the "pick you a flower" metaphor is quite obvious [laughs].

**You are constantly switching up the fashion game and are leading the new Ralph Lauren campaign this fall with Tinashé. Describe your personal style. What does fashion mean to you?**

On a day-to-day basis, I dress like any other of my friends. Usually just a tee, jeans, Vans or Converse and a cap. Casual street wear. Being a musician though allows me the freedom to sometimes be a little more rock 'n' roll than that. I love thrift shopping, picking up cool vintage pieces on the road. I have some cool leather jackets and old band tees. Fashion is just a way of stating who you are whether it be intentional or not.

**Who was your biggest influence musically growing up?**

Johnny Cash, John Denver, James Taylor.

**If Cody Simpson had a completely free day and could be doing anything, anywhere in the world, he would be...**

Back home on the Gold Coast with my mates, chilling, soaking up some Aussie sun in the surf, having a BBQ with some pretty girls and whipping out the guitars for the old serenade and sing-along!

**People who think they know Cody would be surprised to learn that...**

Being some sort of celebrity is the last thing I want to be! People used to make me do bullshit celebrity stuff when I was young and impressionable and had just moved to the states. That's the furthest from who I am. All I care about is playing music and a being a teenager.

**You have toured and traveled all over the world. What was one of your favorite shows and why?**

Playing a recent intimate gig on the Gold Coast for all of my family and friends was super cool. It was so rewarding being able to jam all of my new tunes for those closest to me and share with them why I'm doing what I'm doing. Just an unreal feeling.

**You are about to head on tour, Singapore, Tokyo, all across the US. Tell me a bit about tour life. What's life like on the road? Any secrets you can share about this particular tour that fans can look forward to?**

Life on the road is very spontaneous and fast. Anything can happen at any time. I usually just try and keep my head buried and play as well as possible each gig. Now that I have my freedom, I'm just playing these new tunes from *Free* and jamming some blues and some cool old school covers with the band. Some people are taken by surprise, but that's the way we like it!

**With new digital platforms like YouTube, Soundcloud, etc., technology has provided a new platform for artists to express themselves. As someone who was discovered online, where do you think the music industry is headed?**

I think we're headed towards an era in which a live experience is the most valuable thing there is. With music and everything else being so accessible so immediately, a live gig is the only thing that is not.

**You recently performed at the Special Olympics. Your performance of "Reach Up" was incredibly moving. Are there any other causes that are near to your heart?**

I work alongside the United Nations on a few on their humanitarian and environmental causes. Also the Surfrider foundation. The environment must be preserved and [being] a musician incorporating some of those messages into my music is the bare minimum.

**What inspires you the most about making music?**

That it's the most freeing job in the world. There are no boundaries. I hate boundaries!



**THE**



# PINUP

*Photographer+ Art Direction / Dustin Hollywood  
Model+Styling / Devon Trunk*



above: jeans and bodysuit , stylist own.

this page: jacket, Adidas. thong, American Apparel. tights, Wolford.

opposite page: socks, American Apparel. boots, Dr Martens.





QUIXOTE

Because everyone on set should feel like a VIP

A woman wearing a dark t-shirt, dark pants, and a cap is standing on the steps of a white trailer. The trailer has the word "Verde" in green letters with a green star below it. The trailer is parked on a dark surface, and the scene is lit with a blueish light. A large fan is visible on the right side of the trailer.

Quixote.com

The Quixote logo, which is a stylized 'Q' inside a circle.

Designed, Cut and Sewn  
in Los Angeles



**American Apparel**