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it's fifteen minutes to **grimes**.

DISPLAY UNTIL
07/02/16

ISSN 2251-3639



9 772251 363029 39

Jan
2016
39
SGD 5.90



It's easy to mistake Grimes as the quirky girl - there is, after all, a whole lot of evidence that points to this. The 27-year-old Canadian did, after all, write a song in Mandarin, filled with aggressive rapping and weird swailing on a bass-heavy soundtrack, one that she collaborated with Taiwanese rapper, Aristophanes, on. She screams over her tracks at times, something she says she has learned to incorporate after having performed live. And she did spend 11 years twirling in a ballerina skirt, only to shave her head after discovering goth music. Her muses include, naturally, Siouxsie O'Connor, "because I really relate to how she seems too weird to be popular, but is accidentally popular, regardless".

The multi-talented singer also designs her own album artwork, plus, 14 unique illustrations that accompany every track on her album. "REALITY" sees a dinosaur-like skull, grotesque eyeballs looping out of its empty eye sockets, embellished with clouds and fire, kind of like the headband doodles the really artistic people you know used to sketch on their textbook covers. Then, there are wings and flowers and heart shapes and ribbons, amidst teeth and leopard spots. They look like the stuff you see on DeviantArt.

It also says a lot when you like an entire music video, based on a yet-unreleased song, on a whim. But that's the kind of free-spirited person Grimes is, and exactly how the single, "REALITY", was revealed to the world. Also, fun fact: the music video was filmed in Singapore, with Gardens by the Bay and Haw Par Villa forming an impressive backdrop to her kooky dance moves. That's interesting because most of us haven't stepped into the abandoned, creepy Haw Par Villa theme park in years, but it's immediately appealing to Blouche.

She chimes in: "Well, it's interesting because we never actually meant to make a "REALITY" music video, and my team didn't even know my brother and I had made it." The opportunity arose when they had a week off in Singapore, single time to shoot a video, she says, and also because her brother used to live in Singapore and knew about the places. "We went to Haw Par Villa because we hoped no one would stop us there, and they didn't. Plus the creepy statues are amazing! My favourite shots are from that insane purple waterfall though."

But hold on before you classify her as an annoying trope that's been floating about the Internet on Thought Catalog and BuzzFeed lists - the now ubiquitous Manic Phase Dream Girl. Think Zoe Lister-Jones's character in *500 Days of Summer* or Natalie Portman's in *Garden State*. In no way does Grimes fit into that stereotype of surface-level-only quirkiness. Sure, she might have a certain knack for a dance style that rivals Drake's "Hotline Bling" video, except this isn't ironic or affected.

For one, she's both thoughtful and authentic, based on her frequent Tumblr postings, where she often drops new material, new artwork, or writes about what she's currently up to. It's where she gets to express her thoughts - not necessarily connected with her lens, but be honest. And that makes all the difference. Grimes isn't some sort of manufactured pop star that trends carefully with every Instagram caption, plus, we know how that kind of image is really built on the quick-thinking decisions of managers that work tirelessly behind the scenes.

She's daring, and the Internet gives her a platform to air her musings, especially the ones that go against the status quo. As a female musician who works independently and loves discovering new ways to make music, she certainly has something to say about the male-dominated music industry. "I'm tired of men who aren't professional or even accomplished musicians continually offering to 'help me out' (without being asked), as if I did this by accident and I'm gonna flounder without them," she laments in a 2013 Tumblr post. "Or, as if the fact that I'm a woman makes me incapable of using technology. I have never seen this kind of thing happen to any of my male peers..." "Normally, any other pop star would have to take the post down and apologize as humbly as possible. Not Grimes."

On the other end of the spectrum, it's the online realm where she also gets to be personal, by responding directly to her listeners. "I guess it's sort of a sad song. I was crying when I recorded it, I hope that's okay, but I hope it brings joy," she says of "Life in the Wild Dream", responding to a question posted on her Facebook page. Of course, being Grimes, she approaches these connections with the utmost casual air. To her, it's just being a person.

"Luckily, my good friends don't really acknowledge my success and are pretty down-to-earth. Most days, I forget that Grimes is popular. I like to hang out and watch my friends play video games and make spaghetti," she says.

119

dress by adam lippes; coat by louis vuitton; and choker by lady grey.



That's kind of how she got involved in music in the first place - not some kind of dramatic story, but purely by experimenting with friends. While studying at McGill University in Montreal, she volunteered to do some background vocals for some of her gay friends, only realising later that she, too, could use the same software to create tracks of her own. Even without knowing how to play the actual instruments, she was fiddling around with guitars and drums on a computer. This led to the release of her first two albums, *Geist* (Prison on cassette), and *Haltax*, both in 2012. She named her first album after a fictional planet in *Dune*, a series of novels by Frank Herbert, which she declares to us is one of her favourite science fiction series. They also create a nice context for her futuristic-sounding music.

But it was really 2012's *Visions* that the musician exploded onto the scene, and all across the Internet, to captivate audiences everywhere. Signed under record label 4AD, and recorded entirely using Apple's GarageBand software, it's an album that plays on her strengths: that notable do-it-yourself mindset, coupled with obsessive music-making. Based on the wealth of interviews and quotable quotes she has since had, the album was created with just a few hundred dollars worth of gear in her bedroom. Boucher takes the whole "bedroom musician" idea to an extreme - she wrote and recorded everything at night, under blacked-out windows, isolated and alone for three weeks, with the goal of letting her subconscious fill in the blanks. It's a fine-line-through album, though the musician acknowledges that she did feel the pressure to put out a follow-up album closely behind. "But I wasn't super concerned with it," she says. "Most great artists don't release albums often, especially artists who don't work with producers or songwriters. I would hate Grimes to rest on hype, which is a reason I wanted to go away and make something great rather than try to capitalise on the success of *Visions*," she continues.

"I actually think the long lead time has been helpful, because people are very excited for new art," she laughs. "If I'm not satisfied with my record then I can't expect anyone else to be, so I didn't really have a choice. I had to keep working until it was of the highest quality."

At one point though, the hype over new material got so intense that there were talks of a first album. In the interim, in 2014, she had released a song and video titled "Go", originally penned for Rihanna, and meant as a thank-you to her fans. The unfortunate controversy surrounding it though, was that the song was reportedly rejected by the famous pop star and her team, and rumours were rife that Grimes has scrapped an entire album after negative fan reactions to the song. Boucher has denied this repeatedly, though she admits to having had enough material for an in-between album. On why she decided to drop the project, she says, "It was a lot of things, but mostly, I got a new computer and kind of wanted to start again with a fresh slate. I had so many unfinished songs, it was kind of daunting. It seemed easier to just make something new."

That's not to say that she didn't do anything "productive" after *Visions*. In her own words, she learned how to sing and play live music and numerous instruments, toured the world and built up a strong live act and following; created a book of illustrations; and wrote, produced and performed hundreds of songs. "I also learned how to colour and do digital art. I directed, edited, coloured and starred in some music videos and moved to Los Angeles. I also took some time to relax and make friends. I got to do some writing sessions and learn about music," she says.

dress by adam lippe; choker and cuff (left hand) by lady grey; and rings and cuff (right hand) by carrie k.

123





