



Sofi Tukker is redefining the definition of what it means to be the cool kids

By **Murjani Rawls** - Dec 17, 2019

In the conventional sense, we know Sofi Tukker as a German-American, highly musical and bombastic duo comprised of Sophie Hawley-Weld and Tucker Halpern. If you take a look at the video for their most recent single, 'Purple Hat,' the embodiment of Sofi Tukker is so much more. Fans are seen walking up to the venue with different colored hair and leopard print. People from all different backgrounds and orientations permeate the crowd. Sofi Tukker is a safe space for

everyone involved to be their authentic selves without judgment. The only requirement is to dance the night away or in your room. Pass the infectious happiness on to each other.

2019 started on a high note, where the duo was able to celebrate their Grammy nomination with a performance of their hit song, “Best Friend.” Ready to take on the world as they normally do, unfortunately, Hawley-Weld broke her foot in a tour stop in Australia. While they may have been grounded temporarily, that didn’t stop the duo from working on music. Their latest EP, *Dancing Off The People* channels all the pent up energy that they couldn’t get out in their trademark shows.

Hawley-Weld recently took to [Instagram](#) and gave her gratitude to the crazy year the band has had. It’s that constant state of thankfulness and warmth that not only keeps Sofi Tukker exuberant and vibrant, but makes more and more people want to join the club. Enjoying a well-deserved rest before heading back out on the road in 2020, I spoke to the duo about their crazy year.

It’s been an eventful 2019 starting with your Grammy performance at the beginning of the year. Unfortunately, there was an injury and you had to cancel some tour dates. However, you were able to use that time to work on music. If you’ve ever been to a Sofi Tukker show, there’s an electricity that you can’t get anywhere else. Because you couldn’t perform, how did you channel all of that into recording?

Thank you! More than anything, we really recovered. It’s extremely energy-giving and life-affirming to perform and leave it all out on the stage, but it’s also exhausting. We took the time to rest and let ourselves reset, which we hadn’t done... really almost ever since we started the band. It meant that once we started touring again, we had so much energy to share and let out! We definitely had more spare energy to channel into the music. We hadn’t had the mind space to really figure out and finish Purple Hat until we took some time off the road.

The Dominican Republic is a beautiful place that is very rich in tradition and culture. How did your trip influence the making of this EP? ‘Swing’ definitely kicks *Dancing Off The People* with that flavor.

Right after we got back from the Dominican Republic, we wrote “Playa Grande”. That was the first song we made for the EP and it really sets the tone. It’s a song about dancing, it’s an ode to nature, and to friendship. Most of the songs on the EP have that flavor, in some way or another.

The collaboration you both had with Bomba Estero on 'Playa Grande' is so creative. It's sung in three different languages. How did it come about?

We started it in English and Portuguese as a collaboration with the Brazilian poet, Chacal, who we work with a lot. We didn't know exactly what to do with the song for a while. We had met Bomba Estero through a mutual friend and had been seeing each other all around the world at different festivals. We have both been huge fans of one another for a while and wanted to collaborate but hadn't found the right time or song yet. The sonic palette of Playa Grande is so colorful and fun and it reminded us of them, so we just sent it to them, and their contributions really made it better –and it became trilingual!

Most of the EP is a celebration of energy and the Sofi Tukker zeal that you would expect, but the song 'Fantasy,' was born out of the feeling of loneliness. Everybody gets to see Sofi Tukker as one thing, but with this song, I love that you brought that real human and transparent element to this song. How do you cope with being alone when all the bombast of touring and celebration is gone?

Most of what we do is a celebration of energy and is about togetherness, but that's also specifically because we know what it's like to feel isolated and to feel down. We like to use our music as a kind of balm for those feelings, sometimes just by jumping to joy, but sometimes—as is the case with this song—to really confront it head-on. It's a different coping mechanism.

This song was born during a time where I (Sophie) was particularly lonely on the road. I've learned now to bring our friends on the road when we can and to go out of my way to keep my friends and family close, but at the time, I was dealing with migraines and, when I wasn't on stage, I was often in a dark room in discomfort.

We wanted to make this song both vulnerable/emotional AND cathartic/dancey so that you could sing it at the top of your lungs while being on the dance floor.

I'm a big fan of the production on "Ringless." There are a couple of lines that stick out to me: *I'm more than the worst thing I've ever done/I'm less than the best thing I've ever won.*" Nobody is perfect and it terms of being in another person's vision, have you ever felt the sting of judgment like that? Does it get to a point where you've said, "hey, I'm more than my past or even my present?"

Absolutely. All the time. I think it's as dangerous to associate with positive things as it is with negative things. I'm not my accolades and awards, I'm not my success, I'm actually more than that. I'm a living, breathing, always evolving being. In the same way that I am not my mistakes or failures. It's a shift from defining oneself by "what I have done" to "who I am", which I think is ultimately about a lot more than what you have done, or even what you will do. It's very Buddhist: I'm just a bundle of sense perceptions. And I think that is very freeing and forgiving and really spirit giving.

That sort of motif continues with "Like This." *Speaking In Absolutes/may be destructive/may be stupid.* I feel when listening to that song, it could apply to anything. Relationships, friendships, but also someone trying to place Sofi Tukker into a particular box. Musically and from a lyrical standpoint, I feel this EP touches on that a lot. In a musical landscape that goes with a lot of fads, how do you keep striving to stand out?

Thank you. I don't think we strive to stand out so much as we strive to tell the truth. I want my lyrics to come from a place of real experience and honest reflection. I threw in a bunch of crazy lines into "Like This" that almost feel hidden because it's such a light and bouncy song for such introspective lyrics. I'm glad you found them.

With 'Purple Hat,' I think it's a perfect collision of the visual and the party that the song describes. It's the embodiment of what Sofi Tukker is about. "Purple Hat, Cheetah print" – things that people would normally think that would clash, but you make them work. How do you feel that this band is a haven for people who don't feel like they can fit in, but when they go to a Sofi Tukker show or put on a song, they feel at home?

That makes us so happy. That is exactly our intention. There is nothing more inspiring than being around people who are 100% freely themselves. It's what gives us life, and it really is how we should all feel all the time. Unfortunately, there are a lot of spaces that actively try to suppress all sorts of things in people and so we definitely go out of our way to make our shows a safe haven and a place to let it all out, together.

A new decade is upon us. As you both are finishing up some European Tour dates, I'm sure you're ready to get back out on the road in 2020. Will there be new music on the horizon as well?

Yes, lots more music! We are spending the first couple weeks of the year finishing up all the music we've been brewing for a while and consolidating it into a cohesive project. And then we are going to start sharing the new music really soon!

Murjani Rawls

<http://mjrawls.com>

Journalist, Self-published author of five books, podcast host of The War Report and The Final Cut, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls has been stretching his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed over 200+ artists spanning many genres, written over 700 articles ranging displaying his passionate aspirations to keep evolving as his years in media continue.

