



STARBUCKS®

Living out pop dreams

► Chloe Qisha speaks about her musical journey upon release of debut EP

■ BY JOHN TAN

MUSIC may be her number one priority now but Chloe Qisha initially did not see a career in music for herself. Despite her obvious musical artistry early on, the Kuala Lumpur native thought it was not a viable career option.

She had set her mind on completing her studies in the UK. But, fate stepped in and nudged her to realise her musical potential during her third year at university.

"I was 20 or 21 and I received an email from an artiste & repertoire guy and met up with him. He pointed me in the right direction of people who I should be meeting. It was managers, lawyers and other musicians.

"And I just went on that path for two years, which eventually led me to songwriting. It made me realise music was what I should be focusing on," said the psychology graduate.

She then met with her collaborator Rob Milton, who helped discover her sound, resulting in the release of her recent self-titled debut EP. In an exclusive interview with *theSun*, Chloe opens up about herself and her musical journey thus far.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in Kuala Lumpur. My house was in Damansara Jaya and I studied in an international school until I was 16.

I then moved to the UK for school and stayed on for university, eventually getting into music during my first degree.

Do you remember the first song you wrote? How old were you and what was it about?

It is difficult to say because I wrote silly jingles when I was 16 to 18. I was experimenting because they were not full songs.

I only started writing proper pop songs when I was 20 or 21. But, I do not remember the titles. It was all probably a little explicit in nature, knowing me. Nothing has changed in that aspect but I think it would have been about having a crush on someone.

Who are some of your musical heroes?

My parents, for one, always listened to 80s music and refused to listen to anything else. So, for my mum, it was always *Tears for Fears* on a loop. For my dad, it was Motown and light orchestra. So, I was always really influenced by 80s music growing up. But, I was also the biggest pop girly ever. I was into Katy Perry's *Teenage Dreams* era.

I was just a real pop queen when I was younger. But, Troye Sivan is one artiste who has followed me through the ages. He is just an incredible artiste and his music has aged with me so well. He has been a big inspiration and reference for me as an artiste. I would say my favourite tune of his would be *One of Your Girls*. It is just a classic banger.

Before the release of your EP, you released *I Lied*, *I'm Sorry* and *Sexy Goodbye*. Could you tell us a bit about the songs?

It feels like it was so long ago. With *I Lied*, we wrote it at the beginning of this year. We wrote it through sonic references. I remember I had



Chloe's sound can best be described as alternative pop. — ALL PICS COURTESY OF LILLIE EIGER

just finished this Apple TV show called *The Buccaneers*. The theme song of that show was a cover of an LCD Soundsystem song, which is a band from the 80s. It was called *North American Scum*. I brought that reference in and asked Milton if he had the song, thinking it was a new song.

He told me it was a cover of a famous band. And I think we just spent that whole session listening to one of their albums with that song in it. The production was insane and so through that, we ended up with an infectious loop.

We built the song from there. As for the love story, it was my own

experience when I was a teen. It is about that awkward first connection you have with somebody and you do not know how to express it.

And, it feels a bit embarrassing at times because you do not know whether they like you back. So, I wanted to encapsulate that feeling. As for *Sexy Goodbye*, we were again just messing around.

We did not know what we were going to write. I think Sivan was a reference sonically. Thanks to Milton, we landed on something that was super catchy. As for the lyrics, we were quite silly with it. We were just listing girl names for the pre-chorus.

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She is set to headline a show at Omeara London next March.



She pursued music professionally while studying in university.