



# SID SIMONS MAKES HIS MARK ON HOUSTON

The folk-rock artist gets real about his first solo- album "Beneath the Brightest Smiles"





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it back, buckle up, and get ready for the ride: Sid Simons has a story to tell. The Oregon-born musician has traveled far and wide and has now settled right here in New York City to share his music. From road trip stories, to ballads, to sanguine love songs, Sid Simons is unafraid to wear his heart on his sleeve.

In 2020, his folk-rock band formerly known as Girl Skin, released its debut album *Shade is on the Other Side*. and has since been performing in venues like New York's Mercury Lounge. Performing at local colleges, Simons has become a staple name in the New York music scene. I had the chance to have a video call with Simons and ask him about his upcoming project.

Among the likes of Bowie, Mazzy Star, and the swagger of Iggy Pop is where we find the talented singer songwriter. Describing the band's sound as "indie" would be too broad, as they integrate aspects of rock, soothing folk, and shoe-gaze dramatics (a sound in which the distinctions between instruments and vocals are blurred) all accompanied by Simon's timeless voice.

Of course, as with any great band, sound and music influences are ever changing. Pulling inspiration from 60s rock and soul while adding his own modern twist, Simon's says that the music is really influenced by whatever he's listening to at the moment. He pauses for a moment fiddling with a match box on his desk, contemplating if he should explain further. "It's easy to tell when a band is going for a certain sound. It sounds like they're copying and feels in-genuine" he tells me. When you have multiple influences coming in one direction, that's when the magic happens.

From Oregon to Australia, to New York to China, and back again- Simons has had an unorthodox journey to landing back in NYC. When he was a young teen, his father got a job in Shanghai, Simons and his family moved out there for work. Not knowing anyone there, he kept busy with an old guitar his cousin had given him.

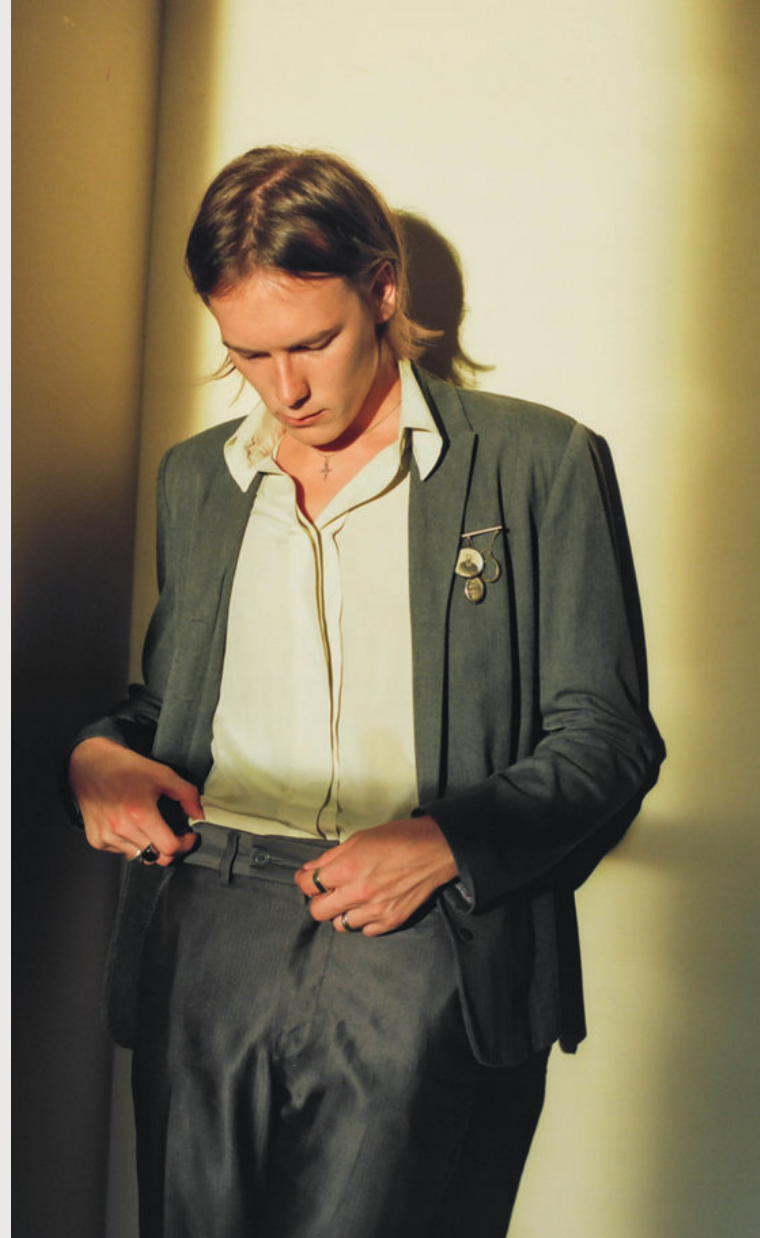
“The guitar basically became my friend, I became totally obsessed with it”

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Sitting in the quiet corners of his room, guitar in hand, Simons began working on his first album, a body of work that would encompass the feelings of love and yearning. Taking unexpected turns in some songs to the more lyrically dramatic. Songs like “Soft Gun” and “Darling” having a more folksy, upbeat tone while others like “Star” being a more emotional ballad. The album gracefully takes the listener on an eloquently dramatic journey.

Having only seven days to produce the second album, the band decided to bring in a producer. Simons brought in Gordon Raphael, known for his production work with The Strokes, who helped keep Simons and the band focused and on schedule.

“You need other collaborators in the process even just to tell you ‘Hey, the song is done,’” Simons tells me, recounting how his creative process has changed in his upcoming album. Collaboration is an important part of the writing process for Simons, telling me that he’ll bring in stem of a song, and the band and him will string the song together.



“Its like putting together a painting. I’ll bring the canvas and we all just put the painting together.”

Upon returning to the US from his time in China, Simons decided to hop in his car and embark on a 2-month road trip across America. His nomadic upbringing and road trip adventures inspired his parts of his next album, Beneath the Brightest Smiles.



His new single “Wendy” just released tells the story of a woman who seems to be a bit “topsy-turvy” and has got “something on her mind”. This witty track is actually about a malfunctioning GPS, determined to off road Simons and his friend on their road trip. While this tongue and cheek song has a humorous sensibility to it, the album takes twists and turns throughout the tracks. This is a “no shuffle” album, meant to take the listener on an emotional journey.

“You get yourself into situations you normally wouldn’t if you were with family or friends,” he says. It’s about being on your own in the world and finding new parts of yourself you wouldn’t have found if you didn’t take that risk.

As the first album released under his own name, Simons is stepping out of his comfort zone with this one. “If people come away laughing and crying that’s kinda the goal,” he tells me. His debut solo album will be released June 23rd, available on all streaming platforms. It’s clear the talented musician has some big plans up his sleeve, and personally, we can’t wait to see what he does next.

Written by Colleen Rodgers



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