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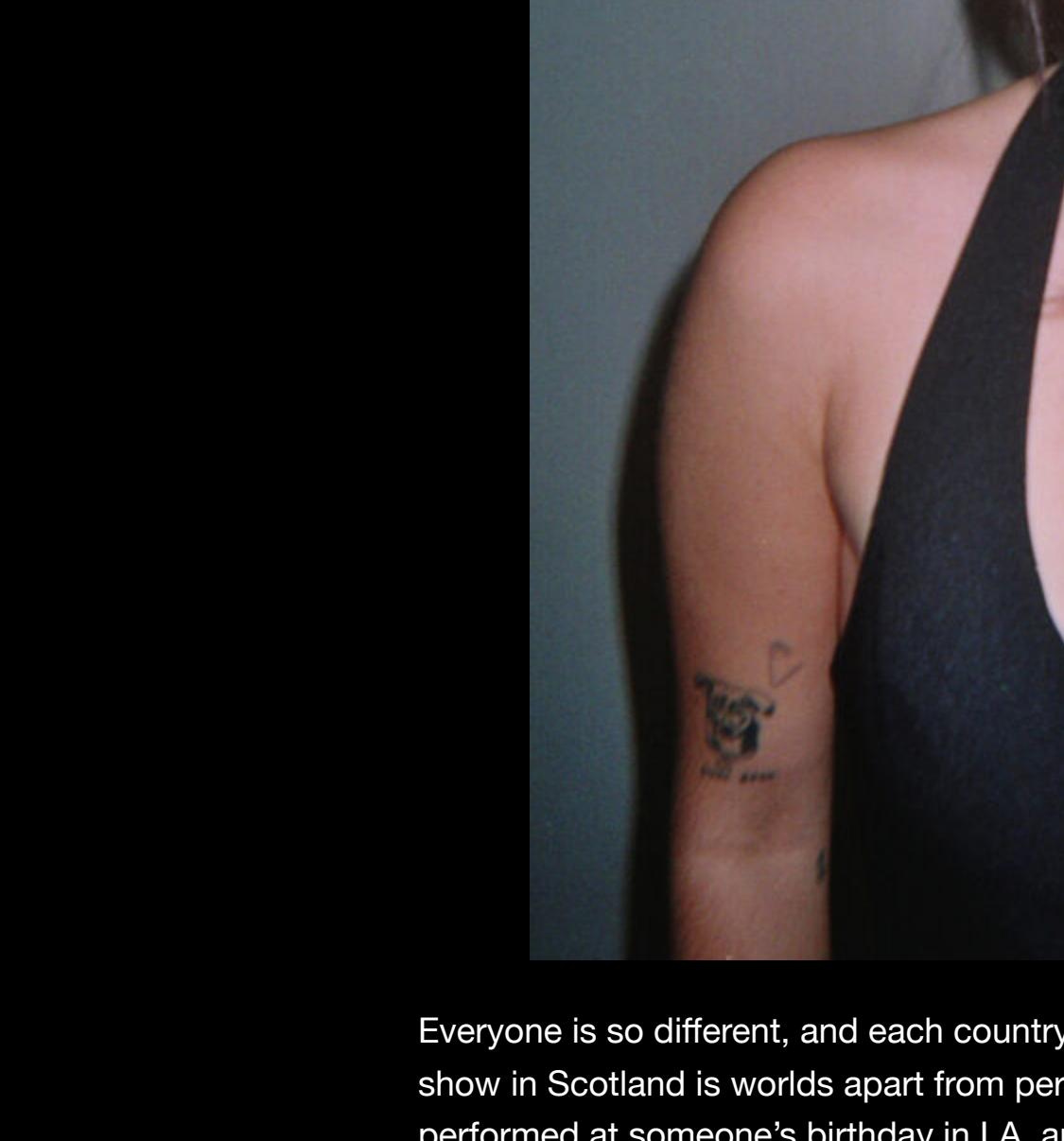
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From releasing her debut album 'dear amelia' this year, working alongside Travis Barker, Jake Bugg and Mike Shinoda, to having just completed her first European tour, renforshort has come a long way since her 'teenage angst' days. She is paving her way through the industry and cementing her name as a culture shifter and a creative that is not going away soon. LOOP Magazine caught up with the Canadian star after her first overseas tour.

How was the European tour, and which country/city was your favourite to perform in?

We just finished a couple of weeks in Cologne, and it was amazing. I'm back in LA now, and having thought about it, I'm going to have to say London; I really enjoyed the atmosphere.

How did you find navigating the variety of fan bases across the world? As each has its distinctive style of supporting your music.



Everyone is so different, and each country gave me a completely different energy, like playing a show in Scotland is worlds apart from performing in LA. For example, after my last tour, I performed at someone's birthday in LA, and I turned to the crowd and said, 'Guys, I have a really fun idea; let's just pretend we are at a full-blown show right now', and then when you go to Scotland, it's like damn I have to match their energy as it's on a completely different scale. That's been the trend with a lot of the UK and most of Europe; there is excitement to just be at a show which is awesome.

Would you say there is a huge difference between your US fanbase and your UK fanbase, and what challenges does that bring to you as an artist paving their way?

Each respective country has its own fanbase dynamic, but I've never performed a show where I felt like the fans didn't want to be there, which is really awesome, as other people's fanbases can vary. For example, if I were opening up for Jacob Collier, his fanbase would be listening to every musical note that left my mouth because that's who his fanbase is; they're interested in the intricacies and complexities of a musical piece. However, with my fanbase, I just feel like they are always so excited and incredibly sweet. So I feel really lucky, as it just makes me even more excited to perform and create music.

Were you able to work on any sessions whilst you were touring around Europe?

I wasn't able to, unfortunately. I had debated staying a little bit longer in the UK to work with a few producers there. There are a lot of producers I really like working with in the UK.

I feel like your musical style is very embedded in America, yet you have made a splash here in the UK. With the UK having huge stylistic influences like indie-rock, Brit-pop and others that seem fitting to your direction. Would you say these styles marry well with the music you have created in the past or that you are looking to adopt for future releases?



Yeah, definitely. There is a reason my music is received well in the UK. Most of my musical inspirations come from the UK (Pink Floyd being one of them), so I think there are a lot of sounds I've adopted that originate from there. I find a lot of inspiration from the musical scene there, Pop! is one of my favourite bands of all time, so that gives you a sense of how I envision my musical direction.

What's it like for you now that you are off tour and have the time to reflect on this monumental feat in your career? Looking at your career, you have not been in the industry for the longest time, professionally – three-years to be precise. It has been a steadily inclining trajectory and doesn't seem like it will stop anytime soon; what has it been like for you to see all this unfold, especially the success you have achieved as an upcoming artist?

I see it continuing to grow – my first show in London was over two years ago and I had played to maybe thirty-people? Then last year in London I played a show to roughly three hundred people, and this time it was around eight hundred people. You see that natural growth and it feels good and it's something I want to see continue. To have my music resonate with more people, and have more people find catharsis in my music. For me, sitting back and reflecting on the run I just had, I get very emotional about it. Like two nights ago, I had a few glasses of wine sitting with my boyfriend at home. He wasn't able to come with me on the European tour, but has been to a fair few of the American ones so understands the current process that's unfolding. I just sat there balling my eyes out, saying, 'You don't understand how cool this is!'. Even after one of the shows, I remember texting him, 'Little Lauren would be so happy!'. Even though I'm not playing arenas, there is just a natural growth that you see, and it makes it all worthwhile.

It's so common as an artist to feel stuck, especially during a quiet period where you are not releasing any music or not performing shows. You start to feel as if your career is over when that's not the case.

Is it similar to impostor syndrome? Oh, one hundred per cent, it's the worst. So moments like these allow for a positive feedback loop, to see how your music is resonating with people and the impact it's having.

That's really encouraging to hear, especially with all the work you placed into your debut album 'dear amelia', which released earlier this year and your ability to play it across Europe to thousands upon thousands of fans. You definitely hear a maturing process in your musical journey from your EP 'Teenage Angst', to your most recent release. Is this a sound you will continue to experiment with and explore in future projects, or are you looking to change your sound in upcoming releases?

I always want to improve my sound in any way that I can, as I don't like feeling conformed to a certain sound. I have an idea of what I want to do in the next project and what I want it to sound like and the topics discussed in these future projects. Continuously improving my sound is really vital to me.

With that being said, what would you call your current sound – it's alternative, it's pop, but it's also very experimental, especially with synthesizers. Even though you don't want to put it in a box, what would you call it?

Well, I'm happy that you said alternative-pop and not pop-punk, because people say pop-punk, and I go 'where?'. So thank you for actually doing some research there! I definitely think it falls under the alternative-pop umbrella, even though that's a very loose definition. I'd describe it just how you did; I like experimenting with synthy sounds and I'm very enthralled by the post-modern approach to music, specifically, what sounded futuristic in the 80s. There are elements that I find really fascinating. Even incorporating that aesthetic into my visuals is a very comforting sound and feel for me.

What would you say were your main inspirations behind the 'dear amelia' in terms of the sounds you sought to incorporate?

The Amelia character within herself is just an orb in the caricature of a human body. It feels like something someone designed with the post-modern cap-on. Even with the 'moshpit' video, you get the instant aesthetic or feel that it's post-modern. To me, I look back at that era and I hear something, for example 'I that you were cool', that bassy synth and moody atmosphere. It all comes together, and it paints a picture through sound to me. It's definitely a sound that I want to experiment with more in future projects.

That sound is making a comeback, yet you place your unique take on it, which has resonated with fans all over, as recent events have suggested. You have worked consistently alongside Jeff Hazin, a prominent alt-pop producer, since the start of your career. How did that relationship form, and what was it like for you to work on your debut album with him?

We actually wrote my first song that was released together. So my manager, who is a close-family friend, was working at a Canadian media company a few years ago and through his network connected Jeff and I to write together. Two years before the release of my first song, Jeff and I would meet every Sunday and write songs until we found the sound that we believed fit the ren aesthetic. So we have a long working relationship.

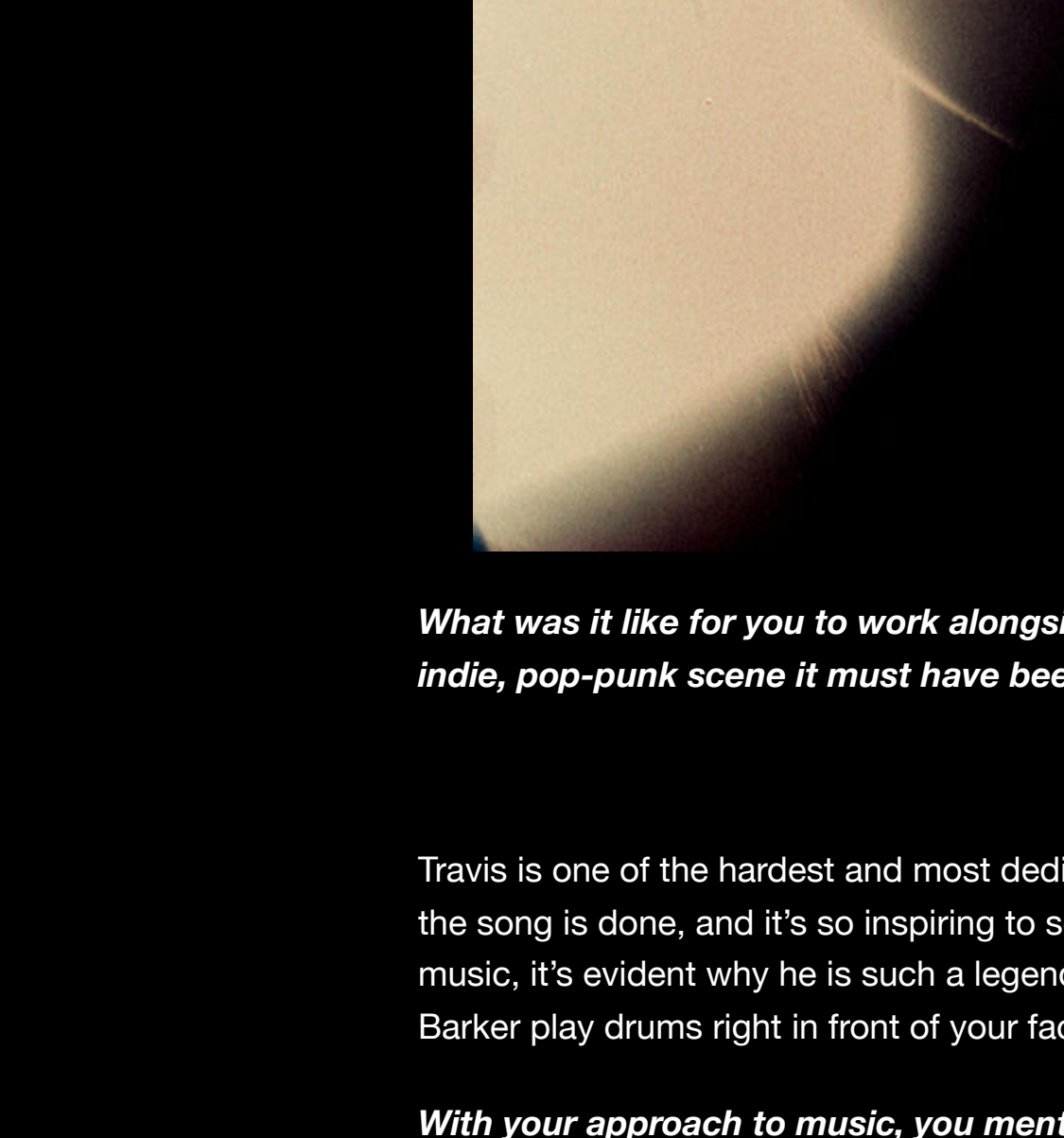
Jeff is like a brother to me, and we have very similar backgrounds; we culturally grew up the same as we both come from a family of Russian immigrants. It's just crazy how life works, and we can relate on a level outside of music and understand each other.

Through that connection, you are able to create great songs together, as understanding and musical chemistry always synergise. Do you take a lot of inspiration from your childhood in Toronto and the Canadian culture/music scene?

I think there has always been a huge difference between Canadian and American music. Growing up listening to Canadian radio, which by law has to have at least 35% Canadian content, there is such a different sound that I grew up on. The access to nature, very green and breathable environments that create a space of serenity, like behind my house there is a ravine that you could just walk along. So every time I want to work on a project I go out, as I feel very inspired by nature; it clears my mind like nothing else can. We have all these incredible artists like Feist and the Metrics who have a distinctive Canadian sound, and they are sounds I always want to incorporate in my writing.

What would you say the main differences are between the American and Canadian music scene, and how do you find yourself navigating being a Canadian artist in the American scene?

I've worked a lot in LA, as I live here, and I find the LA approach to writing music very odd. When I was making music in Toronto, we'd be starting our sessions at around 10 AM, and we are writing full songs and sitting in the studio until it's done. In LA, you start sessions at around 1 or 2 PM, which is basically the end of the day. You write a verse and a chorus, then you start scrolling through restaurants you wanna grab a bite from, and just decide to finish off the song another time. It's just really different, and I don't know if I really like it that much. Both scenes have their pros and their cons, it's way more accessible being here, and there are loads more creatives you can work alongside. You learn a lot here in LA, whereas in Toronto there is not so much scope for learning, as it's not really a thing.



What was it like for you to work alongside Travis Barker? Being a legend in the alternative, indie, pop-punk scene it must have been quite the experience for you.

Travis is one of the hardest and most dedicated workers I have ever seen. He never leaves until the song is done, and it's so inspiring to see. Once you see his work ethic and approach to music, it's evident why he is such a legend in the game. It's cool to sit in a room and watch Travis Barker play drums right in front of your face.

With your approach to music, you mentioned that it's open to interpretation and not too focused on particular events to allow listeners to fill-in the gaps with their own personal experiences. Why have you taken that approach to songwriting, rather than being linear in story-telling in a more traditional structure?

I found a lot of my inspiration for that comes from Bon Iver. You are not really supposed to read Bon Iver lyrics, as he doesn't write lyrics but what he hears. Yet it still has that emotional pull. So those gaps in the writing allow for the listener to make the song whatever they interpret it to be. The approach focuses on the idea I want to get across, but not personalising it too much to avoid becoming inaccessible to relation. Letting it be a little bit loose at some parts is good.

You are now in a position where you are a role-model for upcoming artists, who are in a similar soundscape or similar position. What would your advice be to young artists coming up through the ranks of the music industry?

The most important thing from the get is to stay authentic to what you want and what you want your art to be. It is so important as the second you divert is the second you can't turn back. I also think that you are way more powerful than people will lead you to believe because you are young. People think it is very easy to take advantage of the young. Stand your ground and don't let people manipulate you.

I think it's also very crucial to make sure you have time to yourself. You can't create without experience, so you have to enjoy life and the experiences around you but also grind a bit. It's about creating that balance to create, to feel empowered and authentic. Don't feel discouraged and keep pushing through.

What's next for Renforshort? You have released a debut album, just completed a European tour and are due to continue touring in the coming year. Where do you see yourself going next?

I'd love to tour some more places like Asia and South America, and even more areas in Central America. For me, continuing to create more music and having another project out to keep pushing myself is important, and working with new people and experimenting with music because it's cool.

Who's an artist that's currently on your radar?

You know who I love? Madi Diaz. She's incredible and "Hangover" is one of the best songs ever, and I think it deserves way more props than it has received thus far. People should listen to that song because it's beautiful.

With a solid debut album under her belt, a strong fan-base across the globe and a heart full of determination to elevate her musical output, renforshort is a sensation that will grip any musician. With influences from post-modern art, 80s dystopian aesthetics and a deep-love for The Strokes, she is a distinguished artist that is paving a cultural shift in the alternative music scene.

Words by Remy Abou-Setta