



**THIS
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CONAN GRAY
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CAVETOWN

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Here is Why Conan Gray is a Different Kind of YouTuber

When you think of the word “YouTuber”, clickbait, the Paul brothers, cash grab music, beauty-gurus, “tea accounts”, and diss-tracks, most likely come to mind. Yet, still found on YouTube is a bright, genuinely talented person who avoids drama, and always seems to be above or ahead of the trends: Conan Gray.

Conan Gray is a lifestyle and music YouTuber from Texas, now studying at UCLA. Gray has been on his channel since 2013, when he posted a video titled, “Let Me Introduce Myself”. Gray was much younger then, with a higher-pitched voice and worried eyes. His first video was calm, properly edited, and more self-aware than the average kid’s video. Gray has continued to post for five years. Even his early video differed from the very formulaic content that could be found online at the time.

Through the years Gray has challenged the norms set by “boy’s” YouTube channels. Gray, in 2015, at age 15 posted a video, “HOT THINGS GIRLS DO” mocking the then current tropes within the male YouTuber community. He shared his love of fashion and design, sang songs about boys, and told viewers to buy



clothes from whichever section of a store they want, regardless of size or gender. In 2018 Gray posted a video of himself painting his nails for the first time, called, “i’m a girly boy and i don’t care (kinda)” where he discussed the fluidity of gender, masculinity, sexuality, and his difficulty to find confidence off-camera. Throughout the following months, Gray would continue to post videos of him painting his nails, applying makeup, and discussing such topics.

Conan Gray's videos are typically ahead of the trends. With his "artsy" editing (that he's been using for years) and his longtime love of thrifting, Conan Gray has been ahead of the curve. While everyone is just now catching on to the power of their local GoodWill, and the magic of a record player, Conan Gray has been there, thrifted that. The most impressive aspect of Gray's "perfect" aesthetic, life, and style, is that he never carries himself with an air of superiority. Gray even making videos titled, "youtube conan vs twitter conan" and "i'm not perfect" where he discusses his perfectionism, and the difference of people's perceptions of him depending on the social media platform. Giggling at fan-made memes throughout the whole video, Gray never denies or ignores his perfectionism or the differences between himself on different social media platforms. Sure, he may have discovered that band before you, but he's happy to share, not shame. He's happy to smile at the camera listing his monthly favorites, like a friend sharing a secret with you.

Being candid with his conversations on camera never appeared to be difficult for Gray. Chatty videos such as "ART-TEA" videos where Gray worked on some sort of his art while drinking tea (or coffee), and discussing whatever is on his mind. Gray also posts baking videos with his best friend Ashley, while they discuss anything in their lives, from friendships to Queer Eye. Being honest and open

about his friends and high school experience were typically done with grace, while maintaining a certain level of privacy. Gray refrained from vlogging his prom and graduation to best enjoy the moments for himself. However, he opened up about his experiences with grades, his AP art portfolio, childhood trauma, college admissions, being bullied, and how he was mocked for his music.

Conan Gray is first and foremost, on his channel, a musician. Fellow YouTuber Haley Pham posted a video titled "dancing to Conan Gray's dreamy voice". Where she shared with a cheeky grin that, "he's [Conan Gray is] one of the few YouTubers whose music I actually like... no offense to anyone else's YouTube music." That quote, while a teasing afterthought, spoke volumes about the current music culture on YouTube. Many internet stars who have been signing record deals left and right, as a way to bring in even more money, despite the passionless sound of their songs. Some YouTubers do like singing, and can produce music that gains lots of attention and profit, but have little genuine talent. Conan Gray is none of the above.

Conan Gray's lyrics are deeply personal, and share sentiments of a quiet high schooler opting to enjoy simple moments with friends, regardless of peer pressures. His covers will make you completely forget the song was not written by him.

His vocals have a shockingly powerful, yet lullaby-like quality. With beautiful lyrics, a talent for making covers his own, and strong vocals; Conan Gray is remarkable.



‘Will I ever stop feeling as though I’m living in a dream?’: Singer-songwriter Dodie Clark on the disorder that leaves her cut off from the real world

If I had to describe my brain before I started experiencing darkness, I would say it was deep-thinking, excited, but most of all it was busy. If you were to dive into my brain at seven years old, you’d find vivid fantasies, colossal complex worlds of made-up characters and storylines, where in each one I was, of course, the star. Throughout teenage-hood I visited these worlds. Then several things happened: my granny passed away and I experienced grief for the first time in my life. I watched my mum shrink and fall into depression. I started to love a boy, went on hormone-altering contraception and realised too late that he liked to shout at me.

At 18 I was a shell of a normal girl. There was just one overriding emotion: a vac-

uous, overwhelming feeling of despair. After a few months of empty smiles and dark headaches I asked my mum to book me an appointment with the doctor. ‘What can I help you with today?’ A rosy-faced woman beamed at me. I pulled out my phone and shakily read her the paragraph I’d typed up in the waiting room, on how I would run home as quickly as possible so I could shut down and not have to think any more. How I’d wake at 3am nauseous from the nightmares that felt like black holes inside my being.

I skipped over the scars on my thighs from the nights I dragged the edge of scissors along my skin, relishing the distraction of surface-level pain, the closest I’d come to feeling anything at all in ages.

She looked down with a slight smile while I mumbled through.

‘Are you studying, Dodie?’ I plastered on a polite smile and told her about my move to Bath as a student and the future I hoped for when my brain was working again.

‘I don’t think you’re depressed. It’s very dangerous to give someone so young a label like that. You’re doing so many activities, making new friends – it’s certainly more than I did at your age!’ I felt the back of my neck get hot and tears welling. I wanted to shout, ‘What’s the point when I don’t really experience or enjoy any of it?’ But I nodded instead and stretched my smile, whispering a thank you and grabbing my coat to walk out before I started crying.

I wasn’t going to be listened to or believed. It took me three years to build up the courage to go back to the doctor to talk about my mental health.

* * * * *

In the spring of 2016 my stress levels were peaking as I took on far too much work and travel. I’d been working as a presenter for an online channel and we were to go to Wales for a three-day shoot. During that trip I noticed my vision was getting so bad that I could focus only on what I was looking at – the rest of my peripheral vision was silver, like TV static.

I was so tired my eyes felt itchy and heavy, my head ached as if I was hungover. Whenever I spoke the words seemed to hang in the air in front of me as if they were a recording. My voice didn’t belong to me and yet sounded scarily familiar. I somehow got through that shoot, desperate to get back to

my flat in London, hopeful that the return to familiarity would fix whatever this was.

I lugged my suitcase up the stairs, walked into the living room and saw a stranger lying on my sofa. ‘All right, babe? How was Wales?’ I couldn’t compute my flat-mate Hazel’s face in my head. My flat looked humongous and tiny all at the same time. I struggled to reply, the same way I would if I were hammered and trying to act sober.

‘Hazel, I’ve gone mad.’ I called every helpline I could find. I remained calm and rational, somehow still managing to put on my ‘phone voice’ while talking about something so personal. A girl with a tear-streamed face and snot running down her nose, composing herself just enough to be able to say, ‘Hello there, yes, I’m just calling about my worsening mental state.’ For some reason I couldn’t get the help I really needed. The medical numbers I called asked me if I was signed up to a GP – which I wasn’t – and then told me if it was an emergency and I was suicidal I should hang up and call 999. I didn’t want to die; I very much wanted to live. But I was in a weird limbo: technically ‘alive’ but not getting anything from existing but pain.

I knew that if that was all life was going to be from now on I couldn’t go on. Nevertheless I kept trying to find ways to get better. I found a ketchup-stained gas bill from the beginning of the year, proof of address, which I could use to register with the local GP.

‘Hello, I’d like to sign up to this practice

please.' The receptionist grabbed two pieces of paper from a drawer. 'You'll need to fill these in and bring them back with a proof of address and ID.' 'Thanks. I couldn't find a recent bill. Will this one be all right?' She unfolded the crumpled paper. 'This is from January' – as if I didn't know. 'You'll need to bring one from the past three months.'

She looked behind me at the next person. I stepped away, my throat closing, and bolted out of the door before I started sobbing in front of everyone. I sat alone in my flat, wondering if there was a way to detach my brain from my body so that I could go for a walk and get a break from the spiralling.

I knew that I was sinking deeper and deeper but I stayed in the same spot for hours, filling the room with loud, ugly crying. I cancelled all my plans for the next few days and went home to Epping, Essex, to my childhood bedroom, still clinging to the idea that familiarity would help.

My mum did her best to look after me, layering me in blankets and making me cup after cup of tea. She placed her hands on my body and tried to will away the pain, like she used to do in my childhood days of stomach migraines; except I wasn't a little girl with a poor tummy, I was a woman in her 20s who had completely forgotten who she was and how to exist with black holes in her head.

I can't remember the order of the ways that I found myself again but there were distinct pillars that grounded me and gave me enough hope to claw my way back. Talking to old friends helped. They fed ropes down the hole I'd been digging and even if they couldn't pull me up, they at least reminded me that there was a world beyond this.

I started to write in a notebook: little but important things. I ran through moments in my head that would spark any sort of joy in my heart and jotted them down, numbering them so that I could count them up as a collection. On the surface they looked superficial, but each of these things was a reminder of who I was, what made me happy and a reason to live.

I found myself again in 'opening a window when there's been rain' and 'first kisses' and 'good books and the worlds you get lost in'. I had lived and loved in this bedroom and this world, and if I had been happy before I could be happy again. I woke up the next day feeling lighter. I made myself breakfast, showered and moisturised for the first time in days.

It was like the day after food poisoning – taking life in little bites, being cautious and gentle with myself, worried I was teetering on the edge of relapsing again. But I was OK. I was just OK.

I went to a picnic in the park and sat staring at my hands, wishing I could join my friends in the vivid world I seemed to have lost. We walked to the shops after the sun had set and while they babbled and skipped around each other, I hung back, staring at cars driving past and wondering if they were going fast enough to knock me down. My friends had placed daisies on my head to make me giggle, pulling me by the hand and daring me to cartwheel on the damp grass. The next day I went on a water slide with my mum and

sister, and I raced them down a hill, tripped over my feet and landed in a heap of limbs, relishing the sounds of my family laughing all around me. The day after that I did a little bit of work, and then over the next few days I eased myself back into life. There have been times when I have crashed back into that same dark hole. But then I bring out the list of little but important things, climb into Hazel's bed for her to stroke my back and remember the lessons I have learnt since hitting rock bottom: that I have been here before and I have got up and out of it every time.

I have depersonalisation disorder (DPD), a feeling of detachment from reality. It took me years of researching my symptoms to find a Wikipedia page about it and then I spent a day crying with relief that there were other people who felt as I did. It affects me in different ways at different times. The world looks flat and fake and my peripheral vision seems very dark or very light, as though I am looking through a filter. DPD also affects my memory and in my dazed state I find it difficult to feel present in the moment. I have to ask friends about the moments we have spent together, things I said or did. I also find that it causes depressive episodes and anxiety. I found out a lot about my condition and became able to manage my depressive episodes a lot better.

I healed open wounds and broken friendships and insecurities and I im-

proved the way I dealt with being spaced out – but I was, and still am, spaced out all the time. It took me five years to get an official diagnosis after multiple appointments with patronising doctors and a lot of confusion and pain.

Since I found out about DPD and opened up about my experiences, I have had friend after friend reach out to me saying they know someone who's been feeling like they're dreaming all the time or that during conversations they find their souls up on the ceiling rather than in their own body.

I don't know whether I'll ever feel 'present' again, but in the meantime, there's not a lot I can do except look after myself and share my experiences to empathise with people who are also in the 'Am-I-really-here?' club.



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The Music of Cavetown: A Helping Hand for Mental Health Issues

Sometimes there are too many problems. While some people can deal with them effortlessly, others just do not feel that they have enough strength to cope with the world. For them, the constant tension and the speed of the modern life may become too much, which, without timely intervention, often leads to mental health issues. The world of a person who cannot fully participate in social life or suffers from mental illness may be a scary and lonely one, and sometimes they might just need someone to say, “hey, it’s alright. I’ve been there too”. Such support can be found in the music of Cavetown who often focuses on these issues, and so his songs may just serve as the right helping hand.

Robin Skinner – or Cavetown, as he is known in the music world – is a nineteen-year-old singer-songwriter from England. In spite of being quite young he has already managed to find his way in the music industry and by choosing YouTube as a platform for sharing his songs, he has gained an audience of over half a million people. He released his first album in 2013 at the age of 14 and since then, has released a further seven. When it comes to the content of his songs, his youth is an advantage. No one can speak about the fear or the

struggles of young age better than someone who experiences them right now. Precisely the same need to figure out his own thoughts and to deal with the psychological difficulties led Robin to the path of creating music, which – to his own surprise – helped not only him but other people too.

“I know how it feels to lie down feeling that everything’s going wrong because of me” (“Rain”, 01:08). That has probably become the uniting factor for the audience of Cavetown – people who felt lost and discouraged and who found the words of the songs truthful and trustworthy. The most striking factor of his music and lyrics are the honesty and simplicity with which he speaks about worrisome things. Such openness about problems provides listeners with the soothing feeling of not being abandoned.

One recurring theme which may be found in his texts and to which many listeners would probably closely relate to is anxiety. People’s lives are full of stress, and in some cases it may turn into never-ending fear and anticipation of future trouble even if there is none. “I’m sorry for the times that I get scared for no reason at all”, Robin sings in “Lov song” (00:59), or “Thank you for being calm with me when/ Things are gettin kinda rough, it’s like I am dying all the



time” (“Thank you”, 01:27). As the text excerpts show, Cavetown often connects the feeling of anxiety with the notion that no one is completely isolated and their emotions and behavior may affect others. He adds the notion of guilt but by doing so he does not bring about the feeling of shame of one’s problems, he only reminds us that people are not alone and there is always someone patient to reach out to and be grateful for.

“Falling doesn’t feel so bad when I know you’ve fallen this way too” “Devil town”, 01:12

In several of his songs, Cavetown also makes the appeal to his friends – and through them to all his listeners – that if they are hurt right now, he is there to help. “You’re not alone, please never forget/ My arms are your second home” (“Evergreen”, 03:34), “Learn a little self love/ Cause you’re not half as

bad as you thought” (“Calpol”, 00:57), these are the words that may be very helpful to someone in need.

In some of the lyrics, Robin raises more specific problems. For example in “Dysphoric” he sings about feeling uncomfortable in one’s own body, which is the issue transgender people encounter. “And now I don’t remember comfort/ Because what I am is what I’m not” (“Dysphoric”(8), 00:36). This theme of not accepting one’s body, of the feeling of disagreement between the body and the mind is based on his personal experience which may make it valuable and important for some people in the LGBTQ+ community.

Another issue Cavetown covers in his songs is that of mental illness. With the disquieting images he creates a world full of mythical creatures and dangers. “There’s ghosts in my house/ And I can taste blood in my mouth” (“Poison”, 01:00). In this song he tries to describe the life of a person suffering from paranoia. Similar patterns can be seen in other lyrics, for example in “Untitled”: “Monsters in the closet won’t stop giving me the shivers/ Even though it’s probably just in my mind” (02:59). By producing such songs he raises public awareness about mental illness and reminds his listeners to be more attentive to the people around them because one may never know what they are feeling.

In Cavetown’s songs such topics become inseparable from the notion of self-hate in general. “Don’t let me see what I am/ Cause I can’t stand it, no I can’t” (00:07), he sings in “Dysphoric”. In “I Promise I’m Trying”, he helplessly declares: “I’ve

never hated myself more” (02:02). However, the title “I Promise I’m Trying” shows that it is not about giving up, it is always about acknowledging the way one feels and trying to get better.

The main track of the album “Lemon Boy” brings together all of the problems stated above. The title song is a story told by Robin himself about his struggles with “a bitter sweet...Lemon Boy” (“Lemon Boy”, 00:06). As Robin states about the song and the whole album: “Lemon Boy is the anxiety, the negativity, the illness that’s inside all of us, and that is very strong inside me. A way of being happy for me is disas-

sociating myself from those things, but also learning to live alongside them as a friend.”

So, what lesson can be heard in and learnt from Cavetown’s music? The most prevalent one is the acceptance of oneself. However, it is not only about accepting the good sides and attempting to eradicate the others. Doing so is tantamount to turning the mind in a battlefield which may only make it all worse. The challenge is to try to accept the hidden sides too...to accept the Lemon friend. “There’s nothing wrong with a little bit of darkness now and then” (“Peachy”, 01:25).

Beck On Healing Through Music, The Deep Art Of Pop And His New Album, ‘Colors’

In a career spanning three decades, Beck has remained one of music’s most intriguing shapeshifters. From the warped folk of his earliest recordings to the chopped-up samples, hip-hop beats and lush orchestral arrangements of albums that followed, Beck has never lingered in one sonic world for long.

For his latest album, *Colors*, the singer takes his music in what some longtime fans may think is an odd, or overly simple, direction: The 10 songs, co-produced with Greg Kurstin, are pure,

highly refined pop. But as Beck explains in this special Guest DJ session, *Colors* was still one of the most complicated and challenging records he’s ever made. He also explains how pop music can be a finely crafted art form, why the guitar has become the stepchild of popular music and the healing power of songs that just make you feel good.

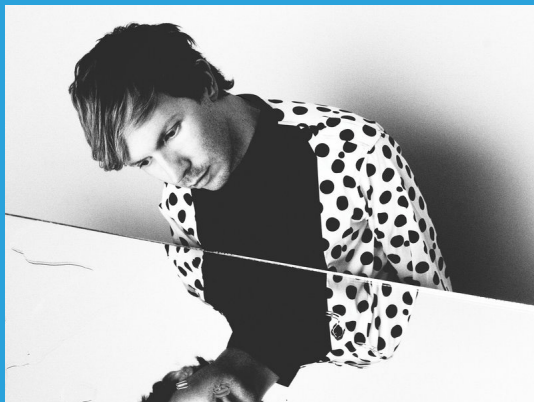
Hear the full interview with the listen button at the top of the page and read edited highlights below.

Beck on why he wanted to make a joyful

album

"I wanted the record to be [one of] those kind of albums you put on, or you're in the car, and it just sort of elevates the mood a little bit — you just kind of feel a little better. I wouldn't say that's my instinctive default in the kind of records I make. So it's something that I have to kind of dig into and figure out a way to articulate that thing in a [way] that made sense for me. But this is a kind of a feeling that I wanted the record to have before I even knew what the songs were and what it was going to be all about. It's interesting, I was talking to somebody the other day and then they said, 'Well what did you want this record to be like?' And I said I just wanted it to have a lot of light. You know, when you're looking at a color you don't actually see the color, you're just seeing a reflection of light. And we all see colors differently. So, I think the best music will ever be is some sort of reflection of something that doesn't really exist. But the greatest artists — their music is filled with that kind of... you can call it love, or you can call it warmth, or just this intangible quality that just makes you feel better."

On writing and recording pop music as a refined, time-consuming art form



"There are certain songs that are harmonically complex, they're sophisticated musically but you can, as a listener, you can just find direct, immediate, simple pleasure in the song, even though it does some unusual and musically advanced things. There was a bootleg of all the sessions of [The Beatles] recording 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and just dozens of versions of the song and how they edited it together. And that was a real revelation because as a kid you think, oh they just went into the studio and recorded 'Strawberry Fields.' But what actually went into it was this incredibly complex process and this sort of experimental searching for something like a new sound and a new way of doing things. And that's always something that's stuck with me. I always wanted to do a record where you take it that far."

"So that idea of a pop record as a piece of art was something that was really fascinating to me. Like songwriting craft that goes all the way back to Motown and Phil Spector and the Brill Building. People that were in a building, writing hundreds of songs to get the one magic song. I think, more than anything, I was just curious about what happens when you go there. You hear these stories, where everyone's kind of lost their minds in the pursuit of this sort of elusive, great track. You can hear the stories from Brian Wilson or Phil Spector. There's so many stories of like the sort of extremes that they would go to make these records that were really groundbreaking in their time."

On the electric guitar's diminishing role in modern music

"There's really not much guitar on this record. I think we're sort of in a weird

moment in music where the guitar is sort of a stepchild in the popular consciousness. It's not really at the center, which is fine. I think there's a lot of great music being made without guitars and we've certainly spent decades exploring it — it's still a powerful thing. It's a visceral thing. I think certain genres have to evolve and — this is an incredibly pretentious statement to make — but perhaps we're due for some sort of reinventing or pushing [of music]. You know, hip-hop is sonically, just in the last few years, it's gone to a whole new level. There's a whole new paradigm. There's a whole new sonic place that music has reached and [hip-hop] is very much a live form. And it's tough because there is a certain orthodoxy I think we hear and have to tear apart, and maybe try to embrace where we are now. I think there's a couple of albums, like the Alabama Shakes, where you feel that direct connection to sort of classic guitar music and roots but it does feel modern. And it really connects, because it's sitting in a modern space.”

On writing lyrics about overcoming difficulties and the power of music to make you feel better

“The way I felt like it would work, for me, was to write from a place where you've seen and experienced difficulty, struggle, heartbreak and all these things. But there is that moment or the thing in your life that reminds you of the beauty in life, whether it's in music or nature. You know, things are complicated. There's a lot of difficulty. Trouble. But there's these very simple things that make you glad to be alive. That's something I wanted to capture [on this record]. So there [are songs] about getting through the last years or being at the end of your rope. But there is that cliché of how certain music got me through this hard time or provided some sort of solace. And I was thinking about that in [making] this record — just the fact that it's one of the things that music does. And music is a conduit for some sort of connection as well. It can have a healing effect. So it's been a powerful force in my life.”



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Alec Benjamin Likes Music More Than the Internet

Meet Alec Benjamin, the 24-year-old singer-songwriter whose lyrics stand out in the sea of same-sounding tracks that often circulate around the pop sphere. With a plethora of hit singles under his belt including “Let Me Down Slowly” and “If We Have Each Other,” the Scottsdale-bred star has already proven himself through his ability to marry a customized lo-fi sound and infectious melodies with his sagacious narratives about life’s hardships.

It’s with no coincidence that all of his songs are emotionally fraught. Benjamin strives to create an engaging experience for his fans by using his lyrics to tell a story while infusing each song with raw emotion—covering everything from the pang of losing hope in childhood heroes to a dorm room heartbreak, and everything in-between.

The artist initially cultivated a fanbase on YouTube, and has quickly covered a lot of ground from making videos. Benjamin recently opened for Camila Cabello, has over 50 million global streams on Spotify and can claim ten out of seventeen sold-out tour dates so far.

Still, Benjamin’s journey has not been without its challenges. Dropped by Columbia Records just 24 hours after submitting his first album, he was faced with the challenge of re-building

his brand by himself, which for him, meant taking his talents abroad. The then 18-year-old traveled to Europe and hosted “parking lot shows” outside of concert venues where popular artists (like Shawn Mendes and Troye Sivan) were scheduled to perform. Fast forward a few months and about a dozen self-made YouTube videos later, he caught the attention of “All Time Low” singer Jon Bellion. Benjamin then found success in songwriting while assisting Bellion in the creation of “New York Soul (Part II),” a homage to Jon’s original “New York Soul” found from 2016’s *The Human Condition*.

Now, hot off the heels of the release of his three new singles, including his most recent “Death of a Hero” (August 23), the singer is back in Los Angeles, taking time to prep for his upcoming tour in November. PAPER caught up with Benjamin to chat about music, the tour and the benefits of perseverance:

Did you always want a career in music?

I got into music late into high school. I didn’t have anything else going on, so I was looking for a hobby. I started getting into music right around the time YouTube was becoming popular, when everyone was singing cover songs—it was like the era of the YouTube cover artists. I was like, ‘Oh, that’s cool, but I don’t really want to do that.’ So, I learned how to play guitar on YouTube and start-

ed learning how to write songs and then started writing my own, because I didn't want to sing other people's music. That's kind of how it started, and then I kept doing it and then at the end of high school, I decided that I wanted to do this for a living because I really like it.

What was your experience like when you first started recording music and releasing it out to the public? Was it solely via YouTube or were there other social media channels?

When I was in high school, I didn't really know how to get started into music and that was during the time period where social media was just starting to take off. When I first started making music, Instagram didn't exist and Facebook was pretty new, people were still on Myspace and were starting to transition from Myspace to Facebook. So, the first era of bands that started a following on the internet were through Myspace for Warped Tour stuff. Before that everything was still on CDs.

My sister actually encouraged me to get on social. She was into that Warped Tour and social media scene and I was like, nah. [Social media] came later for me; I like music more than I like being on the internet. I started sending cold emails of music to random songwriters, and then I met this songwriter in the UK and started going back and forth. At the end of high school in Arizona and early college from California I was writing songs, and then I got signed to Columbia Records. I made a whole album and then I got dropped and had to start over again. In 2015-16 is when I really started to focus on building a fan base and that's when I

started putting music out on my own. I started taking Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter seriously at the end of 2016.

Where do you draw influences from?

I listen to a lot of different kinds of music, and I believe every genre has something interesting to bring to the table. There are certain things each genre does best. Growing up, some of my favorite artists were Jason Mraz and John Mayer and then through that, I got into Paul Simon. But I also listen to a lot of heavy metal, like Slipknot. I listen to the Red Hot Chili Peppers but also listen to straight pop music like Katy Perry; I was a big fan of hers but I wasn't like going to shows or anything like that but I think she has great music. I feel like the hook in other pop songs is always something I can learn from and get inspired by. I listen to some country too; I think country is great for telling stories, but my all-time favorites are Eminem, Paul Simon, Jason Mraz and John Mayer. I love Eminem because I love his words. I like music that has something important to say, there are so many things that happen in life, so I'm into songs that hold a specific meaning.

How do you think your audience resonates with you and your music/lyrics?

To be honest, I am just kind of finding that out now. I am just out and am just starting to do shows and go on tour. I feel like the best way I am going to figure that out is to continuously go in front of people and see them in person. I'm not really sure yet, but the thing I think resonates most with them is my lyrics—that's what I hope at least.

Leading up to your upcoming tour, do you have any hopes, fears or desires?

It's so new to me and there are so many things that go into running a tour, I don't even know what to be scared about yet. If things do come up and we run into difficulties, we will be afraid then, but for now, I'm just excited.

What's next for you?

I'm always writing songs, I never really stop so I'm doing that. I have a new song that just came out called "Death of a Hero" after that maybe another single and then a mixtape after that. Hopefully, an album at the beginning of next year. I'm definitely going to keep writing and keep putting music out, now there's a dialogue with the people that listen to my music, so I want to continue to give them that.



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<http://www.papermag.com/alec-benjamin-interview-2599858065.html>

Why & How Did I Make This?

I made this project using a combination of Photoshop and InDesign. I chose to make a music magazine because I spend more time listening to music than anything else, and the musicians I picked are just some of my favorites.