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Kylie Minogue: 'I Became A Gay Icon by Being Myself'

The legendary pop performer speaks with *The Advocate* about embracing her status as a gay icon without pandering to anyone.

BY JASE PEEPLES MARCH 25 2014 7:30 AM ET



She's sold more than 70 million albums, performed concerts in packed stadiums around the world, and won numerous awards – including being appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for her services to music by Queen Elizabeth II. Yet for all her achievements over a singing career that has lasted more than 25 years, Kylie Minogue admits she still gets nervous each time she begins work on a new album and “always” feels pressure to deliver a hit. “Maybe even more so now,” she says. “It’s fantastic to have such a loyal fan base, but that doesn’t mean you can relax because you want to please all of them as well.”

Nevertheless, Minogue can breathe a bit easier now. *Kiss Me Once* (her 12th studio album released March 18), has generally received a warm reception from both critics and fans alike, while the collection's lead single, "Into The Blue," has landed comfortably on the music charts in a number of countries – including cracking the top five of the Billboard U.S. Hot Dance Club Songs.

Though the 5'1" pop pixie says she is proud to be an adopted icon of the LGBT community, but what makes her appeal to gay fans isn't accidental and yet isn't manufactured either. "I didn't become a gay icon or become popular in the gay community for doing something specific. That happened just because I was being myself," she says, noting the colorful crowds who attend her live shows. "When I'm on tour, I think there's a little bit of everything there. From a row of muscle Marys and drag queens to dads, moms, grandmas, and three generations of girls – everyone is there. So I try to put into my shows and albums a little bit for everyone and I hope that colors my work in the best way."

Minogue is conscious of not alienating one facet of her fan base for another. Still, she admits her gay following influenced her creatively throughout her career. Most recently, that influence can be seen in the music video for her latest single, "Sexercise," in which she takes a stiletto-clad strut on the sapphic side with an all-female group of dancers. "I'm very comfortable with it," she says of venturing into the homoerotic realm for her latest offering and her status as a sex symbol. "I believe I found my place. That right zone between not being too far over the line and just being representative of myself."

In fact, it's Minogue's effort to be more than a one-note performer and remain true to herself that she believes is partially responsible for the fiercely-devoted gay following she enjoys today. Long before her voice began sailing over American radio waves with her 1988 debut hit "Locomotion," Minogue was known in Australia and the U.K. as an actress. At the age of 11 she began appearing in small roles in various TV shows and became a breakout star in 1986 when she landed the part of Charlene Mitchell on the hit Australian soap opera *Neighbours*. Despite her popularity as an actress, Minogue says she was ridiculed when she attempted to expand as an entertainer. "In Australia, to be taken seriously as a singer took a long time," she recalls. "I was attacked in the press – you could almost say bullied. It was stuff that really wasn't nice and I didn't understand at the time because I was just doing my job. I had to really dig my heels in to be allowed to be seen as a multifaceted personality."

She adds, "I really resisted being pigeonholed and perhaps that's one reason the gay community has felt some allegiance with me. Because I didn't want to be told I was one thing and couldn't be another. I didn't want to have just one color to my personality."

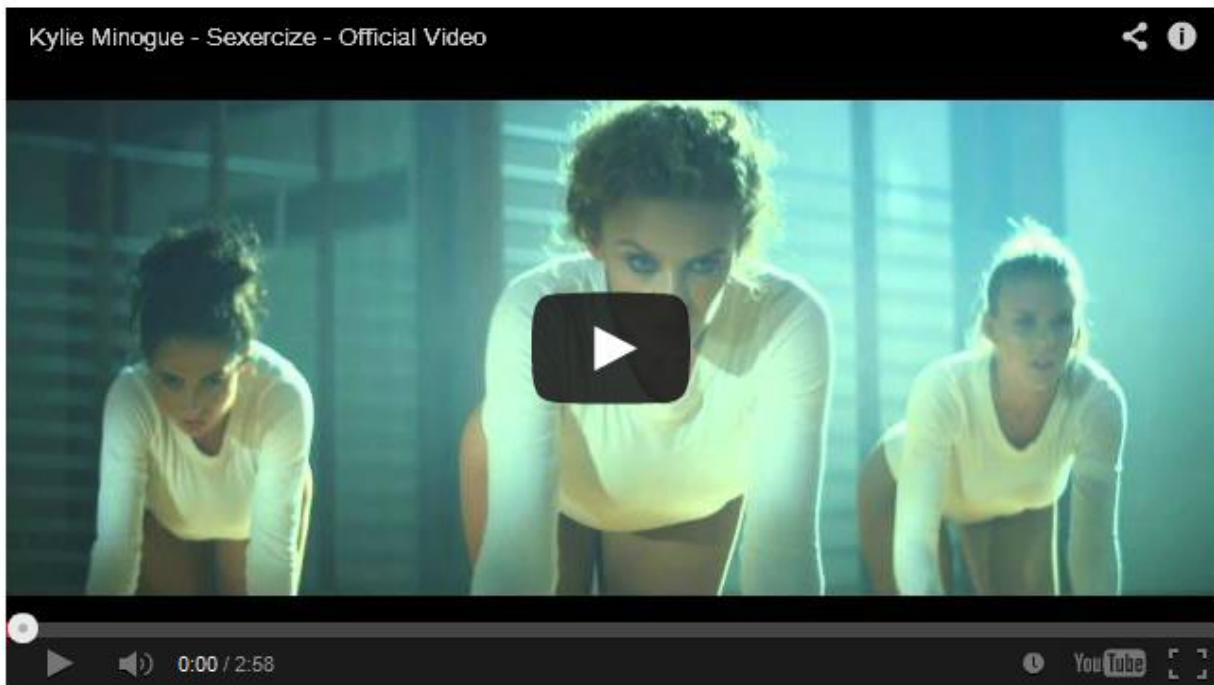


Today she is not only known as a music legend and actress, but also a philanthropist, designer, activist, entrepreneur, and style icon. But being more fully herself hasn't meant toning down her fabulous factor anytime soon. "It's performance," she says. "In the pop industry, you're a super-up version of yourself. That's not how everyday life is, but I don't think people want to see everyday life."

"You don't really need to see me in my pee jays first thing in the morning," she adds with a laugh. "It's not pretty."

Even superstars have to find ways to remain grounded. "I wake up with myself every morning, so I know in my day-to-day life I'm not those things," she says. "But I respect that some people do think of me that way and I'm proud, contentious, and I try to live up to that. However, I think if that's all you focus on, you lose sight of yourself. For me, the sweet spot is somewhere in the middle and remaining realistic – which I believe I always have been – while playing the role."

Watch Kylie "Sexercise" in the video below.



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