

issue 43

SORORITY NOISE – AS CITIES BURN – MOON TAXI – CADY GROVES & MORE

# HIGHLIGHT

MAGAZINE

BEBE  
REXHA

DO WHAT  
IF I'M  
FUCKING  
CRAZY





BEBE  
REXHA

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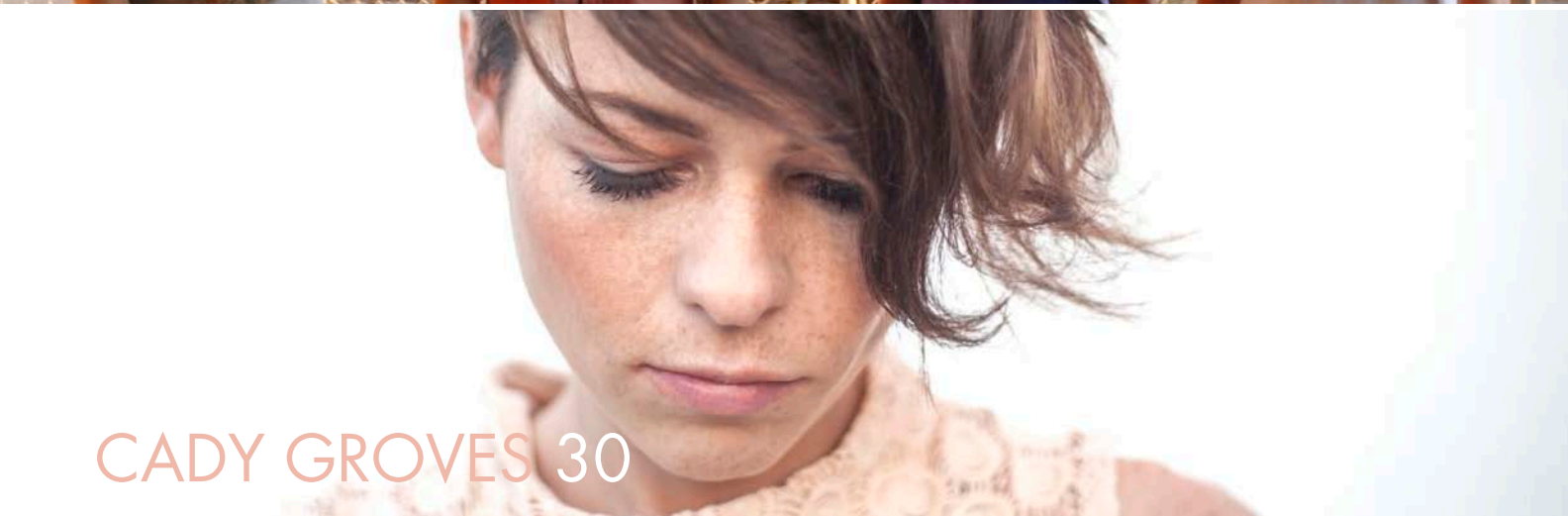




BEBE REXHA 34



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CADY GROVES 30



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHT 14



BEER











**HOME:** Brooklyn, New York

**NOW JAMMING:** "I Can't Stop Drinking About You"

**CURRENTLY:** Preparing for a tour with Nick Jonas

ONE OF THE SUMMER'S BIGGEST HITS WAS David Guetta's "Hey Mama," an electro, house anthem that features pop icon Nicki Minaj and EDM artist Afrojack. ***However, one of the biggest questions following the release of the song was who sings the catchy chorus.***

**The answer? Brooklyn native Bebe Rexha.**

At only 25 years old, the singer-songwriter has penned massive hits such as "The Monster," the hit single notably sung by Eminem and Rihanna, as well as co-writing "Hey Mama" alongside Guetta. She was featured on the 2013 summer hit "Take Me Home" by Cash Cash and was also the lead singer for Black Cards, Pete Wentz's short-lived, post-hiatus side project, from 2010 to 2012.

Gaining her impressive laundry list of credits as well as recognition for them has been a bit of a rollercoaster. While Rexha is listed as one of the seven songwriters on "Hey Mama," she was not originally credited as a featured artist, sparking the debate of who actually sings the red-lettered chorus, Minaj or another artist? Fortunately, all confusion ceased in May when Rexha was officially added to the song credits.

Now fans are left to wonder why Rexha wasn't credited originally. Due to formalities, having more than two displayed and mentioned names on the radio looks like a lot, but Rexha fought for her recognition and succeeded. Now, three months later, she has made her mark on the radio and also on the Vans Warped Tour.

Warped Tour can be brutal, especially for the artists playing the entire summer. The days are long and hot on the punk rock summer camp with set times varying daily, cold showers, and extensive walks between the bus, stage and merchandise table for signings.

Though the "summer camp" resembles more of a boot camp, Rexha was ready and willing for the challenge. "I was so excited to do it from day one. I knew it was going to be a challenge and I wanted that," she said.


As a pop artist on a tour comprised primarily of alternative and punk acts, Rexha's reception was one of the main challenges she expected to face, but she was welcome with open arms and laden with inspiration.

"I'm not the typical Warped Tour artist, but I'm just like everyone else in the sense that we all go through the same things," Rexha said. "At the end of the day, we're all here for music and that's what brings us together."

Despite the difference in sound, Rexha's angst-filled and powerful lyrics, dealing







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with issues such as anxiety, depression, and other types of mental illness, have put her right in line with her tourmates.

During the early years of her life, Rexha's parents' conservative lifestyle and overprotective nature led to her being trapped within the confines of her house and her thoughts. While this upbringing is what inspired Rexha to become the bold and outspoken artist she is today, she had to overcome her demons first. In her late teens, Rexha suffered from a mental breakdown spawned by the release from her first record deal with Island Records. During this time, she succumbed to the darkness of depression but used music and songwriting as a source of light. She attended therapy sessions, where she overcame doctors and looming medicine prescriptions, and gained the inspiration to write her massive hit, "I'm Gonna Show You Crazy," an electro-pop ballad that has over 45 million plays on Spotify.

"There's a war inside my head/Sometimes I wish that I was dead, I'm broken/So I called this therapist and she said/'Girl you can't be fixed just take this,'" sings Rexha in the opening verse.

The song continues with weighted lyrics about depression: name calling, the internal overthinking and the judgment from family members as well as peers. But Rexha delivers solace too, preaching the lyrics, "I don't need your quick fix/I don't want your prescriptions/Just 'cause you say I'm crazy/So what if I'm f\*cking crazy?"

Loving yourself and the faults that come with life is a prominent message that Rexha continually preaches to her fans. "Growing up, I didn't know how important it was to love yourself," she recalled. "Loving who you are is the strongest thing you have. I wish that I had someone who told me that. So I want to share that with all my fans and anyone going through a hard time."

Rexha's second hit single, "I Can't Stop Drinking About You," tells of another dark subject matter—one that is masked by the fast tempo, smooth rhythm and heavy, pop synths of the song. The contradictions between the sound and heavy message notably reflect what it is like to be in a dark place—consistently trying to conceal the darkness with light, but the shadows are still there.

Rexha speaks of this musical styling by saying, "I like to keep a balance. I don't want people to feel down all the time, but I do want to keep it real in what I am saying."

In "I Can't Stop Drinking About You," Rexha keeps it real by singing about a universal topic: heartache. Written about an ex-boyfriend who was harboring feelings for his own ex-girlfriend and ultimately ending their own relationship with a screeching halt, Rexha turned to her friends and alcohol as a remedy for the pain. With heartache and betrayal

running through her veins, she coped in the best way she knew how—writing a massive pop hit. The beat of "I Can't Stop Drinking About You" pulses through listeners as the song starts off with a slow tempo but gradually picks up as it reaches the chorus, creating an illusionary parallel to a night out. Rexha's emotionally enticing lyrics layered with a heavy, pop synth sound are a combination that is making her a star on the rise.

Now signed with Warner Bros. Records, Rexha released her five-track EP titled *I Don't Wanna Grow Up* in May, which features both "I'm Gonna Show You Crazy" and "I Can't Stop Drinking About You," as a sort of teaser as to what to expect on her debut album that drops next year.

The debut will be much like Rexha—fresh and lively with a bit of an edge. The latter comes with her desire to work with up-and-coming producers. The advantage of working with up-and-comers instead of those who have their feet already planted in the industry is the musical freedom. While experienced and reputable producers are more inclined to steer the artist toward what is radio worthy, those just starting out are willing to give the artist more control.

But Rexha's personal choice of using up-and-coming producers such as the Monsters and the Strangerz and Jon Levine does not mean she was completely against those already established in the music business. Rexha also worked with notable producers such as Max Martin and Martin Solveig, as well as Fraser T. Smith, who helped with production on Sam Smith's multi-platinum album, *In the Lonely Hour*. With the combination of producers as well as Rexha's gifted songwriting skills, the debut album from the 25 year old should fall nothing short of immaculate praise.

In the meantime, as Warped Tour has come to a sad close, Rexha is enjoying a well-deserved break before she heads out on tour this fall with pop sensation, Nick Jonas.

"He's super talented and I love his voice," said Rexha of her soon-to-be tourmate.

Even though Rexha has had her fair share of ups and downs in the music industry, she credits her now flourishing career to none other than music.

"I always dive into my music to cope with anything," she said. "It has always been there for me during the ups and downs. Music is all I need."

PHOTOS: Sammy Roenfeldt | INTERVIEW: Jenn Stookey | STORY: Ally Fisher



DO NOT TOUCH  
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