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Chapman Baehler



## INTRODUCING

# LUKAS GRAHAM: Danish pop-group frontman on why Scandinavia trumps the US

**A**T first Lukas Graham's hit ballad "7 Years" — No. 2 on Billboard's Hot 100 — sounds a little sappy. Next thing you know, you've listened to it 375 times in a row.

Maybe you've even teared up a bit as the Danish quartet's frontman and namesake, Lukas Graham Forchhammer, tracks his life's major stages — the song was inspired by his father's death of a heart attack.

After a few years of stardom in their native Denmark, the band releases its eponymous US debut album on Friday. Here are a few things to know about the pop troubadour:

— Elisabeth Vincentelli

### He grew up in the Copenhagen commune of Christiania

"It's a city within the city — we just don't have street lights or a police force," Forchhammer says. "We have kindergarten, after-school clubs for kids, cafes, concert halls. And a stable with 17 horses."

### A clause regulating styling was cut from the band's US record deal

"We didn't come all the way from Europe so people could tell us what to wear. The easiest way for us to be creative and on top of things [is] to be comfortable."

### Rap is the band's biggest influence

"Dr. Dre's '2001' album changed modern pop music. We mix a lot of genres — soul, pop, jazz — but we most agree on hip-hop. The lyrics are the essential part in our songs."

### There's a secret behind Scandinavian world-pop domination

"I think it's our public-school system: You've got free university, which lets people follow their dream while studying. I dropped out of law school when I got my record deal. [Studying] was fun, but it really was just something to occupy my craven mind while I was writing songs."