

LIGHTS

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Lights could have simply released another much-awaited album and pleased her fans with a new single, but she decided to release a comic book series to coincide with her fourth record, but to create the story, add in music videos, and do ALL the artwork herself. *Shogun Earth* isn't just a musical release. It's a revolution.

This two-year undertaking started with a longtime love of two mediums – music and comic books. “I’ve always loved comic books and always admired the way that rock bands like Cheap Trick and Camelia and My Chemical Romance entwined the two. There had yet to have been a female to dabble in this. I’ve always loved the idea of a female comic book character, so I decided that if she wanted to see it, she might as well do it herself. I had to teach myself how to do everything along the way, she admits. “I actually go all the way back to when I was a kid and I actually know to what extent I could pull it off. I thought, maybe a 20 page comic that will cover the whole album, which turned into a six issue comic with 150 pages each. I did the art and writing and lettering, all the songs correlate and all the videos bring it to life, and it’s turned into something that I would not have ever imagined I was capable of.”

Enna, the heroine of *Shogun Earth*, is not quite Lights’ alter ego. She’s a powerful, burned comic book character, but she’s got a softer side. Lights, singer. And she’s not indistinguishable. Lights created the type of female protagonist that she likes to see in comics. She’s a strong, independent woman, but she’s also a shy, almost shy herself. “I’m very interested in the characters that are perfect, that are necessarily superheros, even. She’s looking for hope in this hopeless world. I think that’s a really relatable than somebody who is always strong.”

Both the comics and the album are a labor of love. Lights, by – music lovers can revel in her gritty new sound and comic enthusiasts can get lost in the story – without necessarily knowing it. “I’ve always loved reading comic books,” she says. “I’ve always loved everyone in this multifaceted endeavor and wants as many people to hear, read and enjoy it as possible. That way all of the people who love music, art and my comic book will be worth it because more people will see it.”

“You always gotta push yourself into the world that you want to be in. I did.” she says. Getting to alternate between video, art and music has been so great because when I get exhausted from one I can move to the other, and it always keeps my creative spirit alive.”

Singer, songwriter, wife, mother – why not add comic creator and illustrator to the list? Despite constant and typically conflicting tour schedules, Lights is very happily married to Sean Boken, lead singer of melodiccore band Bleasethair. Let’s face it, their daughter, Rocket Wild, didn’t really stand a chance against a non-musical life. “I honestly didn’t know what she’d be into, because a lot of

times kids don’t wanna do what their parents do, especially if you have to be a musician. I’ve always loved music and I have a lot of videos of her singing my songs and she knows all the words!”

The alt-rock power couple is so solid, in fact, that over the years she’s had trouble letting herself explore darker themes in her art. But now, Lights channels Enna in her songwriting. “I was able to sing about things and write about things that I’d never been able to express before because she’s like ‘Savage’ or the ‘Fight Club,’ aggressive songs, they’re angry and about fighting. These are things that if I were to write about, I’d be like, ‘I’m not like that.’ It’s right now, people would question the state of my relationship. These are things I’ve experienced in my life, whether or not I’ve experienced them in my art. I’ve always been a person or not I’ve experienced them in my art. I know these emotions and I know people that are going through these emotions, so I’m capable of writing them and I feel good about it. I feel like I’ve been able to get it out. I feel like I’ve been able to speak through her, there’s no question.”

“I’ve released this voice that I’ve never released before. It’s been singing different, I’ve been singing more soulfully, and slightly different, and carrying myself with a new layer of confidence because she has opened up a whole new part of me.”

Lights isn’t afraid to be thrown into the “pop music” category. In fact, she embraces it. “I wanted to make something that was relatable to as many people as possible, probably because I wanted to challenge myself to create that kind of art. Mainstream pop art, because people dismiss it as very simple. But it’s actually the challenge of creating something so simple with so much depth, saying something that means so much in so few words.”

Yet again proving her layers, a big musical inspiration behind the album is the comic book series *X-Men* by Chris Claremont and X-Men artist John Byrne. The ROQUE, was prison music. She got her hands on old music that prisoners would all sing together back in the day to get them out of the prison. “It’s just that beautiful, beautiful, soulful music and there’s a darkness to it. A couple of the songs definitely started from a place like that. Not a prison song, right?”

But I suppose you wouldn’t expect a comic book, concept album, or a music video series. Lights’ manner has allowed Lights to explore a side, herself that she has traditionally shied away from. “It allows a whole new aspect of my voice, both vocally and emotionally. I’m thankful for the outlet – it’s so liberating.”

