A SUNNY AFTERNOON WITH GEORGE MAPLE

SARA FEIGIN / OCT 17, 2017 / MUSIC

It's a sunny day in London when I meet George Maple down by Tower Bridge.

Our plan is to grab coffee in Saint Katherine's Dock, as the area tends to be quiet despite it's proximity to one of London's most famous landmarks. When I greet her at our meeting location, I notice she has a suitcase the size of a small child with her. *"I've been in London for six days already, but I keep having to move house, so I'm lugging my suitcase all over."* she explains. We start talking about her whirlwind week, and how she hit the ground running as soon as she arrived in London and was positive she beat jetlag, but it hit her hard when she woke up this morning. We walk to the closest Starbucks and I grab us a table as George gets herself a coffee to try and help herself deal with her jetlag. When she sits at the table, she takes a few sips of her coffee and excitedly tells me, *"I only have a few days left here, I just found out I'm going to be opening for 6LACK back in Australia in a few days time, so I actually have to head back home really soon."* This is a really exciting time in Maples life and just from the smile on her face, I can tell she's looking forward to telling me all about what she's been up to over the past few years creating her debut record, Lover (Oct 27).

At the age of fifteen Maple got offered her first record deal, but collectively she and her family decided it was smarter for her to focus on school until she became more developed as a human. Nine years later in 2014, after a lot of growing up, she took on the moniker of George Maple and became active in the music scene. She's released an EP and a few singles but 2017 is the year her debut LP, is due to be released. Maple has spent the past three years perfecting her craft and figuring out what kind of artist she truly wants to be. She spent two years writing 'Lover', and after coming to terms with who she is as an artist, she finally reached the point to release it into the world.

Maple produces her own work, but she tells me she never really thought of it as producing, but rather as songwriting. She only recently realised that her developing of songs was in fact her being her own producer. *"On a few songs on the record, I didn't even take production credit, because I was like 'well that's not producing', but when I look back on it, I actually was producing. It's been a really interesting transition into that role and accepting that role, I'm not tied to it, I have no problem working with amazing producers, but I love understanding it. It is amazing being able to give my work to somebody and have it come back as something that you wouldn't have imagined."* she explains to me.

Being a female in the industry and having so much power over her own work is very gratifying for Maple. Ending up being the director of the production process is an achievement she is excited she has done with this vision of hers. *"If I could ever give any advice to any young musician coming through, is that your skills are everything, you have you talent and you have your abilities, but your skills nurture that."* For Maple, being able to use her skills in a way so she can have her hands in all of the pots has given her a lot of confidence moving forward as a musician. She now has a process that works for her, which is a feat she's been trying to gain for years.

Being a young female in the world of pop music, Maple feels like there's a lot more to her job than just putting music out into the world for her fans to enjoy. She also has to be a role model for the girls who listen to her music. *"It's become really important to me [being a role model], it checks you in, and gives you a responsibility to make sure that I'm not just talking the talk, but that I'm actually doing the things I'm talking about."* On her Instagram page, Maple shares with her fans, explaining the story behind her moving 'Hero' music video, which she used to help herself heal from a lot of loss in her life. She shares with her fans the meaning behind the video, and how cathartic it was to be given the opportunity to visually be open with the world. By opening up about the stories behind her songs, she hopes to spread a message of perseverance and hope to the thousands of fans that look up to her.

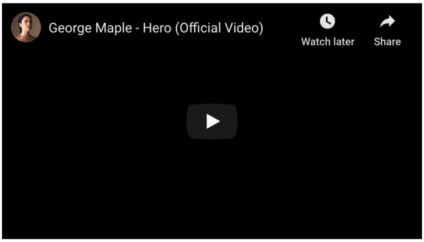
Maple has become more comfortable in her own skin while writing this record, she muses that she hopes when her fans listen to this record they can feel her metamorphosis into the strong woman I'm sitting across from now. After listening to Lover in full, I feel like I know her whole story, and I also feel empowered, and I know that fans and newcomers alike will be able to feel empowered by her voice as well. Although she never planned to become a role model, she's wearing the badge with pride, and bearing her soul to the world with this record.

"What I'm trying to do with art is to never have boundaries, and to never categorise things into one dimension," she explains to me when we delve deeper into her album. 'Lover' is very intense as the album tells a story of discovery, and two of the main themes in this discovery are love and acceptance of the vulnerability of intimacy between humans. When listening back to the album she thought to herself 'what am I talking about?', *"and then I realised that I had this obsession with intimacy and the various shades of intimacy and that it's an exploration of intimacy."* After realising this she dug a bit deeper to try and figure out what message she was trying to portray with every part of the album.

That's when she knew she needed to include interludes in her album, so she spent three months wandering around LA, and scouring the internet for interviews with people on their relationships with intimacy. She went to strip clubs, she went to parties, one of the interludes on the album came from a drunk rant an "incredible man" spouted off about love at 4AM at a party at her friend's apartment in LA. This album is a labour of love for Maple, as a lot of thought went into every variable of the album. She giggles and says "*it would be really funny to look at my search history, because on one hand you have Alan Watts talking about desire and the human condition, and on the other hand, you could click and see Russian Dominatrix first sexual experience. And it's like 'well this is a contradiction isn't it?' But is it? For me it was always just about the exploration and keeping that freedom to include experiences from all walks of life."*

With the release of Lover, Maple has crossed off one of the last things on her list of things she wants to achieve in life that she wrote when she was 15. She explains that her plan is to release two more records, but she says that's a given. But beyond that, she's not sure where to go now that she's completed her original musical goal. Her interests right now lie in the possibilities of combining the cinematic process with her music. *"It's just such an exciting time to be an artist because you can express yourself with so many mediums, like art installations, there's just so much you can do! It's just so cool that it's being accepted,"* she muses. Her excitement for what is to come in her career and where she can take her music gets me excited for what is to come.

Maple has a fire lit under her that it doesn't seem will ever go out, and the world doesn't know what's going to hit them once her full album is out for mass consumption. After getting to know her, I know that nothing is going to stop her from taking over the world. And based on the beautiful video she recently released for 'Hero' and the moving lyrics alongside incredibly catchy hooks on 'Lover' I know she is a force to be reckoned with.



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