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Entertainment / Music

Lorde shrugs off the hype

Grammy nominee for Pure Heroine and Royals says anyone 'can be making beats out of your bedroom and be a superstar'

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VICTORIA MILL / INVISIONAP

Lorde says she doesn't think it's weird that she's written music since she was 12.

By: Nekesa Mumbi Moody The Associated Press, Published on Sat Dec 21 2013

NEW YORK, N.Y.—Lorde may never be a royal but, these days, she's living like one.

The 17-year-old singer, anointed to the lofty position of pop's newest princess thanks to her astute hit song "Royals," is surrounded by the materialistic things she rails against in her No. 1 smash. She has drivers, she's catered to and says she could get "crazy bottle service" if she so desired.

"The irony is not lost on me," she said in a recent interview. Yet just because she's surrounded by excess doesn't mean she indulges or is even interested in it.

"I definitely don't feel like I'm living in a particularly extravagant sort of way, which I think is good because I think for me, personally, if I was thrown into that kind of thing I wouldn't know how to deal with it," she said. "I think it's good to kind of keep on keeping on: just do what you have normally done and sort things into a stride."

It will be hard for Lorde, born Ella Yellich O'Connor, to keep on living a normal life if her stratospheric trajectory stays on point. In just a few months, she's gone from being a New Zealand teen with an EP and an impressive following on SoundCloud to a four-time Grammy nominee (including nominations for top categories Record and Song of the Year) with commercial success and plenty of critical raves.

"Royals," which has sold close to 4 million tracks, was in the top spot on Billboard's Hot 100 chart for nine weeks and Rolling Stone named the song as the second best single of the year. Lorde was named Spotify's most viral new artist and NPR recently compared her to Nirvana — a pretty heady comparison for someone who's still in high school.

But Lorde is miles apart from the typical teen artist or pop star. Her debut, *Pure Heroine*, touches on what she describes as teen life: relationship drama, school, party life and suburban living. But it hardly comes off that way. With the help of her collaborator, Joel Little, Lorde fashioned a moody, lyrically rich

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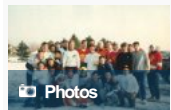
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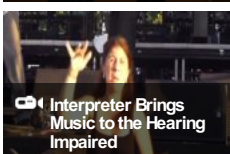
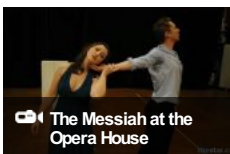


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album told in a far more mature way than most teens would ever describe.

Lorde, who says she started writing music when she was 12, downplays the hype (she calls “Royals” an “obvious” song) and talk about being wise beyond her years.

“Is that an odd thing?” she asks. “I’ve always written and read and that’s been a part of me that’s superimportant. And it’s a really good outlet for me to be able to say whatever I’m thinking and whatever it is that I’m trying to process. So I don’t think it’s too weird. And I also think people my age these days . . . with the Internet, you know, you can be making beats out of your bedroom and be a superstar.”

While plenty of people are making beats out of their bedroom, few are taking it to the superstar level.

In a music world where the majority of female pop stars seem to be competing for who can wear the least, Lorde stands out with her understated, almost modest, attire; the wildest thing about her is her long, flowing auburn hair.

She’s garnered a reputation for being outspoken. She was quoted as calling DJ/producer David Guetta “gross,” has made disparaging comments about Selena Gomez and Miley Cyrus, and complained that Taylor Swift seemed “too perfect.”

Perhaps weary of such headlines, Lorde declined to clarify those comments in this interview. She blamed others for trying to position her as the “anti-other things that are happening right now.”

But the self-proclaimed feminist seems to make that declaration on her own.

“My kind of interest in making music was born out of this desire to hear something that I hadn’t yet heard,” she said. “I guess it was never really going to be interesting for me to do something that had been done a lot of times. Because, yeah, I wanted to make something that I thought was fresh and felt kind of new.”

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