

Interview: Emi Meyer

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Singer-Songwriter Emi Meyer was born in Kyoto to a Japanese mother and American Father. After moving to Seattle as a child, Meyer honed her vocal skills which eventually led her to win the 2007 Seattle-Kobe Jazz vocalist competition.

Her debut album, *Curious Creature* came in 2009 which reached #1 on Japan's iTunes Jazz Charts leading her to be crowned as iTunes Japan's best new artist. Next came her critically acclaimed album *Suitcase of Stones* where she

We had the opportunity to talk to Emi about her presence in both the US and Japan, and about her upcoming album *Galaxy's Skirt*, set to release December 4. Read what she had to say below.

It's so unique to hear a jazz musician really making a name for themselves in today's world of pop, it seems. What inspired you to pursue jazz, and what makes you stand out?

I started in jazz when my middle school band needed a pianist. I'd played classical until then so I had the technical chops but when it came to reading charts and improv, I was in way over my head. So I listened a ton, went to a lot of shows, and realized jazz was a great medium to collaborate with others from different genres and cultures. So my love for jazz grew and grew. It's also how I learned to make chords and write songs, so I owe a lot of my self expression to jazz roots.

Growing up in Japan, you have the ability to showcase your music in both Japan and the US. How do these markets differ and how does it influence your writing and what you release?

I am in general considered a Western artist in Japan, and then associated with Asia in the US, so it's like I never quite "fit in". That used to be slightly lonely in the beginning, but after you manage to reach some listeners and make a career for yourself you realize it's totally worth the perseverance. I see different versions of myself and my music based on which market I'm in, so it keeps me objective, humble, and excited to try new things.

You've had the opportunity to work with a lot of great artists and producers. What has been your favorite collaboration and why?

I learned a lot from my collaboration with David Ryan Harris. David was the first produced I ever worked with, but it was at a good point in my life where I was no longer a control freak over my own arrangements. "Letting go" was perfect at that moment because David has all these incredible ideas in his mind. He is so chill, but has this understated character that commands the most amazing musicians (Michael of Fachael Yanahata, Zak of My brightest diamond, victor imbueizzo of Alanunmoriste, SeN of John Mayer).

It's awesome that your songs have been featured on so many TV outlets from commercials to shows! What is the process like of getting your songs out there, and then hearing them played so promotionally?

I love hearing my songs on TV or film! I used to want to be a composer for film and took all these scoring classes but it wasn't for me. So when I see my music paired with visuals and a plot line, it's like a dream come true! It is so incredible to see how directors and music supervisors find a certain emotion or image in your song, and how they can make that speak to viewers in a way you could never have imagined.

Can you tell us a little about your new release, *Galaxy's Skirt*?

This album is like a little travelogue: it contains a song I wrote while living in NY for the first time on my own, and then another song I wrote when I moved from Kyoto to Tokyo. There are new bonus tracks on this Deluxe Edition, including a cool "urban geisha" vibe remix of the title track "Galaxy's Skirt". I just shot a music video for that with a geisha in Kyoto in conjunction with the brand Tatcha. It's unlike anything I've done before! There is also a lead track from my next album, "If I Think Of You" which was recorded in Paris. I hope you enjoy, and thanks for your time "Music Creates Us" readers!

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