

**ZOYA /// ROSHNI BAPTIST /// ZELLA DAY**

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# Zella Day: Off the Record

The American singer-songwriter on drawing from the Sixties and Seventies, going on tour for the first time and releasing her upcoming seven-inch limited edition vinyl



**FLOWER CHILD**  
Zella Day is influenced  
by Patti Smith, Janis Joplin  
and Stevie Nicks

IT'S ALMOST AS IF ZELLA DAY DOESN'T belong in 2016. Everything about the American singer-songwriter seems dream-like and there's a general vibe of the Sixties and Seventies that follows her everywhere, onstage and otherwise.

Come to think of it, she seems to be doing a fine job personifying her psychedelic, indie pop brand of music. "As I've become more immersed in my art and been lucky enough to sign a record deal which allowed me to only work on music, I started discovering parts of myself that I never knew existed before," she says over the phone from Avila Beach, California, a stop on her tour with legendary funk rocker Michael Franti

and his project Michael Franti & Spearhead.

Twenty-one-year-old Day is almost done with the tour for her 2015 debut album *Kicker*, which featured the popular tracks "Sweet Ophelia" and "Hypnotic." This is her first-ever tour and the whole experience has greatly changed the way she writes music. "I now know the names and the faces of the people who are listening to the music that I'm writing," she says. "Every night that I get up onstage, there's a relationship that I'm building with my audience." This newfound connection with her fans will play a key role when

she begins work on her second album by the end of the year. "Now going into the studio—I'm much more aware of what it is to make a record and tour off a record. It's going to be much well-rounded for the live performances."

Growing up in the small town of Pinetop in Arizona which has a population of 5,000, Day was the only kid she knew her age who was making music. "There wasn't much of a music scene. I had to believe in my art and my music on my own and believe that it would get me somewhere." The video of "Mustang Kids," another track from *Kicker*, chronicles this phase from her childhood. "In the video, you see these kids go through an evolution of binding together and coming together in liberation of art," says Day. The biggest liberation for her personally was when she moved to Los Angeles. It opened a new creative chapter in her life and gave her hope that she would find other people who loved the same things she did. Day's ex-roommate, indie singer-songwriter Garrett Borns aka Børns, was and continues to be one such person. "I think people like him definitely moved me along in my creative journey," says Day.

For her next LP, Day wants to push her vintage indie pop along a psychedelic rock route. Her upcoming seven-inch vinyl titled *Zella Day* which releases this month is a glimpse of what's in store. "It's a special thing for the fans who like to hold the music in their hands," she says. The limited-edition record will feature just two tracks, "Hunnie Pie," a song about her sister and "Man on the Moon," which is co-written by producer Dan Nigro and talks about the feeling of falling in love with someone for the first time. The song was inspired by the Dream Room, a long-term art installation in New York City.

For someone who has just been on her first tour, Day is aware of the aesthetic she wants to create. "I started focusing on my brand and what it meant to look the way that I sound, and sound the way that I look, and how those things really play off of each other," she says, adding that a lot of the music she listens to has played a part as well. She digs Sixties rock gods Zombies and the Rolling Stones. Her influences have come from the great women musicians of the time such as Patti Smith, Janis Joplin and Stevie Nicks. "Every night before I go onstage and I'm thinking about what to wear, I'm planning my outfit around comfort and flexibility and glitter," she says with a laugh. RIDDHI CHAKRABORTY

**"I had to believe in my art and my music on my own."**