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For Indie Pop Star Morgxn, Only A Life Without Labels Is Worth Singing About



TIM MOSENFELDER VIA GETTY IMAGES

Pop singer-songwriter morgxn released his full-length debut album, "Vital," in 2018.

The singer-songwriter, who identifies as queer, defies easy categorization on his 2018 album, "Vital," and genre-bending new music.

Deeply personal lyrics, a distinctive falsetto and a sensual stage presence have helped make morgxn, whose real name is Morgan Karr, a rising star on the indie pop circuit. The mainstream music industry seems to have caught on, too, by slowly taking notice of the singer-songwriter's talents. His chosen path, however, has been anything but linear. In fact, he experienced his first burst of success via a different artistic medium: theater. He relocated from Nashville to New York in 2008 to join the ensemble of Broadway's "[Spring Awakening](#)." The hit musical helped launch the careers of [Jonathan Groff](#), [Lea Michele](#) and other actors, but it turned out to be a much different type of turning point for morgxn. "It was a really tough experience, because I remember standing onstage and feeling empty," he said. "I didn't know what to do with that. I just wanted to find my own voice and my own way of existing."

In an effort to "shake the universe," morgxn relocated from New York to Los Angeles in 2011 and began writing. "I don't think I trust people who haven't, at some point in their life, sold everything they've owned and moved somewhere," he said, "because I think sometimes you have to give the universe a big gesture that you're ready for something new. For me, that was that."



Within a few years, that “gesture” began to pay off. Following guest appearances on two songs by DJ Tiësto, morgxn released a debut single, “[Love You With the Lights On](#),” in 2016. His full-length debut album, “Vital,” dropped in May 2018. The anthemic choruses and handclap rhythms of “Vital” occasionally bring to mind Panic! at the Disco and The 1975. Although he cited Prince and David Bowie as musical influences, morgxn stressed that he would like his signature sound to be undefinable. “I’m really not interested in labels,” he said.

When it comes to his private life, he takes a similar approach, identifying publicly as queer and using the pronouns he, him and his.

“I’m categorized as a human,” he said. “That’s as specific as I want to get, because for the first time in my life, I’m living my life authentically in a way that feels good to me, and not to society or anyone else.”

Though he has never shied away from expressing inclusive themes in his work, morgxn is hopeful he can help open doors so that music performed by openly LGBTQ artists will no longer be confined to queer spaces.



Momentum for “Vital” has been building slowly but steadily since its release last year. In January, morgxn released “[Vital: Blue](#),” a companion EP containing acoustic takes on five of his tracks, including “Carry the Weight.”

He followed up with two brand-new singles, “A New Way” and “OMM!,” the latter of which dropped earlier this month. Released [in partnership](#) with GLAAD, [the video](#) for “A New Way” has garnered more than 1 million views since June.

On the mainstream stage, morgxn’s profile is also on the rise. He teamed up with rockers Walk the Moon — best known for the 2014 smash, “Shut Up And Dance” — for a televised performance of his song, “Home,” on “[Jimmy Kimmel Live!](#)” in January. And in July, he sang “A New Way” on “[Good Morning America](#).”

On the concert stage, he’s been just as prolific, hitting [Lollapalooza](#) and [South by Southwest \(SXSW\)](#), among other festivals. He’ll kick off his first [headline tour](#) in September, playing venues in Boston, Atlanta, San Francisco and many other cities.

Still, the rapidly shifting ways of consuming music can be tough on a young artist looking to find footing in a fickle industry. morgxn is conscious of this, but he said paying close attention to airplay and streams “undermines the journey of being an artist.”

“I can say confidently that I try to measure [success] by how I feel about the music I make,” he said. “I’ll receive a message from someone on Instagram or Twitter about how something I’ve written has helped them, and I’m like, ‘Well, there’s proof that something is connecting.’ That’s real, and that’s success.”