



Bea Miller's Talks Her Sophomore Album "Aurora," Gun Control, and Slut Shaming

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Ever since she first appeared on the cultural radar with a stint on season two of *The X Factor* in 2012, **Bea Miller** has established herself as a force to be reckoned with — and with a voice to match. With her politically-charged social media presence and sultry melodies, the 19-year-old singer-songwriter has built her career on defying expectations in an industry that demands conformity. And with an album and four EPs to her name, she's done it all while most of her peers are still finishing high school.

Never one to sit still for long, Bea is already back with what might be her boldest work yet. Out Friday (February 23), *Aurora* is her sophomore album that was largely written as she transitioned from adolescence to adulthood. Touching on everything from existential boredom to slut shaming, *Aurora* is the work of an artist whose not only found her voice but has something to say with it.

For Bea growing up, equality always made sense. But as her eyes were opened up to the real world, she realized that were still fighting for people's rights to just be who they are. *Teen Vogue* sat down with Bea to chat about her passion for fighting for what's right and how that translated into her songwriting and activism. She chatted about turning her experiences into music, lessons learned from [Selena Gomez](#), what fans should expect from her second album, and more.

***Teen Vogue:* What about making *Aurora* felt different from when you were making your debut album?**

Bea Miller: What was different about the first album is that I didn't write it. My label said "We think you're cool and have stuff to say, but you're new to the industry. We've been doing this for so long so just put out a record we think is going to work." I was 15 and of course, I rebelled like "No, this isn't my vision!" But they said, "If you do this now and pay your dues, your next record you can do what you want." And they kept their word! This album is the real Bea Miller. But I also don't think in the past I was ready to be that, and now I'm ready to be here with all my walls broken down. *Aurora* let me figure out what the f*ck I was supposed to be doing. I was almost teaching myself through writing without even realizing it. It's like therapy. You can hear my progression as a person and how much happier I became, which is really cool for me to hear because I'm proud of myself.

***TV:* What were some influences you looked to for inspiration?**

BM: I was inspired by anything relevant enough to write a song about. Some days I wrote about something specific, but there were days where nothing interesting was going on and I still wanted to write. I literally have a song about how bored I was and it's actually a really cool song that's interesting because I created something out of nothing. A lot of this record is me nit-picking little moments and being like "This is what's on my mind and even if it's not an obvious topic worth writing about, maybe that's what makes it worth writing about."



TV: Songs including “Burning Bridges” and “Repercussions” have this darker edge that your debut didn’t. What made you want to move in that creative direction?

BM: When I go into the studio I just want to make something that feels good. One producer told me he gauges what he’s doing by listening and going “Hmm, I like this” or “Hmm, I don’t like this.” It’s as simple as that. What feels good in the moment is what you should follow. I listen to so many different genres that one week I’ll be super inspired by rap but then I’ll hear a cool country record or pop or rock. I’m inspired by new things every single day so trying to fit myself into one box where I have to stay the same all the time? I didn’t want to do that.

TV: Your first single off *Aurora*, “S.L.U.T.,” reclaims a word used to shame people and criticize sexual expression. How did that track come together?

BM: The day I wrote that song I walked into the studio and was feeling really good about myself; I was wearing a cute bodysuit that was a scoop-back and I posted a picture. I have A-cup boobs so I don’t wear bras because I don’t need the support. It’s less comfortable for me to wear one! It wasn’t see-through but you could see the impression of my nipples because every person has nipples. I normally don’t read comments but I happened to see one girl had said something like “I can’t believe you posted this, it’s so inappropriate, you’re such a slut, how could you promote this to your young fans?” I remember sitting there like ‘What the f*ck?’ We need to lift each other because when women come together they’re so strong, and when men see us tearing each other down then that makes them think it’s ok to do the same thing. I was ranting to my co-writer and she looked up “slut” on Urban Dictionary and one of the definitions said it was an acronym for “Sweet, Little, Unforgettable Thing.”

It immediately made me feel better. Because that cheered me up, I thought it'd cheer a bunch of other women up to hear, so we shifted the whole day and said "Let's turn something that's negative into something positive and reclaim the word so when women are called a slut for absolutely no reason, it doesn't make them feel bad about themselves."

TV: Would you say you integrate your politics and worldview into your music?

BM: Definitely in "S.L.U.T.," I feel like that song has a lot of my worldview. There's a line about how we have to learn to come together, love your color, gender, whatever. I have a trans brother and a gay mom, so I've always been surrounded by people in the LGBTQ community and have so many friends passionate about equality. I put that on my socials all the time.

TV: Why is it important to you, especially at a young age, to be so involved in societal issues like LGBTQ+ advocacy, gun control, and cyberbullying?

BM: Because young people are the future. I know that's such an overdone thing to say, but literally young people become adults and then they're in charge of the world and the cycle repeats itself. I'm only 19 but it's important to inspire the people of the future to lead it to a better place. We're working toward equality but we're not there yet. There are so many people who are belittled and we need to realize the world would be a much better place if we could recognize that we're all the same. If you think something's wrong, nothing's going to happen until you act on that.

TV: You've also become a big proponent of the gun control group [Gays Against Guns](#). What is it about GAG and their mission that resonates with you?

BM: Right after Trump was elected a lot of sh*t was going on and my mom said "We need to figure this out, we're joining Gays Against Guns." My mom is very liberal and very much a fighter for the people, so when she joined GAG I loved that it was people who are belittled and go through so many struggles coming together and fighting against something they believe in. I 1000% think that gun laws need to change and a lot less sh*t would happen if we caught on to other countries. It's so important to get involved with a group of people and try to make a change. Nothing will ever happen if you don't try. Let's get out there and make some change! I think people are just so shocked and scared by Trump that they're like "Oh sh*t."



TV: What have you learned from getting involved with these causes? Has your activism changed the way you view the world in any way?

BM: I don't know if anything's changed. I was raised by two moms in a town that was diverse and understanding of people. I remember when I got a taste of the whole rest of the world and left my bubble when I got older, I was just so confused by the fact that not everybody else was like that. I couldn't wrap my head around the fact that there are people who look at other people and think "You're less than me and you're not the same as I am." I've never been able to grasp that concept, so when I experienced that it's not so obvious to people, it inspired me more to act on it. Equality just always made sense and once I got out into the world and realized it didn't make sense to everybody, that's when I thought "Ok now I actually need to get out and do something about it."

TV: You've toured with some powerhouse female artists. What was your biggest takeaway from those experiences?

BM: My biggest takeaway is how inspiring it is that when women come together they can literally do anything. **Demi [Lovato]** is someone who really speaks her mind and has gone through so many things in life that she's been willing to share with us. It's amazing when women are actually supportive of one another. You think it'd seem so obvious, this idea of women supporting other women. But girls get jealous of other girls, they get angry that one has this or that and wanna drag them down. We should all just be inspired by one another and encouraging so we can accomplish so much more. I'm just trying to frontier that.

TV: Did any of them give advice that's stuck with you?

BM: Most of the time when you sit down with other artists, it's never like "Here's how I got where I am..." When you sit down with other artists, you're like "finally I'm with people who f*cking get me and understand what I'm going through."

I don't think anyone's ever given me straightforward advice, I just watch other people and see the way they grow and experience things. Selena [Gomez] was interesting to be on tour with because she didn't let the world break her but let it empower and inspire her instead. Everybody goes through ups and downs, but she's never let that stop her. That's how I felt when I was young so it was inspiring to be around someone who pulled through

TV: With *Aurora* finally set to arrive this week, what can fans expect?

BM: I feel like the album is a story and now you get the whole thing without any gaps, so when you listen to it start to finish that's literally been me for the past year and a half. It's who I am and everything I'm about. So if you wanna know Bea Miller, here I am.