

THE BEST VIDEOS FROM THE MOST COMPELLING ARTISTS



A BAEBLE NEXT SESSION: ZZ Ward

The Blues Powerhouse Is Back In The Baeble Studio For A Second Time

Show Review

Longtime Baeble fans might remember that four years back, we [introduced you](#) to upstart blues powerhouse [ZZ Ward](#), who stunned us with her brand of Delta Blues that's somehow untouched by time. Fast-forward one album and a whole lotta touring later (and a change of location on our end), Ward is back at Baeble HQ to bless us once again with her uncanny knack for dusty blues and folk. This time around, Ward is less than a month away from releasing her second album *The Storm*, which promises another round of the rugged, genuine blues-rock we all came to know and love from her first one. We're frankly pretty damn excited for the new album, so when the opportunity arose to have her back for another session, we simply couldn't pass up the opportunity.

Just like in her first session, Ward knows how to bring the blues in full force, thanks to grooving guitar rhythms and her signature electrifying vocals. Just like some of the best old blues records from the 50s, Ward's music offers massively raw power and untethered emotion, so it's a huge bonus music like this is still being made in 2017. We were so happy to have ZZ Ward rocking out in the studio again, and we're even happier to share here exclusive session with the world. Watch her full performance right here, and look out for *The Storm*, out June 30.

Artist Bio

By all accounts, 2012 was a banner year for up-and-coming blues-hop/soul singer ZZ Ward. Releasing the mixtape *Eleven Roses* in February, the Criminal EP in May and her full-length debut *Til the Casket Drops* in October proved she was nothing if not prolific. Since then, she has appeared on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, had her music featured on ABC Family's *Pretty Little Liars*, MTV's *Awkward* and in promos for ABC's hit series *Nashville*, and completed a 50-date headlining American tour with sold-out dates in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Denver and Nashville. Ward is still in awe of the buzz that has continued to build around her and her music this past year.

"That was the first year I played in cities I'd never been to, and yet I had fans there," says Ward. "They came to the shows, knew the lyrics, and had already connected with the songs. It was fun, but surreal."

Ward, whom NPR recently declared "is going to be a star," and whose vocal prowess *Rolling Stone* has praised as being "chill-inducing," has been gradually working her way into the music scene since she began performing for her father's blues band at age 13. Growing up in rural Oregon, her love of hip-hop and rap eventually took her to the nearby college town of Eugene, where she sang choruses at underground hip-hop clubs for local rappers. Despite these experiences though, she struggled to reconcile her love of blues, hip-hop, soul and rock on a professional level.

"It took me a while to embrace the sort of music I wanted to make and accept that making it for myself was enough," Ward says. "I just wanted to write songs that I loved, so that's what I did on this record."

Ward's honey-smoked vocals and soulful lyrics ensnare you from the opening moments of the stomping title track and hold you in their hypnotic sway clear through the final notes of the cool, R&B-flavored "365 Days." The album features thirteen tracks ranging from heartfelt ballads ("Last Love Song") to groovy up-tempo numbers ("Move Like U Stole It"), and includes guest appearances by rising hip-hop star Kendrick Lamar and rapper Freddie Gibbs. Bluesy ditties like "Lil Darlin'" sound like something you might hear in a dive bar, and the funky hip-hop track "Charlie Ain't Home," acts as an imaginative reply to Etta James's "Waiting on Charlie." The maverick sensibilities which appear throughout this show-stopping record have also earned Ward's music a nickname Dirty Shine which she happily embraces.

"What dirty shine means to me, personally, was the moment I stopped thinking about what people were gonna think about my music, and I just accepted who I was and what my sound was," Ward says. "It's about embracing your authentic self, doing what makes you happy and committing to it. That's the message people have been getting from that phrase, so it's inspiring."

2013 is promising to be even busier for Ward. She recently appeared on *Conan*, is co-headlining *The Fire and Shine Tour* with Delta Rae, and will be performing at *SXSW*, where she first introduced herself as an artist to watch out for last year. If you thought 2012 was a great year for Ward, 2013 is going to prove the best is yet to come.