

Cultural Daily


Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Both Sides of Billie Eilish

Miki Hellerbach · Wednesday, October 9th, 2019

Billie Eilish's most distinguishing quality is her tact. Her music style blends swagger, seductive darkness, humor, and vulnerability. Not to mention just amazingly catchy melody. This very composed combination grabs you as if it was meant to do so. It's as if she actively developed the sound making sure to cover all of the vibes we inwardly wish to be drawn to.

Now this may all just be her. But it almost seems a bit too clever to not have been crafted. The music represents all of our dark desires mixed with true purity. Her debut album, "When We All Fall Apart Where Do We Go," which dropped in March of this year, executed that concept fully through sound and lyricism. Though funny enough in person and in interviews Eilish seems like she is that one goofy homie who everyone gets along with. It all comes across as much deep as it is charismatic, but most importantly honest.

Her recent *SNL* performance was the epitome of tact. She opened with a playful technology  filled exploration of her highest charting hit, "Bad Guy." She moved in a filmed box in which it appeared that she was walking on walls with magnets on her shoes. She was upside down and sideways singing and dancing with finesse even with a visibly injured leg. She still performs with a large brace. It was as silly as it was cool. But the most impressive part of the performance was her vocals still sounded crispy, which in my experience, has been very much not the case for *SNL* music guests in the past couple years.

Eilish hooked the audience with that start. It was wildly charming. She even had the camera zoom out to her band playing at the end to reveal that it was some sort of camera affect. This move to show her hand made you feel cool that your were in on it. Which seems so stupid and vain, but in truth we all like to be involved. Her message was I'm humble but you have to admit I'm still dope.

That said, the first performance was all just a set up for the real stunner. The second performance was a bare stage with a seated acoustic rendition of her song, "I Love You." It was simply her and her collaborator and brother. He sat to the left playing acoustic guitar and smoothly entering with backup vocals. And Eilish to the right singing lead vocal really just floated. She delivered the song effortlessly, honestly, and simply. She maintained her signature breathy tone. Yet she still executed beautiful vocal ability and vulnerability that when showcased stripped down proved why she is where she is.

It was one of the best *SNL* performances I've ever seen. The second song was the highlight for me, though she opened with the more social media explosive and meme influencing performance in order to allow the space for it. Eilish proved that she has the true tact to play both sides affectively.

So much so that it feels authentic even if it's so crafted it's hard to believe.

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