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**BIOGRAPHY**

*"I wrote London Is Lonely back in February 2020 right before the pandemic hit here in the UK. I had just moved out of my childhood home down to London and had spent the past few months feeling really trapped and alone in my tiny flat with strangers. London felt so intense and although there were so many people around me, I felt even more isolated and like I didn’t belong. I kind of lost myself in the city. I didn’t exactly know who I was anymore, and so going home and writing felt like my safe space to process everything. It’s funny now listening to the song almost two years on, post-pandemic, and feeling like nothing much has changed at all. I’m still trying to find my place here and make it my home and so it felt right to put this song out into the world right now, when so many other people are probably feeling lost right now too.” -* **Holly Humberstone**

Holly remembers watching the BRITs at home with her parents every year, and being totally awestruck by the artists coming together. It felt like another universe. Now Holly has been named the BRITs Rising Star 2022, picked by the BRIT Awards and hundreds of tastemakers as the next big artist to come out of the UK, with previous winners including global superstars Adele, Sam Smith and Florence + The Machine. Being nominated for the songs that started in the four walls of her family home, Holly says it “doesn’t feel real,” but she is an artist who has captured the hearts and minds of fans across the globe with her personal storytelling, revealing *“*the chaos in my head”.Writing is the only way Holly knows how to process life’s messiness.

The 22-year-old’s music started life in her *haunted* childhood home - a quintessentially spooky, strange house that is now crumbling down. Like most unusual houses of its ilk, its most intriguing parts are in its subterranean layers. There’s a dungeon and a room full of meat hooks, and a climate so damp mushrooms grow out of the walls. Friends find the whole house so creepy they’ve been known to make excuses to avoid sleeping over there.

“Loads of people have probably died here in the past but I’ve always felt really safe here,” Holly shrugs. “It’s like a seventh family member. It’s part of me.”

Last year, the family were told that they wouldn't be able to live in the house anymore because it was becoming so dilapidated. The news followed a period of big changes in Holly’s life, from finishing school and heading off to uni only to hate her experience, the end of a relationship, and having to say goodbye to a loved one. “I just felt like all the special bits that I was really trying to hold onto from my childhood that were really precious were getting away from me,” she says.

The idea of having to leave her childhood home for good soon inspired one of her most poignant songs so far. ‘Haunted House’, the opening song on her critically acclaimed second EP *The Walls Are Way Too Thin,* finds the young musician saying farewell to the extraordinary residence and paying tribute to its impact on her life. “*Bringing up four daughters made this house a fortress*,” she sings over plaintive piano, later pleading: “*Don’t say that I’m leaving/ In the morning, let me lie here with you*.”

Writing has helped Holly to come to terms with the shifts that were happening in her life, and it first began to take shape in the pre-pandemic days when Holly would visit her friends and sisters in Manchester, revel in big nights out and then get the train back to wherever she was living at the time, feeling worse for wear.

“On those train journeys I had loads of time to confront how I was feeling because I had nothing else to distract me from it,” she says. With her hangovers preventing her from being able to filter her thoughts, she began to write ideas in the Notes app on her phone and record little voice memos that would form the genesis of *The Walls Are Way Too Thin.* The title track is a collaboration with the 1975’s Matty Healy, and ‘Scarlett’ was written to help her best friend get out of a bad relationship, while sonically, Holly’s sound is one that belongs to the night, with moonlight flashes and twilight tinges occupying her genre-blurring songs, which take influence from the likes of Bon Iver, Damien Rice, Frank Ocean, Lorde and Phoebe Bridgers, but stand alone in their own distinctive world. Her critically acclaimed debut EP *Falling Asleep At The Wheel* was written at her home and imitated the sounds of the house – packed with distant buzzes, ethereal echoes and wonky, warped glitches. *Falling Asleep At The Wheel* marked the first chapter in the story of a new global talent, garnering over 200M global streams to-date.

Becoming a breakout sensation during a global pandemic meant staying in her room and watching her world change, online. But in that period, Holly achieved everything a young artist could dream of: being nominated for the Ivor Novello Rising Star Award with Apple Music, chosen as YouTube’s next Artist On The Rise and Deezer’s Focus artist, and Amazon Presents, and coming runner up in the prestigious BBC Sound of 2021.

When live opened up again, Holly was able to endear fans at sold-out shows across the globe, and last summer performed at the Roxy in LA and two-sold out Bowery Ballroom in NYC, with attendees included superstar Lorde. It’s no surprise Holly has been invited to join Olivia Rodrigo and Girl In Red on their huge USA tours this Spring. Indeed Holly identifies with “female writers who overshare”, including Phoebe Bridgers and Adrianne Lenker of Big Thief: “My songs are quite self-exposing. I don’t really leave much to the imagination because I am writing so much for my own mental well being”. She has also become known for her intimate live experiences - having performed a version of ‘Friendly Fire’ at Sessions Arts Club with Griff, and has brought that intimacy to bigger shows, playing ‘Friendly Fire’ with Bombay Bicycle Club’s Jack Steadman at her sold out London Shepherd’s Bush Empire headline, with Kentish Town Forum headline planned for June.

Holly’s latest single, ‘London Is Lonely’, is her most heartbreaking and poignant song yet, documenting the story of moving to London and feeling disconnected and isolated. It’s another example of her deeply personal songwriting, which has led to finishing 2021 with the most prized new artist accolade: The BRITs Rising Star 2022. The huge news was announced by friend and collaborator Sam Fender during their recording of the acoustic version of his hit song, ‘Seventeen Going Under,’ to which, almost speechless, Holly responded: are you joking?

It is the honest storytelling at the heart of Holly’s craft that has captured the hearts and minds of fans globally, with “tattoo lyrics” that are specific to her life, from her sisters' struggles with mental health to growing apart from her friends, but are universal experiences. “People can connect to a song more if it’s just me and my unfiltered thoughts,” says Holly. “That’s what I look for in music that I listen to – a personal connection. Everything I’m going through is universal. Everyone’s been through these situations, it’s not just me”.

Holly’s universe now sits apart from her childhood home, but will always be at the root of her songwriting.

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