**Lauran Hibberd - Artist Biography**

Growing up, Lauren Hibberd was a “cork-head” – otherwise known as “a person who was born on the Isle of Wight,” she clarifies. “Everyone laughs at us because we’ve never been in a big ASDA,” the musician adds with a laugh. “We’re still in 2001.”

As a kid, she lived next door to a surreal tourist attraction called the Dinosaur Farm; a maze of old fossils, plastic caves, and motion-activated T-Rex roars. Her first job was cleaning the museum’s dinosaur eggs with a toothbrush; later, she got a gig microwaving spag bol in a seaside cafe. “Somebody once said to me ‘compliments to the chef’” she recalls.

Still based there, Hibberd loves the island’s slow pace of living, and her music – charged with deliciously quick wit – draws on its many idiosyncrasies. She views her hometown with a protective fondness: case in point, her hometown’s unofficial national anthem. “It’s the worst song I’ve ever heard,” she laughs. “They play it on all the ferries. I’ll be there on the midnight ferry with shit cup of tea, watching Derek Sandy sing ‘Welcome to the Isle of Wight’. I think: this is England”.

As a teenager, she listened to Galaxy FM and worshipped at the altar of One Direction – “it taught me how to write a catchy chorus,” she points out, “I love pop music.” Chair of her own eight-member strong Jacqueline Wilson fan-club, Hibberd “nearly passed out” when she met the author, and meanwhile wrote her own “weird trilogy of books called Daisy Chains” about life on the Isle of Wight. Later, a mixture of curiosity and sheer boredom prompted Hibberd to pick up a guitar – and she immediately found that music lent itself to her knack for witty, observational storytelling. “I like to find the things that would normally gross people out, or things that the average person might look past,” she says.

Originally, Hibberd toyed with folk – and soon caught support from two key figureheads in the Isle of Wight’s small, but influential music scene. Isle of Wight Festival boss and Bestival founder Rob Da Bank both helped out early on by booking her for their respective festivals – she ended up opening Bestival’s main stage aged eighteen after winning a competition. Soon, she was able to head into the studio to record her early tracks – and that’s where everything changed. A producer handed her an overdrive pedal, and a copy of Weezer’s ‘The Blue Album’. “That was me converted,” she says. “I remember I got that CD stuck in my car for a year of my life”

And drawing from her upbringing - and distinctive voice – Lauran Hibberd’s forthcoming EP captures a very specific kind of twenty-something malaise – harbouring huge ambitions while the current state of the world is stacking the odds up against ever realising them. “Big guns, small funds, I could never win me back” she quips wrly on her spiny new single ‘Boy Bye’ – “I have big ideas and no pennies,” she says of the song, “that’s the USP!”

The angular cut, which draws on alternative US indie, was written this year, back when the UK was in strict lockdown. Removed from the bustle of everyday life, Hibberd realised that this was the first significant amount of time she had ever spent alone. “I realised I’m quite a codependent person, and I’m always leaning on someone,” she explains. “This made me realise that I’m actually ok by myself, and that was a cool moment. If I had to survive all by myself, Lost-style, I’d probably be alright.”

Lauren Hibberd’s forthcoming new EP follows on from last year’s ‘Everything Is Dogs’, and builds upon the distinctive dry wit that the release carved out. It’s produced by Suzy Shinn – the eclectic LA-based producer whose credits span from Weezer, Fall Out Boy and Panic! At the Disco to the heady pop heights of Dua Lipa and Katy Perry. Sharing an ear for a sharp hook made for an ideal creative match. “I think the fun thing about bands like Weezer and Green Day is that foundation of scuzzy guitars and fast drums, and really clean, polished melody,” Hibberd says. “That’s the thing that gets me going.”

And as a whole, Hibberd’s new material is brutally honest– it also plumbs new sonic depths. ‘You Never Looked So Cool’ smoulders and slow-burns with an intensity that recalls Phoebe Bridgers, and revisits an accident which left her high on strong painkillers in hospital, and dreaming about attending her own funeral. “I wrote the song the minute I got home,” she says. It’s darkly funny. "I just think about life in that way anyway, and it’s how I see things,” she says. “Even in the sad stuff, there’s always something a bit wack or funny in there.

’Old Nudes’ meanwhile, sees its protagonist peering out a car window, and staring at a person she once trusted with her most intimate thoughts. Now they’ve become a stranger – it’s strange and jarring. “The song’s about old nudes, but beneath that, it’s about a lot of other things, too: realising that somebody knows everything about you. I want to be open about it, and talk about it. If I can release a song called ‘Old Nudes’ and play it to my grandad, it makes it easier for everyone else. It’s a confession for myself, and it’s also about trying to normalise it.”

Pondering what kind of artist she wants to be, Lauran Hibberd has a typically succinct, and slightly strange, answer at the ready that somehow manages to tie everything neatly together. “I like to think of myself as One Direction for children that want to pretend they’re alternative,” she says. “I want teenage girls to come to my shows and bring their dads: who will stand at the back like ‘oh god, can’t wait for this to be over’ and the girls at the front. And then I want the dad to be like, oh actually this is quite good.

“The dad and daughter combo,” she grins. “That’s the golden spot”

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