

RINI

Admitting your R&B favorites is to generally risk ridicule. The genre is so overrun with guilty pleasures that it's rare that a repeat-worthy artist can also serve as a signifier of highbrow taste — but **RINI** is one such talent. A singer-instrumentalist with such undeniable talent, fans are quickly captivated upon discovering of the young Australian. It's easy to understand why: not only does his sultry falsetto see critics comment, "I'm so mad at myself for almost *not* clicking," but RINI's remarkably poetic sound has already begun to capture the hearts of millions.

"When I really started writing, I just wanted to make songs that express my emotions and tell my story," the 22-year-old explains. "Sometimes now at shows the audience sing word for word, which is truly amazing to see. The connection with the audience is such an experience."

A talented instrumentalist, Melbourne-raised Justerini Sandoval went to great lengths to become a seasoned performer at a young age — playing guitar in front of his church congregation as a child and street performing in his teens. The success of these endeavors sent venturing down many other avenues to develop his music. Bandmates began to teach him drums, bass and keys to supplement his singing. YouTube became a key resource for the aspiring musician, with both RINI uploading covers of R&B chart-toppers and teaching himself production from tutorial videos. With his self-titled premiere project in 2017, RINI set about scratching the itches of contemporary-soul lovers. Nonetheless, it was when formulating his latest EP, *After the Sun*, the singer says he really found his sound.

"It was about just wanting to get my sound out there and see what people thought of it," RINI claims of his early output. "I would be given beats from friends saying, 'Just try it out.' I would be doing all these different things, writing about my life story."

He continues: "Now my music is about what is actually going on with me. During [*After the Sun*] I was going through relationships, so I prefer to talk about what's going on with my life at the moment and that resonates with people because we usually all have similar life experiences."

RINI's sensuous style now draws frequent comparisons to revered crooners, Frank Ocean and Daniel Caesar, and he's similarly inspired by musicians' whose output feels "real." RINI often opts for live arrangements, with many of his songs the product of a jam session or simple chord progression. "I try to keep it really simple," he says of his approach to songwriting, crediting love and life experience for his creative process. To further hone his craft, the Melbournite has now moved to the world's music capital: Los Angeles.

"I just wanted to keep growing and evolving," RINI shares. "To me, relocating to switch up the energy is really important. You just catch a whole new vibe, which stimulates your creativity."

And he already has. The change of scenery catalyzed something of sonic shift for RINI, and he's welcoming the opportunity to experiment. He assures the next project won't be a full departure from the more "mellow" music to which his fans have been accustomed, but recently the singer's begun gravitating toward a faster tempo. And if his speed towards stardom continues at this rate, we should all prime ourselves for a new sound to come from the up-and-coming Australian artist — no guilt necessary.

"I'm still getting the hang of it, but I feel prepared to take off. I'm ready."

Keep an eye out for RINI's anticipated TK, out TK.