

Rising artist Barney Fletcher on blowing up from your bedroom, Bob Dylan, and only putting out music he can stand behind.

Two minutes into my conversation with North-London based singer Barney Fletcher, we discover that we both live in the same neighbourhood. "That's so cool, man! It's so sick to meet someone who also lives nearby," the 23-year-old shares. After we try to work out which roads we both live on and trade intricate reviews on the local swimming pools we regularly attend, Fletcher tells me why he chose to move to the big city in the first place. "Growing up in the countryside, there really wasn't much to do there," he says. "It also gave me this drive to be amongst different people."

Moving from a small village in Somerset to a flat close to the bustling borough of Camden, Fletcher's music absorbs the diverse influences of his surroundings. Equally, it draws on his teenage infatuation with Bob Dylan. An obsession which plays a huge part in his songwriting and unique blend of hip-hop, R&B and disco.

Since his musical career began in 2019, the singer-songwriter's playfully distinctive sound has caught the attention of various collaborators including the legendary Nas and Run The Jewels. Fletcher has even featured on the latest DJ Shadow album, as well as having one of his songs soundtrack a pivotal moment of Michaela Coel's BBC Hit Drama, *I May Destroy You*.

This Winter, Fletcher released "make you feel good," a catchy, pop-leaning number that details the consequences of a messy break-up. Revelling in the excitement of his recent single, the rising star sits down with Wonderland to discuss the inspiration behind the new song, painting-by-numbers, and creating music from the comfort of his own bed.

Grace Sowerby For those who don't know you, how would you describe your sound in your own words?

Barney Fletcher That's a tricky one. I can define the music which is out currently, and it's mainly hip-hop. I would say the recent track is a moody, "in-my-feelings" kind of thing.

GS Are there any artists in particular who have inspired your music?

BF The Beatles have such good melodies and harmonies, which I think are

really cool. In terms of story-telling, I turn a lot to Bob Dylan. I'm so fascinated by how he constructs a story, and how it's just him and a guitar. Then I veered into hip-hop, like Drake, Eminem and Chance the Rapper. I've pulled inspiration from all these people and tried to mush it together into my own music.

GS Do you remember the first album that you brought?

BF Aloe Blacc's album *Good Things* on my iPod Touch!

GS What's the story behind "make you feel good"?

BF I've got an old friend who went

down. Is that always your go-to method?

BF Yeah, that's how I see it in my head. I rarely change the melodies after I've filled in the words. Writing-wise, I'd say 90% of my stuff, I do when I'm literally just sitting there.

GS What's one thing about the music industry that excites you right now?

BF I think it's cool how anyone can make music from their bedrooms. If you're really good, you can blow up based on one song - all you need is a laptop and a microphone. I always think about how back in the '60s, no one could make music from their room, and how many lost talents there must be from then. But today, you can literally upload anything to the internet for anyone in the world to listen to. It's insane to think about.

GS Is there anything about the industry that you would like to see change?

BF Songwriters need more respect for their names. I've got a few songwriter friends who work so hard and are treated quite badly.

GS It's about getting the credit they deserve.

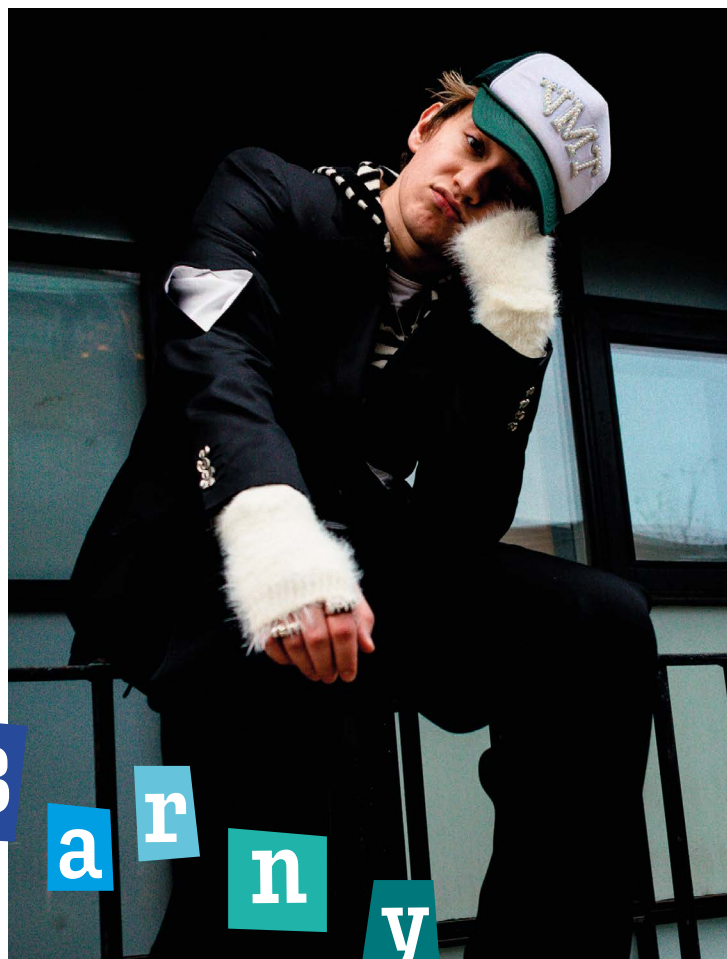
BF Yeah, it's definitely down to credit. They play such a big part and yet they get paid tiny percentages. They're just as important as the artist.

GS So what can we expect from you next?

BF Lots of exciting things! I've got a new single coming out this December with a music video, which is going to be sick.

GS Has there been any sort of advice you've received in the last few years within the industry?

BF Frank Ocean once said you have to 100% be behind every release that you put out, you can't feel manipulated to release it if you aren't feeling it. You want to put out music that you can really stand behind because then no matter if it blows up or not, it's something you're proud of. I think that's super important, and that's something I've learnt - to put out music that you're really happy about.



through some crazy stuff in the last year, and with his permission, I put his story into the song. It's very much a real story - just not mine. But it is somebody's story.

GS Do you have any special routines when it comes to songwriting that helps you feel inspired?

BF I would go into a session and make the track by putting the song together with some melodies. By then, you've got all this gobbledygook kind of stuff with no words yet. Usually I take that home and just write to it. It's like those colouring books, where you paint in all the little parts with the numbers.

GS I did so many of those in lock-

Jacket LUEDER; Long sleeve top RICK OWENS; Trousers LANVIN; Cap VMT; Earring, chain & rings, models own; Mittens, stylist's own; Necklace & rings RAE BERGIN

Grooming by SVEN BAYERBACH at CAROL HAYES MANAGEMENT using BENNY HANCOCK FOR MEN; Fashion assistant MIA YATES