

Jumper HORACE PAGE;
Earring RAE BERGIN
Opposite: Top BEYOND RETRO;
Shorts NATASHA ZINKO; Shirt
SONG FOR THE MUTE; Tights
MIU MIU; Hat HONG JIN WU;
Tie OLIVER SHARPE; Bracelet
model's own; Rings RAE BERGIN



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Photography NIAL HODSON

Fashion BRYDIE PERKINS

Words GRACE SOWERBY

Pop's latest newcomer, Willow Kayne, talks about collaborating with Nile Rodgers, and how online trolls inspired her latest single, "Opinion."

Willow Kayne is meant to be calling me from LA. However, due to a covid-related issue (because what else would it be in this current climate), she is instead Zooming from her bedroom in London. "It's fucking annoying - I had my second job recently, but you can only travel to America once it's been over 14 days," the Bristol-born singer says. "But I'm choosing to feel good about it. It's nice to spend a bit of time at home, actually. I've been so busy recently."

To say Kayne has been busy is an understatement. Commencing her career with secret SoundCloud music uploads, the 20-year-old singer has gone on to release three hit singles; an infectious debut, "Two Seater," a 90-tinged pop-banger "I Don't Wanna Know" and an attitude-packed hit, "Opinion." Next, she'll be releasing her EP, "Playground Antics," which is set to release in early 2022.

Infusing her music with a combination of punk, hip-hop and electronica, Kayne's distinct sound has caught the attention of some of the industry's most notable names. From a music collaboration with Nile Rodgers, to signing with TAP - the management company who also look after Dua Lipa and Lana Del Rey - and, most impressively, the latest winner of the prestigious Ivor Novello Rising Star Award, Kayne is already boasting a glittering CV. The rising star, however, is still trying to make sense of it all. "I actually wish I had some faith in myself before winning [the Ivor Novello award], because my speech was so shit," Kayne says, shuddering at the memory. "Everyone else was sick, mate, like they knew who to thank and what to say. But I do think that whole experience made me feel like an actual musician, which was nice."

Reaching huge milestones from

such a young age, have these career moves helped Kayne with her confidence as an artist, or has it only created more pressure for her to succeed? The singer says it's the latter - but only because of online trolling. "My labels are always just

hate is written by kids," she says. "Like if they made music, and I respected them as an artist, or even if they're actually brave enough to use their own accounts, I might stop to think about it. But because they're little kids behind the screen, it actually can't affect you."

According to Kayne, "Opinion" is just a small flavour of what to expect from the upcoming EP, "Playground Antics." Grappling with the changes occurring in the singer's life, listeners should expect some "ballsy" lyrics. "I find myself even now - at this age - seeing all the things I loved as a kid," the singer says. "All my current influences come from then, and I don't even know why. I've just stuck with this theme and rolled with it. I think it comes from this whole idea of being just a little kid when I joined the music world."

Forthright in character, and remarkably self-assured, it's impossible to tell that Kayne is only at the beginning of her career. She cites online trolls as her biggest inspiration, and she's learned to disassociate from what's being said online. Her imposter syndrome, however, still lingers. "It's probably a good thing because it keeps me grounded," she affirms.

When asked what success looks like to her, Kayne pauses to think. She then shrugs, beaming as she speaks. "Before I released my music, I thought to myself, 'I won't be happy until I have lots of money and I've had lots of music out.' I thought it was about being rich enough to be free," she says, laughing. "It's actually a lot more about who you're surrounded with. I don't know what will make you happy though - but it's not being rich."



like, 'Make tunes! Do you!' Which is sick. But the internet is very savage," she says. "When I started making music, everyone online was like 'You can't do that.' I just thought, 'Yes... I can?'"

Deriving from these hate comments, Kayne's latest single, "Opinion," was born. Referencing the melody of Santigold's "Shove It," the sucker-punch hit takes the perspective of being a child in the playground, looking at the bleakness of adult life through their eyes. There's even a brief mention of Lelli Kellys. "All the

Hair by KIARA SCORZELLI; Make-up by ALICE DODDS; Fashion assistant MIA YATES