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HER DARK MATERIALS

Danish pop princess Oh Land works her black magic in some of our most darkly romantic looks for fall and tells us how she discovered her inner cave man on her new album, *Wish Bone*. By Sharon Steel. Photographed by Marcelo Gomes. Styled by Anda & Masha

The moment the Danish electro-pop artist Nanna Øland Fabricius, better known as Oh Land, steps in front of the camera for her Aritzia photo shoot, she extends her lithe limbs and does a hop-skip-jump that makes her resemble a graceful bird fluttering through the sky. Movements like this come easily to the former Royal Swedish Ballet student, who even based “Green Card,” one of the songs on her thrilling new album, *Wish Bone*, on birds that migrate south for winter. In the track’s luminous chorus, she compares the birds leaving their home to her own long-distance relationship. “Lyrically, I’ve been more raw and direct on this record,” Oh Land confides from her perch on the makeup chair, right before she goes into model-bird mode. “Instead of covering up in fantasies, it’s real places, real names, real episodes, with all the awkwardness that is real life!” Utterly endearing and quick to giggle, she tells us about expressing herself honestly through music, dance, and her “more humorous” sense of style. SHARON STEEL



YOUR FIRST ALBUM, *OH LAND*, REFERENCED FANTASIES AND FABLES. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BE MORE HONEST ON *WISH BONE*?

I think I just woke up a bit, and realized that I wanted to make music that reflected the life that I live right now and the person that I am right now, rather than the person that I aspire to be and the life that I dream to live. I felt like I was in such a chaotic place that I wanted the songs to witness that—instead of retouching it.

YOUR VOCALS ARE MORE PRONOUNCED HERE. WHY DID YOU MAKE THAT CHOICE?

I wanted to make something that was quite primal. It’s very extreme to make big sounds out of your voice. It’s very...toucan! [*Laughs.*] I think I got in contact with my inner stone-age cave man! And also just having the experience of being on the road and playing every night, I got to know my own voice.

THE QUIRKY CHOREOGRAPHY FOR THE VIDEO OF YOUR SINGLE “RENAISSANCE GIRLS” DRAWS ON YOUR BALLET BACKGROUND. WAS IT FUN TO BE ABLE TO BRING YOUR LOVE OF DANCE AND MUSIC TOGETHER?

It was so fun to do. To me, movement and music are part of the same thing. I very much see melody as movements, and every time I sing a melody I always visualize it.

BUT IT MUST BE FREEING TO MIX THE TWO IN A WAY THAT’S A BIT DARKER OR QUIRKIER, BECAUSE BALLET IS SO RESTRICTIVE...

Exactly. I feel like I got to express my own personality much more the way I dance now. Because I don’t make movements to look pretty or sexy. I make movements to express myself. I don’t know anyone who always feels pretty or sexy! [*Laughs.*]

WHAT’S THE STORY BEHIND “RENAISSANCE GIRLS”? IT SEEMS AS IF YOU’RE COMMENTING ON THE FACT THAT GIRLS AND WOMEN TODAY ARE EXPECTED TO BE SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS AT ONCE.

It actually started out by reading a book about Renaissance men. I just remembered thinking, Oh, I wish I was like Leonardo da Vinci. Then I thought it was weird that there wasn’t anything called Renaissance women, or Renaissance girls. I wanted to use that term, just to make up for it. [*Laughs.*] I think this song was just to celebrate all my friends who do so many things and are such high achievers, but it’s also a song that’s a little bit critical of what you expect of yourself. I expect a lot of myself on all levels in life, and sometimes you just have to accept that you can’t do everything at once, and it’s OK to sit down a for whole day and eat candy and watch Disney movies!

WOULD YOU SAY YOUR SENSE OF STYLE CHANGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHIFT IN YOUR SOUND?

Yeah, I think so! My last album was more romantic and dreamy, and so was my style. On this album, I don’t try to romanticize anything, like my clothing. It’s more humorous, because humor and seriousness go very much hand in hand for me.

WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS THE IDEAL HUMOROUS DRESSER?

Maybe Goofy. [*Laughs.*] He wears too-big shoes and too-short trousers. It’s all a little bit out of proportion. I kinda like Goofy!

YOU’VE ALSO CHANGED YOUR HAIR COLOR QUITE A BIT. IT’S BLUE NOW!

Absolutely! Hair is like a very sensual thing that’s very connected to femininity. I kind of like to just be careless about it. It’s very freeing to give up control and slack a little—and trust that the true point will always be heard.

Hair: SEIJI @ THE WALL GROUP
Makeup: ROBERT GREENE @ SEE MANAGEMENT