



PORTALS - MELANIE MARTINEZ

THE REBIRTH OF AN ARTIST

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Melanie Adele Martinez was born April 28, 1995 in Queens, New York. Her musical career began in 2013 when she passed the audition for The Voice, making it as far as Top 6. After her elimination from the show, she immediately began working on original music. In 2014

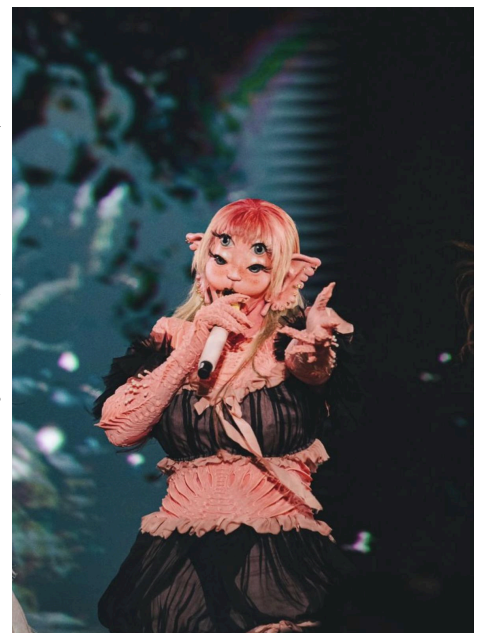


Martinez released her debut EP *Dollhouse*, two of the songs making it onto her first full album *Crybaby*. 2019 she released her second album *K-12* along with a concept movie of the same name. The movie featured strong themes of anti-bullying and the sometimes toxic environments of school. The story focused on a girl named Crybaby attempting to navigate her way through a cruel and odd boarding school. Martinez followed all of that with the *K-12* Tour, which was cut off early due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic she released another EP

titled *After School*. After this release she took a break from making music.

THE ALBUM

PORTALS was Martinez's return to the music industry, with a dramatic change in her aesthetic. Her iconic split-dyed hair and gap-tooth were no longer, replaced with a four-eyed pink creature. It still shares the name of her old persona, Crybaby, just in a new form. The album is about afterlife and rebirth, and the journey that happens in between those two things. Martinez also stated in an interview that the album "*is about being interconnected with everyone in the world and how we're all just here to learn and grow from each other.*"



TRACK LIST

STANDARD TRACKS

“DEATH” - 5:07

“VOID” - 4:08

“TUNNEL VISION” - 4:45

“FAERIE SOIRÉE” - 2:43

“LIGHT SHOWER” - 4:27

“SPIDER WEB” - 3:04

“LEECHES” - 3:21

“BATTLE OF THE LARYNX” - 5:29

“THE CONTORTIONIST” - 3:21

“MOON CYCLE” - 2:32

“NYMPHOLOGY” - 5:07

“EVIL” - 4:06

“WOMB” - 3:32

DELUXE TRACKS

“POWDER” - 3:58

“PLUTO” - 3:01

“MILK OF THE SIREN” - 4:25



SONGS

DEATH

“*Death, is life, is death, is life...*” That is the first thing when you begin listening to the album, along with a beating heart. Just with this opening line it sets up the tone and themes of this album perfectly. The song itself is about Martinez’s rebrand, with references to it with lines such as “*I’m back from the dead.*” In the music video for the song, there is imagery of the ‘old’ Crybaby, laid to rest. From the old emerges the new, attempting to break herself free from her old self. There is also a scene showing the creature stabbing the corpse of Crybaby, showing how she is truly gone. The song also had a deeper meaning about life, and in turn death, talking about how “*we all die one day.*”



LEECHES

One of the more underrated songs on the album. With its smooth yet gross transition into it from the previous song “SPIDER WEB”, right off the bat we start with Martinez’s haunting voice. The song heavily features stringed instruments that are a perfect fit for the song’s melody. Personally I interpret the song as someone stuck in a toxic relationship, not being able to leave because they feel obligated to ‘be there’ for them. In the song the speaker is reflecting on how they have been drained and how another person “*naw on my bones, no marrow left*”, but then going on to say that it’s just “*the luck of the draw.*” At the end of the song there is a sound effect of someone yelling indistinctly. Some people have theorized that this may be Martinez’s ex, Oliver Tree.

MOON CYCLE

Martinez tends to feature at least one subject that is usually 'taboo' to talk about in music in her albums. In Crybaby it was "Tag, You're It", about the dangers of kidnappers and pedophiles, and in K-12 it was "Orange Juice," about eating disorders; specifically Bulimia. With PORTALS it is this song, "MOON CYCLE" which is about the experiences of the menstrual cycle, and the downplaying and even fetishisation that some people who do not experience it seem to do. Song uses a lot of imagery of howling wolves and fruit, specifically raspberry and pomegranate. The howling is an allusion to how people like to think wolves howl at the moon. I also see it as a reference to werewolves, with the parallel for only transforming on a full moon, aka once a month, just like periods. The fruit, both being red, are a direct reference to the bleeding that comes with the menstrual cycle. There was a theory going around that the line "*I could win a fight on my period/Matter fact, right now I could build a pyramid*" was a response to one of Oliver Tree's songs, "Revival," due to its similarity to the line "*Stacking sh*t, like each brick on my pyramid, I'm angry, and bloody like a b*tch on her period*", but this was disproved by Martinez.

NYMPHOLOGY

Transitioning beautifully into this song from "MOON CYCLE", "NYMPHOLOGY" starts with an almost calming combination of violin and guitar, with Martinez's soft voice. You are then caught off guard by the heavy bass line in the chorus that persists for almost the rest of the song. The song really stands as a climax to the album, with its unique rap sections and aggressive and dominant tone. In an interview, Martinez stated the theme of the song:

"I wanted it to be bratty and a commentary piece on the box a lot of men put femme presenting people in when they call us names like "manic pixie dream girl." Being forced to play the role of mom & healer, while they gaslight you & call you crazy the minute you communicate how you feel".

At the end of the song, there is an interlude featured called "Amulet." It takes lyrics from a song that was scrapped from the album, called "Emerald." I personally think this song is the best song on the album, not including the deluxe songs.

MILK OF THE SIREN

However if we are considering the deluxe songs, this one takes the cake. While the deluxe songs do not feature transitions like the standard songs do, I don't think this song needed one. The song opens with the sound of birds chirping and Marinez's voice, singing a song that fittingly works as a siren's call. It quickly picks up the beat, with beautiful lyrics about being female. The song itself is about feminism, and women taking control of their own destinies. It talks about men hurting and abusing women, spreading the message that you do not have to be quiet about this, and that you can fight back. The line "*Don't feel bad when these f*ckers all drown*" implies that you do not need to feel bad about what happens to them, as it is most likely they did not feel bad about what they did. She proudly proclaims that you should "*Let them drown.*" This song is not only my favorite because of the catchy melody of the lyrics, but because of the lyrics themselves. They are able to tell a story and remain fantastical, while still sending a powerful message.