

# A Look Inside Melanie Martinez's World

By Mathias Rosenzweig

Melanie Martinez is like a pop star plucked from the imagination of Dr. Seuss: The 21-year-old singer-songwriter wears oversize hair bows and a bright-colored lip, and she sometimes paints graphic teardrops on her cheeks. But there's a complexity behind her baby doll aesthetic. Her music tells tales of drug abuse, depression, and family dysfunction through the optics of a wide-eyed teenage girl. Martinez's debut 2015 album, *Cry Baby* (which is also the name of the singer's alter ego), details the existential crises that one faces at the brink of adulthood. The lyrics are a twisted blend of childhood naïveté, teenage angst, and adult apathy, all of which are sung over creepy synths and hard-hitting hip-hop beats.

It didn't take long for Martinez to develop her fiercely loyal fan base, which is now millions deep. Her first and only album has been certified gold, and she has plans for a second tour in the fall. All in all, she's come a long way since she stepped into Atlantic Records's office wearing a necklace made of doll parts and hair dyed two different colors—an aesthetic she picked up from *Crula devil*



## The Interview

**I had the pleasure of catching your set at Panorama. Did you get to see anyone else play?**

I didn't really get to see anyone play at Panorama. I have really bad anxiety after I play and before I play. I just need to chill out and smoke some weed, or watch some cartoons. I'm not really much of a socialite when it comes to hanging out at festivals and stuff like that. But hopefully I'll get to see a couple people play tomorrow [at Lollapalooza]. Kehlani is a good friend of mine. She's playing tomorrow as well, I think at the same time as me on another stage, so I don't know if I'll be able to catch her set, which I'm really bummed about, because she's incredible.

**A lot of artists feel nervous before a performance, but you said you feel anxious after as well. Why is that?**

I don't know. I have anxiety all the time—like right now, during interviews. I just need to chill more often, I guess. After Panorama, it was just really hot that day, so I was focused on getting into air-conditioning, really [laughs]. That was the first thought in my mind.

**Do you play around with photography outside of this project, or is everything just focused on promoting Cry Baby?**

Right now everything's super-focused on the character and the story.



**Looking back at your work, what makes you feel the most proud?**

I'm so lucky that I get to do this. And I'm aware that I'm very lucky to be able to do this. So every day, even if I have shitty moments and feel like I'm putting all of this work into nothing, I know in the end it's always worth it because I get to do something that makes me genuinely so happy.