SYMPHIOSIS

ISSUE 001

GEEJAY

...MUSICA

WHERE MUSIC MEETS FASHION

Cover Photograph: Ramanie Rae Richards

FROM THE EDITOR

Music has never existed in isolation.

Before it's heard, it's seen. In the way someone dresses, the way they carry themselves, and the visual language that builds around a sound long before it reaches an audience. Fashion moves alongside music, translating it into something visually tangible.

This is where Symphiosis begins – from the understanding that music is not just an auditory experience, but a cultural one. One that moves through image, identity, and presence. What we wear becomes an extension of rhythm, attitude, and intent.

This issue comes from a personal way of seeing that relationship. Not as two separate disciplines, but as something that has always existed in dialogue. Sometimes directly, sometimes more loosely, but always shaping one another.

But access to that dialogue hasn't always been equal. Independent creatives continue to shape the visual and sonic language of culture, often without the visibility or infrastructure afforded to more established names. Some work directly across music and fashion, others move alongside it or are shaped by its influence from a distance. Not everyone exists at the centre of this intersection, but no one working within either industry exists entirely outside of it.

This issue holds space for that spectrum.

Bringing together artists, world-builders, and industry voices, it traces how sound becomes visible, and how identity is constructed through both. From those building their own worlds independently, to those shaping how music is communicated and consumed, each contributes to a wider visual and cultural language.

Because nothing here is neutral. Every image, every garment, every musical note carries intention.

And the people behind them deserve to be seen in full.

Gian Andrea Gnaegi
Editor-in-Chief
Symphiosis

Symphiosis is an independent publication expressed across two editorial perspectives.
This is where the music side begins.

CONTRIBUTORS

Editor-in-Chief
Gian Andrea Gnaegi

Art Direction
Gian Andrea Gnaegi

Design
Gian Andrea Gnaegi

Writers
Gian Andrea Gnaegi
Núria Tavares

Photography
Ramanie Rae Richards
Elina Sümecz

Retouch
Ramanie Rae Richards
Gian Andrea Gnaegi

Styling
Chanel B.

Creative Direction
Chanel B.

Talent
GeeJay

Make-Up
Laura Saleh Nader
Chanel B.

Assistants
Rolyn Vergara
Emerson Sham

Design Contributors
Núria Tavares
Ha Tsz

Special Thanks

Manfred & Helene Gnaegi
Aislin Kammermann
Emily Anderson
Claudia Gnaegi
Mike McNally

Fashion Creative Cover Star
Chanel B.

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Symphiosis
Issue 001
Spring 2026

Meaning doesn't belong to one perspective – it shifts depending on who's looking.

- Chanel B.

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Behind The Lens

Who Have You Become?

Imagining Sound

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THE MUSICIANS OF TOMORROW: LOVE ITOYA A PRINCESS IN BEING

Most tracks start long before they're recorded – they take shape through a rhythm, a reference, or a feeling that hasn't quite settled yet. By the time they reach the listener, those beginnings are still there, shaping what follows, even if they're not immediately visible.

You can see that in the work of *a princess in being* and *Love Itoya*. They move through very different sonic and visual spaces, yet both treat music as something that extends beyond a track. What they create doesn't end with sound – it continues through image, presence, and the worlds that form around it.

A princess in being builds her world gradually. Based in London and closely connected to alternative scenes, her sound moves between trap, trip-hop, and electronica without settling into a fixed point. Her debut EP *Reflections* introduced a fluid, almost psychedelic direction, while her upcoming project *DYSTOP!A* suggests something more defined, though still open to change.

You hear it in the way her tracks unfold. *Jaded* and *N/A* lean into repetition as a way of shaping atmosphere rather than driving structure. Vocals sit within the production – layered, blurred, drifting just enough to feel embedded rather than placed on top, at times, they almost dissolve into the synth lines rather than cutting through them. In *Jaded*, everything circles back on itself, echoing the sense of being caught in a loop. The repetition doesn't resolve but traps the track in a cycle that becomes strangely familiar.

In *N/A*, that intensity softens. The pace opens up, leaving more space around the voice, which remains present but slightly out of reach, creating something reflective and quietly suspended. That distance is part of the appeal, but it can also blur the emotional centre, where atmosphere begins to take precedence over clarity. As a listener, you're pulled into the atmosphere, but never fully allowed to settle within it.

You see the same thing in how she presents herself. Her identity doesn't arrive fully formed – it builds through subcultural reference, atmosphere, and mood as much as meaning. Visually, this comes through in a restrained palette: predominantly black, styled with layered chains, statement belts, and heavy jewellery, drawing from underground aesthetics with touches of punk and cybersigilism. The visuals don't just accompany the music – they extend its atmosphere, reinforcing the same sense of control and distance.

There's also a looseness in how that identity develops. "Expect the unexpected," as she puts it, works less as a slogan and more as a method. Influences from artists like *Lancey Foux* and *Odetari* surface, but never fully settle. Instead, they're absorbed into something that continues to shift. Even as her process becomes more collaborative, she keeps control over her songwriting, shaping the emotional core from within. Beneath that fluidity, there are grounding elements – her Pakistani heritage and her political voice – that anchor the work, even when they're not foregrounded.

Love Itoya approaches identity from a different direction. Where a princess in being builds through atmosphere and distance, Love Itoya asserts herself through immediacy – through voice, rhythm, and presence. Born and raised in Thessaloniki, Greece, to Nigerian (Edo-Esan) parents, and now based in London, her Nigerian heritage isn't a layer within her work – it sits at its centre.

Her music is driven by voice, and it takes control from the first moment. In *Timing*, that presence is immediate. The track leans into layered, percussive drum patterns and minimal production, allowing her vocal to remain front and centre. There's clarity in both delivery and intention – lines around growth and resilience land directly, carried by a performance that feels controlled and assured. Her voice doesn't just sit within the track; it directs it, giving it shape and momentum. It feels built to carry – holding its form beyond headphones and into a room – the kind of vocal that feels designed to reach the back of a crowd rather than stay contained in the track. Repetition here doesn't suspend the track; it pushes it forward, reinforcing that sense of movement. It's immediate in a different way – less immersive, and more confrontational in its clarity.

That energy continues in *Superpower*, where her heritage becomes explicit. Referencing her Nigerian background directly, the track frames identity as something carried rather than assembled. Language, rhythm, and traditional elements place the work within a broader cultural context, while her vocal performance keeps it immediate and personal. Even alongside her brother, *Life Itoya*, her presence remains distinct – adjusted where needed, but never receding.

You see that same clarity in her visuals. Colour runs through everything – from clothing to hair – alongside traditional patterns, headwear, and bold styling choices. The imagery doesn't construct an abstract world; it reflects a lived one. It moves in step with the music: direct, expressive, and difficult to ignore. That directness is part of its strength, though it leaves less room for ambiguity – everything is felt clearly, with little distance between artist and audience.

That sense of immediacy carries into performance. With a stage presence that feels scaled beyond intimate venues, her work extends naturally into physical space. The voice that defines her sound translates without losing intensity, filling a room in a way that feels both controlled and expansive. It reinforces the idea that her identity isn't something gradually assembled, but something expressed in real time – or as she puts it, it's her superpower.

The contrast between the two becomes clearest in how identity takes shape. *A princess in being* builds through mood, layering sound, reference, and atmosphere into something that unfolds slowly, often at the expense of clarity. *Love Itoya*, by contrast, centres voice and cultural specificity, grounding her work in presence and direct expression, even if that leaves less space for interpretation. One invites you to drift within its atmosphere; the other meets you head-on.

Despite that difference, both move beyond treating music as something contained within the track. In each case, sound becomes part of something larger – connected to visuals, identity, and the spaces their work creates. What they're building isn't just music to listen to, but distinct ways of being – where sound acts as the entry point, not the endpoint.

© Bianca Facchinetti

STITCHING SOUND: BUILDING CULTURAL GRAVITY BETWEEN MUSIC AND IMAGE

DJ and multidisciplinary creative Livid approaches music and fashion not as separate practices, but as interdependent systems. Through control, authorship, and cultural literacy, she constructs worlds that extend beyond sound.

“Nothing is neutral.”

For Livid, that isn’t a provocation – it’s her baseline. A condition that shapes how she works, what she builds, and how it’s read.

Working across DJing, visual identity, and cultural positioning, she operates in a space where music and fashion don’t sit separately, but feed into one another. Her move from fashion promotion and image-making into music wasn’t a shift in discipline so much as a shift in medium. The underlying logic stayed intact – one grounded in systems, references, and the relationships between them.

“Image, context, casting, typography, venue choice, lighting, even silence, all communicate.” From that perspective, sound was never treated as self-contained.

“I never saw my practice as just sound,” she says.

“An artist’s identity isn’t something that just ‘happens.’ It’s constructed, edited, and positioned.”

And to Livid construction starts with placement. “What world does this sound belong to? What references does it sit next to? What does it refuse?”

Meaning begins to form, she suggests, through proximity – through what the work aligns with, and what it deliberately keeps at a distance. And if identity is constructed, it also has to be understood.

The language of branding sits close to that, though she is careful not to let it define the work.

“If people can’t place you, they won’t follow you.”

When asked where she sees herself within the world of branding, she’s clear: “I approach my work as an artist first, but I’m realistic enough to know that in today’s industry, you’re operating across multiple roles whether you like it or not. I don’t think in terms of ‘*branding*’ as marketing, but rather as world building.”

The question of placement becomes sharper when it moves beyond the individual and into culture itself.

“They genuinely intersect at the level of subculture,” she says about music and fashion. “Historically, both have been tools for encoding ideology, class position, resistance, and belonging.” Remove that context, and something shifts.

“That relationship becomes forced when fashion extracts the aesthetic without the context,” she explains. “When a sound becomes trendy, and the styling follows purely to monetise it, it becomes surface-level alignment, cancelling out cultural exchange.”

And that's when reference remains, but the conditions that gave it meaning fall away.

When asked whether music and fashion still function as markers of belonging in an algorithm-driven environment, Livid pauses only briefly.

"Belonging absolutely still exists, but it's more fragmented than it used to be. There's the physical scene and there's the digital one, and both carry weight in different ways.

"What's changed is that affiliation no longer requires participation in the physical infrastructure that built the culture in the first place. You can signal alignment without ever being present in the rooms, the communities, or the labour that shaped it. Algorithms have flattened scenes to some extent, and visibility now functions as currency. In many cases, aesthetic signalling comes before actual immersion.

That said, in serious spaces, the difference is obvious. You can tell who is embedded and who is orbiting. Scenes still exist, they just demand more discernment, and time exposes the distinction. Subculture requires endurance."

If belonging has fragmented, interpretation has accelerated.

"I use styling very consciously," she says. "I don't see it as a costume, but everything should be aligned."

"Before someone hears a track or sees me play, they've already processed visual cues."

"Texture, silhouette, colour palette, even restraint or excess, all pre-frame interpretation. I use styling to narrow the field of misreading. It's less about control and more about context setting." What's shaped here isn't just appearance, but how the work is read.

That same gap – between intention and perception – appears again in how artists develop their work.

To Livid, the biggest mistake emerging artists face is: "either under-aestheticising or over-aestheticising without substance. Copying what's currently working instead of interrogating why it works. Confusing mood-boards with identity."

And just as often, the issue isn't what's made. To her overexposure is another prominent mistake. "Showing everything too quickly. Mystery has value."

In a landscape driven by constant visibility, restraint becomes part of the practice.

"Music alone can attract attention, but a world sustains it."

But that world doesn't begin externally.

"What are you communicating?" she asks. "What do you stand for or against? What are your references beyond music? Literature, architecture, cinema, politics? If those aren't defined, the visuals will feel generic."

That tension becomes harder to maintain within digital systems built around familiarity.

"Algorithms amplify visibility, but they don't build cultural weight," she says. "When fashion and music collaborate meaningfully, they create physical experiences, shared references, and new hybrid spaces."

Her response to the rise of AI within that landscape is direct: "It comes down to perspective, depth of reference, and integrity of practice – AI can generate aesthetics, and it can be a great tool, but it cannot generate lived context."

When asked why collaboration doesn't always translate into lasting cultural weight, Livid points first to structure rather than intent:

"Funding is a major constraint, and so is institutional risk aversion," she explains. "There's very little appetite for projects that don't guarantee immediate return.

"On top of that, both industries now move at a pace that actively works against slow, research-led collaboration.

"The pressure to stay visible encourages creatives to share work in its earliest stages, often before it's fully formed. That constant output culture leaves little room for refinement, experimentation, or failure behind closed doors. Taking the time to develop something properly can feel like a liability, when in reality it's often what gives a project depth and longevity."

When collaboration does hold, the distinction is immediate.

"If both sides are influencing each other's thinking, that's an exchange," she says. "If one side is simply borrowing credibility, that's opportunism. You can feel the difference – one expands culture and the other merely decorates it."

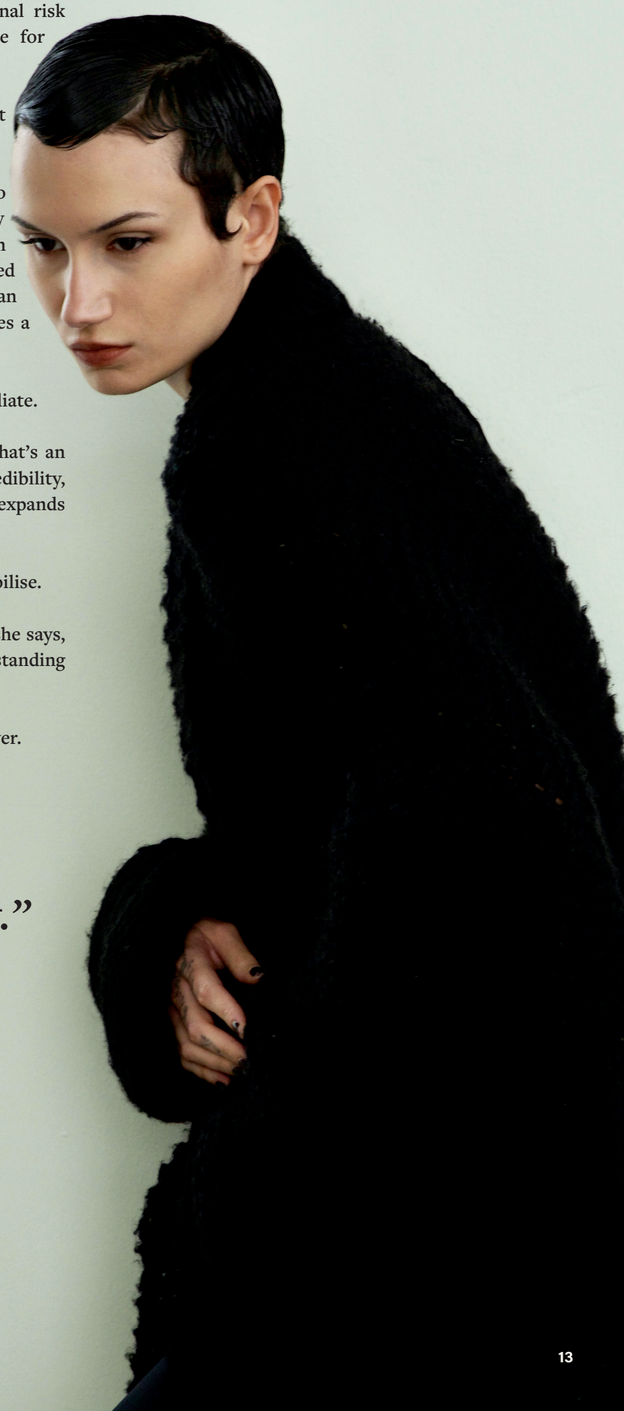
Within that landscape, visibility becomes harder to stabilise.

"You can be both musically innovative and invisible," she says, "but it's harder to be highly visible without understanding positioning."

But visibility doesn't translate directly into staying power.

What lasts doesn't move at the same speed.

"Visibility fluctuates. Cultural gravity doesn't."



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DO YOU WANT TO BE FAMOUS?

OR

DO YOU WANT TO BE AN ARTIST?

- ZAL BORANSEL-

BEFORE THE MUSIC: ZAL BORANSEL ON IDENTITY, IMAGE, AND BEING SEEN

In an industry obsessed with image, identity isn't something artists add on – it's something audiences read instantly. Zal Boransel discusses why what you look like, say, and stand for is shaping how music is heard long before anyone presses play.

"Do you want to be famous, or do you want to be an artist?"

It's a question that lands heavier than it first appears. Not because it's new, but because, as Zal explains, most artists are already answering it with every decision they make.

For someone who has moved between performance, industry, and over two decades in higher education, Zal Boransel doesn't treat identity as something abstract or aesthetic. To her, it's practical, immediate, and already in motion long before an artist decides what they want to "look like."

Because identity, she suggests, isn't something you add on later. It's something people are already reading the instant they are introduced to an artist.

She describes a shift in how musicians approach themselves these days. Where the industry once leaned heavily on construction – on shaping singers into something sellable – she's seen a growing resistance to that way of thinking. "Twenty years ago," she explains, "people would say, I want to be famous. I'll cut my hair, dye my hair, I'll lose weight, I'll change the song, I'll do whatever it takes."

Now, she sees something different. "They're saying, 'I want to be an artist.'"

It's a small shift in wording, but as she frames it, it changes where everything begins. Instead of starting with what will sell, the focus turns to what is already there. In her work with artists, that means beginning with questions that have nothing to do with visuals.

"*What do you want to be known for? What are your values? If you had to have three adjectives that describe you, what would they be?*"

From there, visual identity – fashion, styling, imagery – becomes less about invention and more about communication. "How do we communicate who you actually are? That's the real question."

One of the clearest places this falls apart, she says, is in the gap between sound and image. Zal sees this constantly. Artists pulling from what they think works visually, what gets attention, what feels current – without asking whether it actually reflects their sound or values.

"They're trying to be something they think people want to see," she explains. "But that's not the case at all – people crave clarity. I'll look at someone's Instagram – and then I'll listen to their music, and I'm surprised at how they don't tally at all."

And in her view, that kind of disconnect doesn't go unnoticed. Especially today, when audiences are processing things almost instantly. "That's when it becomes confusing," she says. And for her, confusion is usually the clearest sign something isn't working.

What makes this even more complex is, as she puts it, that identity doesn't require intention to exist. It isn't something you consciously construct – it doesn't need to be. "It's just who you are – and it spills over into your choices."

At one point, Zal gestures to what's in front of her.

"What you're wearing right now," she says, pointing at my neon orange vest covered in a slightly abstract pattern, "tells me you're not a linear thinker. You're not conservative. You're not trying to blend in. You've got opinions. You're creative."

That idea sits at the centre of everything she describes:

"People read you whether you intend it or not."

For her, the role of visual identity isn't to create meaning from nothing, but to bring what's already there into focus.

But the moment identity enters the industry, that role changes. While it still begins with the artist, she's quick to point out that the industry reshapes how identity is read – and what it's valued for.

Zal alludes to a clear shift: from instinct-led decision-making to data-driven systems. "Back in the day," she explains, "music decisions were based on gut feeling. Someone just knew: *this is a hit*."

Now, it's different. Labels are more risk averse. Investment is tighter. Artists are expected to arrive already developed – already defined. "They want you to come in branded," she says. "With a following. With a clear identity."

From that perspective, visual identity stops being just expression and becomes a signal – clarity and direction. Something that tells labels, publishers, and managers: '*We understand what this is, and who it's for.*'

But that clarity comes with its own tension. When asked whether the pressure to stay 'on brand' limits artists creatively, she answers with a sharp:

"Absolutely."

Because, as she sees it, while consistency reassures the industry – making artists easier to position – it also restricts how they evolve. "If you're only relying on data, you're only ever looking at what's worked in the past. You're not making any creative inroads."

Data reinforces familiarity. And familiarity shapes expectation.

Which is exactly why, to Zal, the independent space matters more than ever. "It's where artists have the room to experiment and develop. It's where they can exist before they are fully understood."

She recalls a recent experience: "I went to a gig the other week and one girl was an incredible singer, but she had no stage presence. She looked like she'd just rolled out of bed, like she could have been anyone, and this must've been her first show. Then the headliner – who maybe wasn't even as strong vocally – she looked like a star. She was giving everything. And you could tell she'd done this before."

Identity doesn't arrive fully formed. It takes time to mature – through performance, through mistakes, and through refinement.

To illustrate this within her teaching, Zal often turns to *Amy Winehouse*.

"At the start of Amy's career," she says, "if you didn't know her, you might have thought she was a Latin artist. Her look didn't quite match the music; there was a disconnect which made her difficult to place."

But as her identity evolved, something shifted. "The beehive, the tattoos, the retro silhouettes." Suddenly, the visual language aligned with the sound. "There's something British there. Something retro. But also, something with attitude. It's not just a straight lift – it's a twist on it."

That alignment didn't just clarify who she was – it amplified it. And with it came recognition, cohesion, and success.

While much of the conversation sits within music and industry, Zal's thinking extends further.

She recounts being told to soften her London working-class accent "to make me sound more professional." Instead, she chose to keep it. "I've had students come up to me and say, you're the first lecturer that sounds like me."

It's those conversations that remind her that identity doesn't just communicate what you are – it communicates who feels included.

In music, Zal sees that play out in real time. Audiences don't just listen to artists – they see themselves in them. "There's this thing where you can just look at someone and feel like you'd probably get on. You've got nothing to go on except how they present themselves, but you recognise something."

That recognition carries further than people realise. It doesn't just shape taste – it shapes behaviour.

"I see students support artists whose values they agree with even if they don't like their music," she says, "and reject artists they love if they don't align with them."

To her, identity moves beyond aesthetics. It becomes something people either connect with – or don't.

And in practical terms, that connection matters far more than numbers.

"You don't need millions of followers."

"If you've got a small group of people who genuinely connect with you – come to shows, buy into what you're doing – that's what actually sustains a career."

And across everything she describes – artists, industry, audiences – one thing becomes clear: identity only works when it holds.

Which leaves a simpler question.

Not whether you have an identity – but whether what people see is what you mean to say.

Because, as she puts it: "Being an artist is about how you communicate who you are effectively, rather than changing your values and making yourself something you're not."

BEYOND THE IMAGE: WHEN IDENTITY BECOMES DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

When a thumbnail can define an artist before a note is heard, visual identity becomes more than expression – it becomes infrastructure. In conversation with Marcel Hunziker of Playliveartist, this piece explores how identity shapes visibility in digital music, and why fashion now operates not as surface, but as system.

A CONVERSATION WITH
playliveartist

The relationship between music and image has long been treated as something expressive – an extension of the music, a language that sits alongside sound. From styling to artwork and performance, how an artist is seen has always shaped how they're understood.

But that relationship has shifted.

On platforms defined by algorithms, short attention spans, and constant visibility, identity no longer sits alongside the music – it frames it. Long before a track is heard, an artist is encountered as an image: a thumbnail, a look, a moment in a feed. First impressions aren't just visual anymore – they're structural.

In digital environments, identity starts to function less as expression and more like infrastructure. It shapes where an artist appears, who they reach, and how they're interpreted – often before the music has time to register. What once felt like an extension of the music now plays a vital role in determining whether it is encountered at all.

There is, in many ways, an audience for everything – but reaching it depends on how clearly that space is defined.

That shift becomes evident in conversation with Marcel Hunziker, founder of Playliveartist Ltd, whose work spans across digital campaigns, audience development, and direct to fan strategy. For Marcel, identity isn't something digital marketing constructs – it's something marketing relies on.

"All we do is reflect what's already there."

To him, what matters most is clarity – and that begins with intent. No matter the stage of growth an artist is at, Marcel's approach begins with a simple question: what is the artist trying to do? Build an audience, sell tickets, or simply release music? The answer creates clarity and shapes everything that follows – how an artist is positioned, how their audience is reached, and how far their presence can scale.

Clarity, however, comes with a trade-off. A defined identity creates direction, but it can also become restrictive. A look, once established, becomes expected; a visual language, once recognised, can be difficult to move beyond without losing the audience it helped build.

Yet without that clarity, visibility weakens. Audiences drift, algorithms misread, and growth plateaus. With it, engagement becomes more focused, intentional, and more scalable.

At a practical level, Marcel explains, even subtle shifts in presentation begin to carry weight. What an artist wears, how consistently they repeat it, whether they align with a recognisable scene or resist one – all of it shapes how they are read, and who they reach.

As he puts it, "everyone can style themselves, but not everyone has a message."

That message is what defines positioning. It places an artist within a recognisable visual world, signals intent, and determines how quickly that identity can be understood – especially at the speed of a feed.

For artists where that sense of identity is already clear, the process becomes more precise. Marcel points to one of their clients, Nieve Ella, as an example – where a strong, coherent presence allows campaigns and audience targeting to be shaped with intent. In such cases, the work becomes less about invention and more about amplification: extending what already exists into new spaces.

© Millie Jamieson

Where identity is weaker, the limits become more visible.

"You can't just turn an artist into a global superstar," he says. "There's a limit to how far you can scale someone if the foundation isn't strong enough."

The point is blunt but necessary. Visibility can be generated – but without something distinct to hold onto, it rarely converts into anything lasting.

What underpins this process is alignment. For agencies like Playliveartist, the work only functions where there is trust between artist and agency – a shared understanding of what is possible, and what is not.

That trust, Marcel states, depends on staying responsive rather than fixed – adjusting to what resonates, rather than relying on a set formula. What works is observed, refined, and built upon.

In that sense, the process mirrors the artist's own development: iterative, shaped by response, and dependent on a willingness to evolve.

Within that relationship, a distinction becomes clear. It is possible to reach people – to place music in front of new listeners, to generate visibility around a release or a performance – but whether they return, engage, and invest lies elsewhere.
It returns to identity.

If digital marketing brings people in, identity is what gives them a reason to stay and connect. But for that to happen, it has to feel real – something audiences recognise as genuine, rather than constructed.

And that sense of authenticity extends beyond identity into the systems that distribute it. When asked about artificial growth – bots, inflated numbers – Marcel's response is immediate:

"Definitely not."

Without real engagement, those numbers lose meaning, undermining both trust and sustainability. What proves more durable is something less forced: a sense of self that is clear enough to be recognised, yet open enough to evolve.

For Marcel, his work becomes most compelling when it carries cultural weight – when an artist's identity resonates beyond surface and begins to hold meaning within a wider context.

The clearer an identity is, the more meaning it holds, the more precisely it can be amplified – and the more consistently it can be understood. Identity doesn't replace the music – but it increasingly determines the conditions under which the music is encountered, and whether it travels at all.

And it is here that the relationship between music and fashion becomes unavoidable. Not as surface, but as mechanism. Through repetition, recognisability, and visual coherence, it becomes part of the system itself – quietly shaping what reaches us, what stays with us, and what disappears as quickly as it arrives.

WHO HAVE I BECOME? GEEJAY ON SOUND, CHANGE, AND COLLABORATION

Symphiosis brings musicians and fashion creatives into conversation, allowing art to move between sound and image. For this issue, GeeJay collaborate with creative director Chanel B. on a visual response to their second album *Who Have I Become?*, extending its focus on change beyond the record itself. Moving between intimacy and momentum, their work traces personal transformation through lyric, production, and process.

Who Have I Become? is a question that refuses to settle. That, perhaps, is exactly why GeeJay named their second album after it – not as an answer, but as something they're still in the middle of. Across the record, the London-based jazz-pop duo trace the changes that arrive through life and the ways those changes reshape you – sometimes gently, sometimes all at once.

For Gee, the album moves between those states. Some songs sit quietly, carried by strings – "those still moments that help you reflect." Others arrive louder, more immediate. "Funky and bold, full of heavy bass lines and drums – they make you want to move – for those moments where big changes are coming, and you're excited for what's around the corner." Together, they hold the tension between reflection and momentum. "Whilst writing the album," she says, "with each song I wrote, I'm questioning more and more – what has all of this made me? Having children, moving, still maintaining a relationship – and realising I don't really know."

That question runs through the record, but it also changes shape as the songs are lived with. "You can never really know who you've become," Gee says. "Every day you're thinking – who am I now? Who is Gee today?" In that sense, the album is not a closed chapter but an ongoing process. Tracks such as *Young Girl, My Rock* and *Can't Wait to Meet You* continue to shift in meaning as time passes. "Still every day I'm looking at our daughters thinking – oh my God, slow down. Don't grow up yet," she says of *Young Girl*. "And with *My Rock*," a song about their relationship, "there's ups and downs – Jay doesn't do the dishes and I'm down. Then he brings me a cup of tea and the day goes great." It's a small moment, but it stays with you. Even *Can't Wait to Meet You*, written during the pregnancy with their second daughter, has evolved. "Now every day I'm like – I can't wait to meet who you're going to be."

If Gee's side of the album is shaped by lyric and reflection, Jay's is grounded in texture and process. One of the most tangible examples is a train sound woven into the record. "We live next to a train track," he says. "One song has the sound of a train passing by. I recorded it from inside the studio, windows open, and put it into the song." It sits low in the mix, almost hidden, but it gives the album a kind of lived-in pulse. "You'd have to really know it's there," he says. "But it adds something real."

Photography: Ramanie Rae Richards
Styling: Chanel B.

That idea of building from lived detail also reflects the way his musical approach has developed. “My music style has matured a little bit; my songwriting definitely has. But the base level is still the same.” The songs still begin with his familiar sombre, melancholic chords, then open out through beats and arrangement, he explains. What has changed is the way those ideas are realised, “instead of having synthesised drums, we’ve got a drummer. Same with the bass. We’ve got someone to write and record string parts. That phase has developed – it’s evolved and grown. But my musical landscape is still very much the same.”

The visual project facilitated for Symphiosis picks up that same question, but from a different angle.

Developed as a collaboration with fashion creative Chanel B., the shoot approaches the album through three stages – childhood, the twenties, and who GeeJay is now – translating its central question into something spatial, something visible.

For Gee, that idea clicked as soon as she thought about *Young Girl*. “It was written about our daughter,” she says, “but at a show, a woman in her thirties told me she heard it as being from her older to her younger self.” That moment showed her how a song can move beyond its original meaning once it reaches someone else. “I thought, that’s actually so interesting because this whole thing about *Who Have I Become?* is about leaving that younger self, or that self you were before.”

The images, then, felt like a natural extension of that idea. “So, showing the different stages – it made sense,” Gee says. “It shows that development, that change. The changes that we all go through at different stages in our life.” Jay sees it in similar terms, though he keeps it more direct: “Three separate timescales,” he says. “Different decades.”

That shifting identity extended into the actual shoot itself, though in different ways for each of them. Jay admits that styling is normally where he resists most. “I usually think – I wouldn’t wear this on the street.” But this time, stepping into the shoot meant stepping into something else. “It’s not about ego – it’s about the concept,” he says. “In my head, I’m not Jay anymore – I’m playing a role.” By the final images, that distance had turned into something more relaxed. “I felt more comfortable. More confident. I learned a lot through that – I evolved.”

ENGRAVE
BORN TO BE WILD

For Gee, the challenge was more personal. “I’ve never liked being in front of the camera,” she says. “I prefer to be behind it.” Six months postpartum, the process forced her to confront that discomfort more directly. “It’s really difficult to switch off that inner voice,” she says. “How you see yourself in the photos afterwards. And just accept how you look.”

The shoot, to her, became more about acceptance than performance. “It was about letting go of that,” she says, “be like, don’t worry, you have to respect your body. Your body has just produced another life. Your body will get back to it. And trying to feel comfortable in that moment, rather than avoiding those voices we all have – especially in a really hyper-visual world.” Being guided throughout the shoot helped, she adds, allowing her to stay present within it.

What’s striking is that both of them came to the collaboration from different emotional places but arrived somewhere similar – a space Jay describes as “a fusion of two worlds, half us, half her.” For him, it was about stepping outside himself. “It’s a photo shoot – it’s collaboration... we’re not making music.”

For Gee, it was more internal. “It was just fighting my inner demons. I still felt like me, but also like character playing. Because Gee writing songs isn’t the same as Gee on stage.”

To both of them, stepping into that outside perspective was unexpectedly revealing. “We’re such audio people,” Gee says. “We don’t really think visually like that.” Jay agrees, but for him it also shifted something more practical. “Up until this, I didn’t realise how much I should appreciate everyone’s different skill sets,” he says. “Rather than trying to control everything, you just go along with it.” It’s something he carries forward. “Music videos, live broadcasts – there’s different people in the room. Everyone’s working on the same thing.”

Seeing the album translated in that way didn’t feel unfamiliar, but it still landed. “It wasn’t surprising, because we knew what we were getting into,” he says. “But it was still interesting to see how the concept was built from the album.”

In that sense, the images do what the album itself does; they don’t fix identity in place.

The same question – ‘Who have I become?’ – is still there, just seen from a different angle.

IMAGINING SOUND: NÚRIA TAVARES

Symphiosis moves beyond a singular narrative. By inviting emerging designers to respond to GeeJay's second album *Who Have I Become?*, the project opens the work out to multiple interpretations – where the same sound is carried through different perspectives, practices and ways of making.

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Within Symphiosis, UCA second-year fashion design student Núria Tavares explores how sound can be translated through fashion. In response to *Who Have I Become?*, she constructs a visual language shaped by rhythm, structure and sonic influence – building a world where music becomes something tangible.

Núria Tavares:

The first time I listened to the album was one I can only describe as wistful. Memories of my childhood came flooding back in intense waves, and each song touched on a different aspect of growing up – while some remained distant, yet to appear as I continue to grow. It was important for me to reflect that within the garments I designed.

I wanted them to hold what I was feeling. The bows, representative of early childhood, sit close to the heart – a reminder that our childhood selves continue to live within us far into adulthood. The layering within the first look reflects how much of the self is built from the past; even when translucent, it never truly leaves us.

The large, sculpted silhouettes emphasising the hips were deliberate – referencing the album's conversations around motherhood, and the transition from frilled girlhood dresses to the volume of a wedding gown, and eventually the growth of the body during pregnancy. I wanted the colour to carry a quiet uncertainty – echoing the unknown of a baby's gender, held alongside a sense of fulfilment in whatever form it takes. While these silhouettes trace physical change, they also speak to the emotional and mental shifts that come with it – something that runs throughout the album.

Seen through the designers' eyes, the album returns to Gee and Jay in a different form – translated, abstracted, and reimagined. Their responses move between recognition and discovery, reflecting on how their work is interpreted beyond themselves.

© Núria Tavares

GeeJay on Núria Tavares' designs:

Jay: This feels completely different. I find it really interesting that she's just listened to the music and made something from that – it's not based on us at all, it's just her interpretation.

Gee: Yeah, and you can really feel that. It doesn't feel like it's trying to represent us physically – it's more like it's translating the atmosphere of the music.

Jay: I think I understand it more when I see it in movement, like in the illustrations. When they're standing still it's harder to read, but when they're in motion it starts to make sense.

Gee: They almost feel like two stages as well – one more playful, more youthful, and the other more refined.

Jay: Yeah, I liked the one with the bows at first, but then when you realise the other one is slightly transparent and you can see through the layers... that's when it becomes more interesting.

Gee: And the bows feel quite intentional. It's like something from childhood, but it's not left behind – it's just been carried through and changed.

Jay: Yeah, it's not literal, but you can still read something emotional in it.

Gee: And that's what I like about it being based on sound. It's not trying to recreate us – it's building something from feeling instead.

Jay: Definitely, it's like she's taken what the music feels like and turned it into something you can actually see. That's what makes it work.