

FRANKIE

Dreamstate

When Frankie was a kid growing up Oakland, Calif., her mom controlled the car stereo, as moms do. (After all, they're the ones driving.) Luckily, Frankie's mom had great taste. She loved Joni Mitchell, Carol King, and Fleetwood Mac. Then when Frankie got home, Britney Spears and Spice Girls ruled the living room — this being the '90s. "I'd come home from school and put in a tape of *Spice Girls Live in Istanbul*, then I'd switch to Fleetwood Mac's *The Dance* and pretend to be Stevie Nicks. I'd go back and forth between the two," she says. "I loved the unapologetic, in-your-face pop elements of Spice Girls. You either wanted to be one of them or hang out with them. But I also loved the confessional singer-songwriter poetic-ness that came out of Joni and Stevie, especially at a time when men controlled everything in the music industry."

Both eras of empowered females have shaped who Frankie is as a singer and songwriter. Hearing her favorite artists tell their stories about their lives, loves, friendships, and heartbreaks through their songs inspired her to think maybe she could use music herself as an outlet to understand her own feelings and connect with others. She does just that on her debut EP *Dreamstate*, which combines Frankie's love for '70s singer-songwriters and '90s pop powerhouses in a bright, breezy package. Collaborating with her best friend and producer Petros (Dillon Francis, One Direction), Frankie delivers subtly soulful, real-girl pop songs that radiate with charisma and confidence. ""The songs are about pockets of time in my life," she explains. "The theme of the EP is me trying to figure out love, relationships, power dynamics, my career, and myself in hoping that someone else feels the same way and can relate."

Frankie chose the title of her EP because she was essentially in a dream state when some of the songs, like "Chaos" and "Blackout," came to her. "With 'Blackout,' I had one of those moments when you're almost asleep and you're not really thinking about anything, your mind is just dead air," she recalls. "This song started in my head with music and lyrics and I was like, 'Wait, am I singing a song right now?' I grabbed my phone and made a voice memo, but I didn't remember doing it in the morning. A week later, I was looking through my voice memos and found the song and flushed it out. Blackout was the first song that Petros and I worked on together that really started this whole project."

And then with 'Chaos,' I woke up singing the full chorus in my head."

The remainder of the songs came out of Frankie's writing sessions with her band, such as "Problems Problems," a doo wop-tinged synth-pop anthem that Frankie says is about a relationship's last chance. "I envisioned this couple waiting in the snow for a train to arrive and they ask each other, 'Are you going to get on the train with me or are you going to go back home? Are we going to try one more time or is this done?'" she says. "It's a sad song, but I think the pop elements give it a lot of hope." "New Obsession" is a bright and exuberant tongue-in-cheek sassy pop song. Says Frankie, "It's basically about convincing my best friend that he wants to be with me romantically. My favorite thing about 'New Obsession' though, is that girls often play victims in love songs and this song is full of confident girl power. The message here is, 'I know I'm the best, trust me, you'll see.' It's my favorite song to sing live because when I perform it, it totally changes meaning. I look at the audience and it's kind of me convincing them to believe in the underdog, and to believe in themselves and go for what they want."

Frankie can't remember a time when she wasn't trying to connect with people through music. She's always loved to sing and picked up guitar (along with the piano, ukulele and dulcimer) when she was 10. In high school she was in a band with her cousin with whom she estimates she wrote about 300 songs. "We'd come home from school and play them for each other over the phone," she says. But in high school, being a professional singer felt like a pipe dream, so she enrolled at UC Santa Cruz at her mother's request. "I was like, 'This will be plan B if music doesn't work out,'" she says. "I tried psychology, acting, and then I signed up for a music class thinking it would be a fun outlet. Of course, I was like, 'This is amazing. This is all I want to do. This is all I really care about.' There was no plan B."

After graduating with a degree in music, Frankie followed her friend Petros down to Los Angeles and the two began making music together. "If you just mute all my vocals on the tracks, the songs are so musically interesting," she says. "Petros is an amazing writer, songwriter, and producer and is probably the most talented person I know."

In February, "Problems Problems" became a viral hit and climbed to No. 2 on Hype Machine. It has since racked up over 1.5 million Spotify streams and also led to Frankie signing with RCA Records. As she gears up for the release of *Dreamstate*, Frankie is also looking forward to touring in support of the EP. "The show is me and my band making fun of each other, goofing off, and having the best time," she says. "They're all killer musicians. And I just love singing live. It's really those moments where you're just singing the song that I live for. The world disappears and nothing else matters. It's like a moment of pure truth. When I get one of those, I think, 'I can't wait for the next one to happen!'"

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