

SASHA SLOAN

Boston-born, LA-based pop maverick **Sasha Sloan** is steadily building up a stockpile of emotionally-rich, left-of-center pop that showcases a massive new talent. The first display of this talent came with last October's 'Ready Yet', a deceptively subtle, gently pulsating earworm produced by Diplo associate King Henry, with over 11 million Spotify plays and counting. Now follows the sweetly melancholic new single 'Normal', its confessional, catchy chorus is set to become an anthem for introverts everywhere. These two, along with four other tracks, come together to make up Sasha's debut EP, *sad girl*, released this spring via RCA Records. "I wanted to put out a blueprint for who I am, because I'm still figuring it out myself," she says of the EP.

This idea of going with the flow has been there since the start. Growing up in a house that reverberated to an eclectic mix of music – from The Carpenters to Amy Winehouse to Green Day – Sloan started writing songs at the tender age of 10. "I didn't see myself doing anything other than music, because I'm horrible at everything else," she laughs. "I knew I wanted to be involved in music but I never really knew how to do it so I decided to attend Berklee College of Music."

A different path to the industry lay ahead though, one that really couldn't have been predicted. In 2014, Sloan's parents were painting the front of the family home when they daubed the word "dork" in big letters with an arrow pointing up to Sloan's bedroom. Ticked, she posted the picture to Reddit where it went viral and swiftly became the most viewed post on the site. Keen to strike while the iron was hot Sloan posted a Soundcloud link containing three demos ("made mainly so my mum could listen to them") underneath the post. "It's very not okay to self-promote [on Reddit]," she laughs, "so I got shit on pretty hard and then this music publisher, Steve Lindsey, who had signed Bruno Mars, called me and told me I needed to move to LA. So I left Berklee after six months there and moved to LA, I was 19 and I had no clue what I was doing." When asked if her parents take full credit, she laughs, "Oh yeah, they'll never let me live it down. For sure."

Alone in LA, and new on the songwriting circuit, the first year was tough. "I was writing daily and didn't seem to be getting anywhere. After a year or so, I started gaining momentum and made it to proper studios; from there everything started to happen organically." Writing sessions started to come and then last fall, and seemingly out of nowhere to the world, Sasha wrote and appeared on tracks with the likes of Kygo ('This Town'), Odesza ('Falls'), and King Henry ('I'll Be There'). With all three tracks coming out within mere weeks of each other, "it was such perfect timing," she says. A month later she released her debut single, 'Ready Yet,' a song so close to her, it had to stay her own. "I wrote the song about my dad, so I think that was a huge part of why I couldn't have anyone else singing it," she explains.

So now emerges Sasha Sloan in her own right. For her, storytelling is key, with each song on her debut EP imbued with a kernel of real emotion. It's there in the bittersweet chorus of '**Normal**,' as she sings, "*keep on playing that song that I don't like, I just want to feel normal for the night*," and the string-drenched '**Fall**' which builds to a crescendo of "*I fucked up and now I see it*". Delicate vocals and sparse production on '**Ready Yet**' highlight the emotional fragility of handling a lapsed relationship, whilst the bubbling electronics of '**Hurt**' house a lyric about how terrifying falling in love can be, especially when it might not be reciprocated. "I remember these lyrics came out so fast, '*and I even like you when I'm sober and honestly that's a first / I freak out every time we get closer cause I'm scared that it's just gonna hurt.*' I guess when it's real, it's extra scary."

Melancholic piano opens the self-admonishing '**Runaway**', a realization that "*every time I fall in love I go and fuck it up right when it gets good*" and on the scraped acoustics of '**Here**', she focuses on the end of a relationship.

“It’s when nothing specifically bad happens, but you just wake up one day and don’t feel like you used to. That’s where the line *'sometimes love just disappears and no one knows where it goes, but it ain't here'* comes from. It’s hard hurting someone and, to me, the lyrics in this are what I would write if I had to end my last relationship in a song.”

With over 40 million streams on Spotify already, any other artist might feel the pressure to start thinking about an album already. There's no rush here, however. No grand proclamations; ***sad girl*** is the beginning of a steady stream of heartfelt, emotional pop music whose aim is to forge an unbreakable connection. If this is Sasha starting to figure out who she is, it will be worth sticking around to see what makes up the rest of that blueprint.