

The desire for change stirs from the inside. We either listen to it—or not.

Aluna chose to listen. After generating over one billion streams, selling out shows around the world, and receiving award nominations and widespread critical acclaim as one-half of multiplatinum duo AlunaGeorge, the singer, songwriter, and producer established an unpredictable and undeniable signature sound on her 2020 solo debut. The music represented the culmination of her journey from “a black girl in an all-white British suburb back in the day” to launching a rule-breaking revolution where rigid boundaries dissolve between culture, race, gender, and genre.

“The recent ‘Black Renaissance’ is so inspiring to me,” she explains. “There has been a pivot in all creative endeavors from film and television to plays and comics. Black people have begun involving themselves in non-stereotypical things regardless of who agrees. The outcasts have found each other. This project sums up a defiant, rule-breaking, and transitional election of new culture. To me, this album represents that within its own small, individual world. I’ve gone through the process of owning myself, and this is the celebration. It’s not a party with tables where you’re popping bottles of champagne in high-heeled shoes. It’s in the woods, around the fire, and everyone looks sexy in the bloody fire-light. We might be a minority, but we have power.”

Aluna recognized this power within. She spent over a decade working with collaborator George Reid. Together, they released a pair of albums—*Body Music* [2013] and *I Remember* [2016]—in addition to the *Champagne Eyes* EP [2018]. They teamed up with DJ Snake for the double-platinum smash “You Know You Like It,” which graced the soundtrack of the blockbuster *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*. In between, they collaborated with everyone from Rae Sremmurd and Jack Ü to SG Lewis, Popcaan, and Zhu. Meanwhile, Disclosure’s “White Noise” [feat. AlunaGeorge] received a nomination for “British Single of the Year” at the 2014 BRIT Awards. Along the way, they packed headline gigs and supported the likes of Coldplay, Miguel, and Sia on tour.

As 2018 turned into 2019, Aluna underwent a transformation herself. She recognized an internal calling to create on her own.

“As a musician, I’m constantly looking for something big to learn,” she says. “I thought to myself, ‘What have I not done yet?’ I keep cruising, and I don’t want to miss out on some huge musical challenge. When you’re in a band, you get into a groove and start relying on the symbiosis you have. That’s where I hit the nail on the head. I realized I hadn’t challenged myself yet by truly writing a whole body of work only from my perspective, creative juices, and desires. I had to take the vision from beginning all the way to the end. It all had to come from me in the sense of what my soul is.”

As such, she oversaw every aspect of the process for this new project. Not only did she pen lyrics and, of course, sing, but she also co-produced. At moments, she hopped on the piano and—even the drums. Through and through, she guided arrangements and directed the flow.

“It’s funny, but the album’s production is the most personal thing to me,” she goes on. “I’ve struggled with the very core elements of my cultural makeup and almost apologized for it throughout my life. I’m a really weird clash of different musical elements. I unapologetically embraced that. Songs on this record are actual pieces of my existence, especially on the production side.”

The first single “Body Pump” illuminates this unapologetic approach. Co-produced by Josh Lloyd-Watson of Jungle in London, glistening synths echo alongside a dancefloor-ready vocal crescendo—“Hold on, my body’s pumping all night long”—spiked by a funky tropical groove. As the energy explodes, it culminates on a manic proclamation, “I’m trying to be different, don’t try to make me feel ashamed.”

“It’s about owning your individuality,” she states. “You’re owning yourself and challenging someone to accept you as you are. Lyrically, it talks about hiding yourself from those around you and then saying, ‘Don’t tell me to think about what I’m doing when I was just about to express myself. I don’t want to think about it. I just want to do it’.”

As the new album came together, Aluna’s life changed forever. She became a mom...

“I was like, ‘Okay, this child is actually going to be what I needed in order to get to the next level’,” she remembers. “For the rest of the writing process, my daughter was like a hidden spirit animal to me. It’s a really optimistic secret I had. She’s going to be a mixed child, so I wanted to show her through an album it’s okay to be a mixture of all these things, and it will be a gift to the world.”

In the end, Aluna remains on the brink of launching her own revolution.

“I feel like this is a time of rebirth for everyone,” she leaves off. “That can be both scary and really exciting depending on which way you conduct your mind or your emotions. For me, music has always been able to shift me towards the future, positivity, and high energy in order to do more. When you listen to this, I want people to start believing in themselves and continue to from that point forward. It’s not a nostalgic album. It’s not looking back to the past; it’s all looking towards the future.”