

EMIKA - BIOGRAPHY

I'm a new vibration . . .

"I hope she becomes very famous." - Thom Yorke

"She is sonically out of this world." - The Weeknd

Emika plots the future on the 10th anniversary of her debut solo album

Born in the UK of Czech heritage, while her teenage friends were doing teenage things Emika was studying computer sequencing and audio processing in Somerset's picturesque city of Bath. A classically trained pianist and vocalist, inspired by nearby Bristol's trip hop vista, while Emika's means of musical expression lay in techno culture and the rising dubstep scene, her curiosity for sound was equally guided by avant-garde electro-acoustic composers such as Iannis Xenakis, Dennis Smalley and Trevor Wishart.

While working as an intern at **Ninja Tune** Records, the budding producer began work on her self-titled debut album during a period when female producers were becoming increasingly empowered by technology and a DIY approach to production. Released in October 2011, *Emika* exposed her signature sound as bass heavy electronic with staccato rhythms and vocals, All Music's Jon O'Brien quickly distinguished the 25-year-old's uniqueness: *"Emika doesn't really sound like anyone else out there. An admirable feat which should appeal to those dismayed by Dubstep's recent commercial takeover."*

The sophomore electronic pop album *Dva* arrived within two years. Admittedly torn between conforming to the music industry machine - exemplified by her cover of Chris Isaak's global '80s hit *Wicked Game*, Emika possessed a yearning to break through its obsession with style over substance. Gainfully employed by music technology developer Native Instruments, Emika found home in Berlin where a nascent underground scene would further infiltrate her production aesthetic.

Signalling Emika's intent to seek full ownership of her career, 2015 would deliver a two-pronged attack on the senses. Provoked by Ninja Tune's relative disinterest in releasing an improvised piano diary, Emika showcased the minimalist neo-classical *Klavírni* on her newly founded Emika Records. Six months later, the electronic pop beast *Drei* would validate her rapidly escalating talent as a beat maker and sound designer.

Yet, while *Drei* cemented Emika's desire to playfully develop her signature style, *Klavírni* had opened a door to experimentation that could not be shut. In the artist's own words: *"I'm known for being a shapeshifter and reinventing things. That's how life and art is, but they smash into the music industry world where everything needs to be put in a box. I've embraced so many different ways of working now that it's hard to go back. Approaching the design of my records in an industry-type way doesn't really work for me anymore."*

Having long harboured a dream to write and release her own fully-fledged orchestral symphony inspired by classical greats such as Rachmaninoff and Anton Bruckner, Emika's next project, *Melanfonie* (2017), would demonstrate outrageous ambition, utilising the power of social media to seek €25,000 in funding via Kickstarter for the classical project *How to Make a Symphony*.

With the help of 500 financial backers, Emika headed to Prague to work with soprano vocalist Michaela Šrůmová and the 70-strong City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. The project enabled Emika to not only flex her skills as a writer/arranger, but take the reins in a more emphatic sense, emulating famed North America producers such as Dr. Dre or Timbaland who oversaw projects from conception to completion.

Released in 2017, Emika now reflects on the symphony project: *"It was a big test for me because it's one thing to sit on your own with a computer and fantasise about making a big orchestral production with 60 people, but it's incredibly complicated to get right. It was another test to overcome my classical education and get on with writing it."*

2018 saw Emika return to her pacey synthpop sound with a sense of maturation on her sixth album *Falling in Love with Sadness*. Co-produced with Robert Witschakowski of The Exaltics and continuing her collaboration with guitarist Chris Lockington, the album softened the palette with a richer, denser collection of tracks, signified by Emika's by-now trademark proclivity for lush, darkly mysterious hooks and melancholy vocals.

If the previous eight years were a process of assimilation and discovery, 2020 was one of re-evaluation. Five years after the release of her solo piano album *Klavírní*, a second album of solo piano works arrived in the form of *Klavírní Temná*. Reverse engineering her approach to the neo-classical genre, fourteen piano-based tracks were decayed by computer glitch and ghost FX. During a year of global chaos and deep introspection, the appropriately titled *Chaos Star* album leapt further into the technological matrix, creating an algorithmic journey in generative sound for 'committed sound explorers'.

On-stage, Emika would also move away from the well-trodden DJ path, reconceiving her *Falling in Love with Sadness* album for a spectacular surround sound live show at Berlin's Zeiss-Großplanetarium venue. Titled *If We Disappear*, Emika improvised alongside visual artist László Zsolt, accompanying his uniquely engineered 360° dome visuals.

2021 signifies Emika's 10th year in the music industry and with that comes time for reflection: *"The challenges that lay in front of any career artist are unchanging yet simple. Self-doubt can shatter any artistic vision and the universal illusion that something's good because it's got big numbers attached to it. I've always managed to find a way past these trials, listen to my heart and push myself hard to make the most outstanding music I possibly can while having faith in my ability to sell it myself. My career path continues to be an incredibly colourful one - I've made many friendships through music and I'm grateful for everyone who has joined my journey so far."*

While plans are afoot to mark Emika's 10th anniversary with a trilogy of retrospective albums, she's already plotting to succeed *Melanfonie* with a second symphony project based on economist Jeremy Rifkin's book *The Third Industrial Revolution*. Currently undergoing a research phase, Emika has plans to record the symphony from her newly created self-sustaining forest studio in the province of Brandenburg, outside Berlin.

Meanwhile, a slew of single releases based on a newly created conceptual sound world are primed for release across 2021. Three new tracks: *Anti-Universe*, *Battles Pt. 2* and *Come Come Come feat. Horace Andy* look set to further propel Emika's standing as an electronic/orchestral singer-songwriter of uncompromising talent, ready to mark the next stage of a career signified by 10 years of innovation.

"Emika's effortless performances... sound just as good, if not even better, on stage than they do on record." - **DJ Mag**

"She's all ready worlds apart, worth praising to the skies." - **Classic Pop Mag**
"A glamorous Zola Jesus." - **Uncut Mag**

Words by Danny Turner.

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