

# NUEX Talks The Affectus EP & Finding Their Way (Interview)



Credit: Brandon Shields

Camille Michelle Gray and Teddy Aitkins are the D.C. based indie duo NUEX. Their explorations into electronic sounds are somber, joyful and carry a sense of rebirth. They just released five new emotionally nuanced songs for their *Affectus* EP. The journey started when they met four years ago and started making music together within days of meeting each other. Aitkins' transcendent production and Gray's celestial vocals are part of a sonic world that is open and full of intensely layered feelings. In the interview below, they talk about their origins, the *Affectus* EP and why they call themselves NUEX.Â

*“Revenge, hopefulness, melancholy, hubris, enjoyment”-Camille*

**Are both of you from D.C.?**

**Teddy:** I am from many places. I was born in Liberia West Africa. My family came here as refugees in the '90s and we lived in the D.C. area (Silver Spring). I ended up getting heavy into music in my early teen years and played in several punk and Go-Go bands which got me involved in the D.C. music scene. I moved to other places after high school and after being away from home for about 10 years, I moved back to the area. Home sweet home.

**Camille:** I am!

**Is there anything about D.C. that influences your music?**

**Teddy:** I think we are naturally influenced by all of our experiences and surroundings, so inherently, yes.

**Camille:** Not anything inherent to D.C., no. But the city has always been a backdrop to a lot of my experiences, some of which I write about on the EP. So in that way it has a passive influence.

### **How did you find your way into music making?**

**Teddy:** My first instruments were, tuba and trumpet but that was mandatory at the time..this was in fourth and fifth grade, so eons ago. Then sometime in sixth grade, the snare drummer for the school concert band wasn't in attendance and I was asked to fill-in for some reason and I ended up having a lot of fun. It just came natural for me. I became the permanent snare drummer, then the marching band drummer, then I upgraded to becoming the marching band leader, then high school (and college) jazz drummer until I started my own bands. Did a bunch of fun goofy talent show stuff in high school for my hip-hop band, Go-Go band, and punk band. During my college years, I was fortunate enough to be a part of a few regional and national touring bands where I really developed my chops in the studio and playing live. I like to think that all of that was getting me ready for now. Being the co-founder for this wonderful band that Camille and I call NUEX. Watch Out World!



Credit: Brandon Shields

**Camille:** I've been music-ing for 20 years. So I think it found its way into me rather than the other way around (hahahahahahaa, cheesy). I wrote my first song at eight. I was enrolled in violin early on, always in some orchestra or performance group. Dabbled in the keyboard. Then I graduated into guitar and honing my singing-songwriting that way, later doing YouTube covers and features with hip-hop artists. And 20

years later I am who I am now. Music was the foundation of my life. Always will be.

**Who were your individual muses before you met each other?**

**Camille:** Billie Holiday, Lady Gaga, Kendrick Lamar, Beach House, Frank Sinatra, Amy Winehouse, Lana Del Rey. Strong voices, strong storytelling.

**Teddy:** James Brown, Curtis Mayfield, Marvin Gaye are some of my staples. The Mars Volta, Circa Survive, As Tall As Lions, Toro Y Moi, Empire of the Sun, Kanye West, Kid Cudi are all on the top of my long inspiring artists that got me through some tough days and weird moods.

**Does the *Affectus* EP have a theme?**

**Camille:** Not in a traditional way, no. All the songs, lyrically, are about vastly different topics. Revenge, hopefulness, melancholy, hubris, enjoyment. Even sonically they are all different. The only consistent theme is that the impetus for all of them was a deeply felt emotion. That is why we named it *Affectus*, which means mood/emotion.

**Is “The Fall” about being reborn like a Phoenix?**

**Camille:** I love this interpretation. To briefly tie in astrology, another passion of mine, Teddy and I are both deeply Plutonian in that we both feel rather intensely and project, through music or otherwise, a darkness. The archetype for Pluto is literally rebirth, the phoenix rising, having been transformed by the ash, the ugliness. So yeah, “The Fall” is that phoenix’s journey, forever toying the axis of being at rock bottom and then soaring above it all.Â

**I read that your name is French-inspired and comes from a desire to create otherworldly music, do you feel like your sound reflects that?**

**Camille:** Yerp! *Nue* is a word in French that can mean “of the

cloudsâ€” or â€œheavenâ€” depending on context. The X at the end is just an artistic choice. We thought of the name only having created at most one or two songs together. So the name probably unconsciously and consciously drove us to create music that would live up to that. Itâ€™s strange, Teddy and I are so similarly inclined. It feels fated that we found each other. Is that lame? Probably. Iâ€™ll shut up now.

**Your video for â€œI Make Bonesâ€” from last year was eye-catching, do you have any plans to make visuals for the *Affectus* EP?**

**Camille:** Yes, we have a jam-packed weekend coming up where we will be filming both “Eyes” and “Billie.” Iâ€™m excited for that! Stay tuned.

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