

People Museum Explains Their Name, Music & Connection To New Orleans (Interview)



Jeremy Phipps and Claire Givens started making music together

and became People Museum after a mutual friend introduced them in their native Louisiana two years ago. Givens was working in the classical music world and Phipps had toured as a trombonist with Solange, AlunaGeorge and Rubblebucket. Their peculiar pop has a wellspring in some of New Orleans' traditions as well as the influence of rock pioneers like David Bowie. *I Dreamt Of You In Technicolor* is their debut album of nine songs that sounds earthbound and trippy at the same time. The duo spoke about these origins and meaning of their "Bible Belt" single that has the most magnetic expression of the French Quarter's home through their eyes.

"We are all mini-museums of the people we love or hate"

What is the significance of your name?

Jeremy: It's a metaphor about holding other people's ideas and opinions inside of us. We are all mini-museums of the people we love or hate.

How did you become a duo?

Claire: We met at a place called Marigny Brasserie in the French Quarter of New Orleans after a mutual friend suggested we would be good collaborators. Jeremy had just gotten back from living in Los Angeles and I had just come off of a music project that broke up. We went to our buddy's house in the Treme the same day and started writing songs. We finished two complete songs and realized it was a perfect match.



What is about New Orleans that inspires you?

Claire: Growing up in a conservative North Louisiana, New Orleans was the first place I went that I felt like I could be truly free, truly myself. The people here are wild and lawless, and they are not ruled by time or money. New Orleans is really a place where you can slow down, really see something new, and figure out yourself. I'm so inspired by the people here and the spaces they create for art and music. The best shows I have ever been to have been in someone's home or a makeshift abandoned building.

Jeremy: The richness of the music community inspires me. Music is higher on the priority list than most places and being able to play so many shows toughens you up as a performer.

Who were some of the pop artists that you relate to?

Claire: I love David Bowie and seeing an artist effortlessly move into a different sound with every album he made. I love his mix of pop and avant-garde. I'd like to see myself as a sort of chameleon-like him. I run around in a lot of different music scenes and try to mix it up.

Jeremy: Pharrell Williams is someone I relate to. He's had a long career, rolling through all the changes in the musical landscape while being on the cutting edge of it. And though he's a very skilled musician he manages to use those skills tastefully.



What does your single “Bible Belt” address?

Claire: It addresses my relationship with the church and coming to terms with things that I see in myself that I criticized in the leaders of the church that I grew up around.

I listened to your album I Dreamt Of You In Technicolor and the music seems to glide through the air. Are the songs connected by a singular concept?

Claire: Lyrically, they are very personal songs that I tried to keep vague. The album was like a therapy session for me, and it was about going through all these things that had happened to me (falling in love, breaking up, figuring out how to be alone) and making sense of it all and putting it into something productive and beautiful.

What’s next for People Museum?

Claire: I’m ready to get back to writing and see what sounds we will make next. The songs we are releasing for “I Dreamt You in Technicolor” are over 2 years old, so we have absolutely grown as people and musicians since then. We are also ready to take our music out of Louisiana and share it with everyone.

Jeremy: Most immediately weâ€™ll be pushing IDYTC to as many as listeners as possible. An album is like a baby and you have to hold its hands in the first years before it can stand up on its own.

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