

An Interview With Liam Phan

LaMusique

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So you've loved music since a young age. What was it growing up that influenced you to play/make music?

Liam Phan: *Music has been a passion of mine since my early days, and I often find myself reflecting on the multitude of influences that shaped my desire to play and create music. One significant aspect that stands out in my upbringing is the profound impact of film music on my creative journey. From a tender age, my parents exposed me to the timeless classics of cinema, fostering an open-mindedness towards various artistic genres. One film that particularly captivated me was August Rush, which delved into the theme of the sonic environment that surrounds us and its profound influence on musical creation. The allure of film music lies in its ability to create an immersive experience, intricately woven with scenes, characters, and themes, and utilising various sound elements to enhance compositions. The vast possibilities within this realm, though intangible to touch, resonated with me on a metaphysical level, igniting my eagerness to learn an instrument and embark on the path of composition.*

What are you most looking forward to regarding the release of your upcoming album 'Entropy'?

Liam Phan: *Anticipating the release of my first solo album, Entropy, it proves challenging to specify precise expectations in terms of measurable outcomes. This album holds immense personal significance, as it represents the culmination of heartfelt dedication and creative labour in its production and composition. My primary objective is to make a lasting impression on the listeners, transporting them to a territory where the confines of the mind dissolve, allowing their imaginations to roam freely. Entropy embodies a reflective journey, delving into abstract concepts that elicit vibrant emotions and contemplative thoughts. At this juncture in my artistic journey, my paramount aim is to provide listeners with a transformative experience, where the intangible and the tangible converge harmoniously.*

As well as producing your own projects you also make music for films. What is the process and overall experience of that like?

Liam Phan: *Initially, my foray into music involved improvisational jazz during school lunch breaks, alongside collaborating with a hard rock band during the weekend, and sometimes performing at local venues in my hometown. However, film music has always been my ultimate aspiration. Yet, this field is highly specialised, exclusive to those who possess the necessary expertise to tackle smaller projects, such as student short films, and progress towards larger projects. To thrive in this domain, one must embody the roles of a composer and a sound designer while remaining attuned to modern tools and techniques. Collaborating with a director, producer, and sound team proves to be both constraining and fulfilling. The process often commences well in advance of the shoot, with the director reaching out to establish a precise musical ambiance that harmonises with the narrative and aligns with the scenes. While there is no one-size-fits-all workflow, flexibility is key, allowing me to infuse my personal touch while meeting the project's requirements, a delicate balance that necessitates effective communication. In essence, crafting music for films entails a symbiotic partnership with the director, where the music acts as both an independent entity and a foundation that elevates and enriches the visual storytelling. Personally, I prefer selectively choosing projects, as inspiration does not always strike at the opportune moment, especially when deadlines loom.*

Additionally, venturing into diverse film genres enables me to explore new sonic landscapes and textures, preventing stagnation and fostering creative growth.

If you had to choose one album to listen to for the rest of your life, which would you choose and why?

Liam Phan: *This is probably one of the most difficult questions I've ever been asked. Rarely do I find myself listening to a single album on an endless loop. However, if I were compelled to choose, I would select "Kid A" by Radiohead. This album, with its mosaic-like nature and kaleidoscope of emotions, perpetually captivates me. It holds a special place in my heart as it aligns with my musical origins rooted in alternative and experimental rock. I discovered this masterpiece during my adolescent years, a period of self-expression and exploration, where one seeks to articulate their innermost thoughts in many different ways. I really recommend sitting down and listening to the whole album without any disturbances around, it's an experience to live at least once.*

What are your hobbies outside of music?

Liam Phan: *Besides music, I relish immersing myself in diverse forms of expression, such as photography, design, and cinematography. Since I do not possess an external production studio or film crew for my projects, I have taken it upon myself to independently capture visuals, experimenting with macro photography and delving into CGI work utilising tools like Houdini and After Effects. Programming is another passion that stems from my university studies, while statistics prove invaluable in navigating the intricate landscape of the music business, allowing me to make informed decisions.*

Are there any specific emotions that will play an important part in the tracks of 'Entropy'?

Liam Phan: *Within the album of Entropy, certain tracks serve as musical experiments that aim to seamlessly transition between other compositions, providing a soothing respite and grounding the listeners in a comforting space. However, it is through the pivotal pieces of this album that I aspire to touch upon buried emotions, coaxing them to the surface in a manner akin to the works of Max Richter or Jóhann Jóhannsson. If I were to assign names to these emotions, they would be pathos, melancholy or sorrow, but above all, the timeless essence of our existence. Entropy endeavours to encapsulate the human longing to freeze time, allowing every emotion to converge within a single cinematic experience, mirroring the ebb and flow of our joyous and sad memories.*

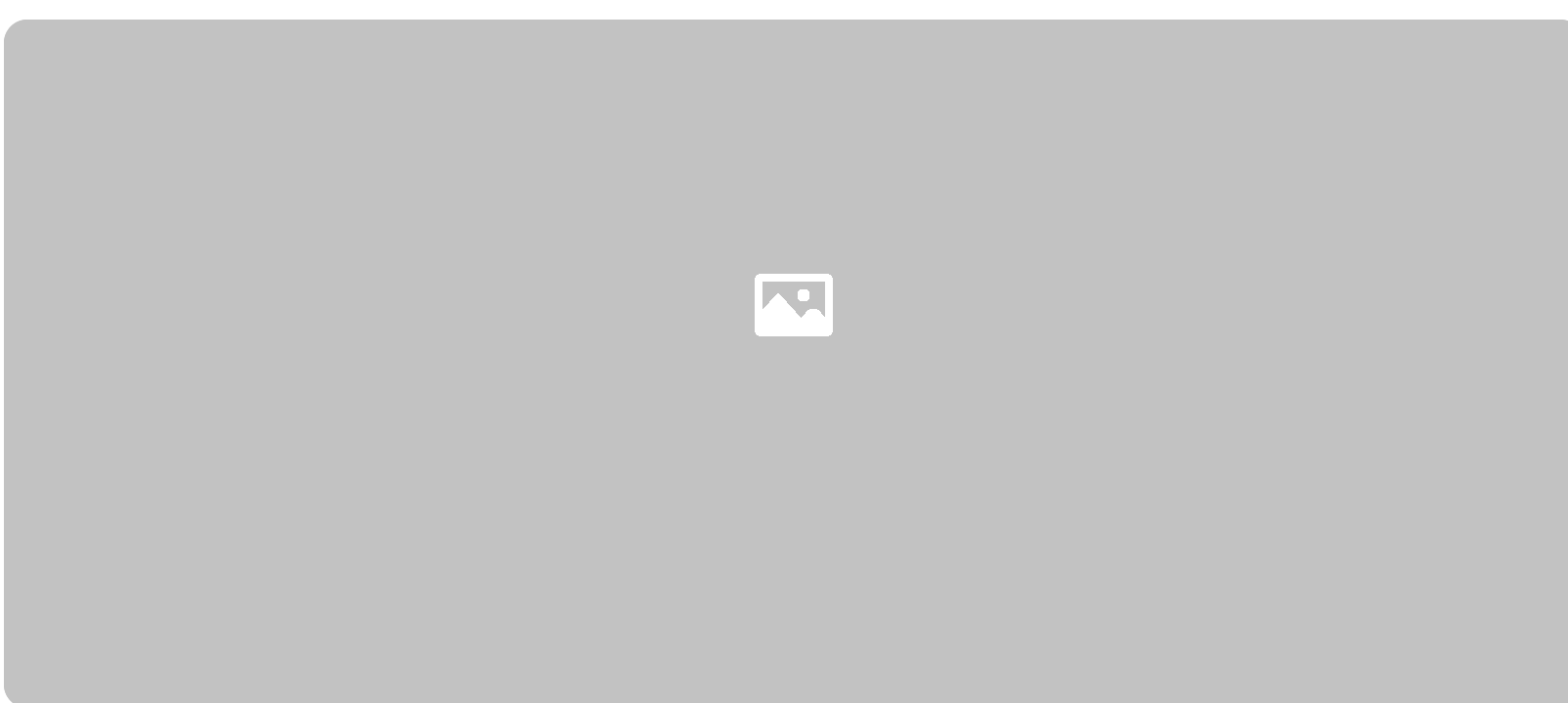
What impact do you hope your music has on others?

Liam Phan: *It's always difficult to know in advance what impact you're going to have on others. For me, the greatest honour lies in evoking an emotion, whether positive or negative. It is my fervent wish that my music becomes a catalyst, inspiring emotions, actions, and even the creation of other forms of art. As my album has traversed the creative process and ventured into the world, I must relinquish ownership and allow others to forge their own connections with it, enabling it to unfold and flourish across vast horizons.*

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