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As told to Ioanna Gika , 1339 words.

Tags: Music, Inspiration, Adversity, Success, Independence.



On what I have learned so far from being a professional musician

I know what the first song was that I played in my headphones when I was in the van embarking on my first tour.

I know that as I listened to the song, the sun was shining on my face through the van window. I could see windmill turbines in the distance like futuristic aunts.

I know that I got heckled by a man saying "go back to your country."

I know that my family has lived in Greece, throughout Southeast Asia, throughout North America, and as a result of living in different places and of touring, my definition of home is not defined by houses.

I know that I don't assign stupid genre terms to my own music and that most musicians don't, but people will seek to do that anyway.

I know that the patriarchy is so deeply entrenched that when there is a male in the band, people will not only mainly focus on the male, but they will also discuss his male relatives who create music in order to explain any sliver of success you, as a female, may have.

I know that I wish I could bring my pitbull on tour.

I know that Pomeranians are cute but flammable looking.

I know that I can record up to 80 vocal takes but will most likely end up using the first.

I know from traveling on tour that vowels in the south sound drawn out and accents in the north sound closed off, and I wonder if that has to do with climate and heat escaping the mouth.

I know that it would be great if all venues could give untouched fresh food the bands do not eat to the homeless. There is so much fucking waste and I'm over it.

I know that this also goes out to bands. Be realistic about what is needed.

I know that science and nature are my religion, and that the big bang theory makes us think that we are bursting out into the universe, but often I wonder if we are being pulled towards something.

I know that there is still a lot I need to learn, and that I have watched countless hours of YouTube tutorials to learn how to do things.

I know that I watched a tutorial once before a show about how to repair a latex cat suit by a guy wearing a gimp mask.

I know that the lesson would have gone a lot faster if he had unzipped the gimp mouthpiece.

I know that my record label gave me \$500 dollars to make my "Out of Focus" video and that doesn't seem like a lot, but that was \$500 dollars more than I had in my bank account that month, and I was excited to see my vision through.

I know that a male I played a show with once put a Xanax in a drink of mine and I had to manually fish it out.

I know that I was filled with such horror and shame, that it froze me.

I know that birds can sense change, and that if someone watched my Instagram Stories without knowing me, they would think I was an ornithologist.

I know that there is one type of bird that lays its eggs directly on a bare branch, and as migration is

about to occur, the musical colony will fall silent. A behavior called "dread." After dread, the colony will launch from their home branches all at once.

I know that when the bomb went off in my stepfather's office and he had the shirt blown off his back and lost hearing in one of his ears, the Greek government did not call to wish him well.

I know that the government then cut into his pension and my mother's pension without warning, and that the word "pension" is a strange word to put in a song.

I know that it felt necessary to put the word "pension" in a song, anyway.

I know when people say they love all music except for country, they have chosen "stomp, clap, HEY!" songs over Dolly Parton's entire catalogue, and that means my Uber's here.

I know that I've been supporting myself since I was a teenager and that my work ethic will never leave.

I know that men have compared me to other female musicians because of my hair color, body shape, or general appearance.

I know that Florence and the Machine is amazing but that I sound nothing like her.

I know that I hold my breath around people with bad energy.

I know that when Deafheaven asked if I wanted to open for them, I was honored.

I know that Deafheaven's crowds are some of the most enthusiastic and kind audience members I have ever met.

I know that Patrick, who plays cello with me, says the word beautiful in two parts, "beaut-tiful" as if the word does a pause and pirouette halfway through.

I know that when Yelp says "this is the best sushi in Reno" it does not mean that the sushi is good.

I know that I puked on stage once.

I know that Aram, who plays bass with me, is an award-winning gay porn star, training to become a therapist, and has the most perfect pitch of any human I've ever met.

I know that the post-tour, re-entry feelings of depression are real.

I know that some people have it a lot easier than me and some people have it harder, and that it's imperative to listen to the people who have it harder.

I know that every woman I've played with shows up to soundcheck on time and views it as a gift instead of a nuisance.

I know that the song *Venom* by Little Simz is my go-to right now.

I know that I stayed in a motel room once on tour where syringes laced the bathroom counter, and cockroaches climbed out behind a desk.

I know that when I am at SXSW it feels like the scene in *Interview With A Vampire* where the vampires are touched by sun and burst into flames.

I know that there is a planet called UY Scuti which is five billion times larger than the sun.

I know that if UY Scuti made an album I would listen to it.

I know that when my dad became sick and lost his ability to speak, he was still able to hum songs.

I know that when I played a show not long after he died, fighting the knot in my throat was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do.

I know that I am deeply grateful for the support of my new music by musicians whom I hold in high regard, and equally grateful for the people who make releasing it possible.

I know that I got a message from someone saying that my new song helped them from their feelings of suicide, and that in my response I should have told them that their message helped me as well.

I know that yesterday someone on YouTube commented that I'm "awesome" with the caveat "for a girl."

I know why I want to stop.

I know why I keep going.



Cloudy

Thunder in the background

Dark room

Grateful to participate on a site as mindful as this.

Name

Ioanna Gika

Vocation

Musician

Fact

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