Lapse Interview

By Neohippy

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Toronto-based producer *Lapse*'s background is as eclectic as his body of work; spanning several different genres, and constantly moving from region to region. The musical vagabond opens up about his history and future ambitions, seeking to perfect his craft and make a name for himself. You can listen to his new track *here*.

First off, I'd like to thank you for agreeing to do this interview with me.

No probs, man.

So, introduce yourself. What's your name? What do people refer to you as? What do you do?

My name's Mohit, I go by the name of *Lapse.* That's my artist name. I was born and raised in the UAE, but I'm ethnically Indian. I moved to Vancouver for university, and I'm in Toronto now. Oh, and I'm a music producer.

You used to go by a couple of different artist names in the past, why'd you decide to switch it up?

Because they just sounded really corny to me. *Lapse* is the only name that has any meaning behind it.

And was there a general change in the direction of your aesthetic as your artist name evolved?

Yeah, definitely. My first artist name was *Nergham* when I was 14, it was some stupid gamer name that I used for League of Legends which eventually bled into my music, I don't know why I chose that name. I was just learning at that point. Then I switched it to *Sydyce* in 2019, and I thought it sounded really corny after a while. It sounded like

some EDM shit. So yeah, I chose *Lapse* because I felt like it'd age well. That's why I picked it.

So, talk to me about your early life, the years that led up to where you are now.

My parents raised me obviously, I have an older sister. She used to listen to a lot of pop music when I was a kid, so that was the only shit I was exposed to, that's what I thought music was. It sounded really cringe to me, you know, *Miley Cyrus*, and other pop artists. I understand why it was popular back then, but at the time I thought that was what music as a whole was and I just thought it was really whack.

That sounds like an unlikely start to your career as a music producer.

Well eventually I started listening to hip hop, like *50 Cent* and the whole *G-Unit* thing, and old *Eminem* like *Slim Shady* when I was like nine or ten, that's when I realized there were more genres to music than just mainstream pop.

And how'd you get into producing?

I was like a soccer guy back then, I wasn't really into music like that. I ended up getting an ACL injury in the 10th grade, so that gave me hella free time, and obviously I hated studying, so I wanted to find something else to occupy my time. So yeah, music.

So you picked up music as a way to stave off the boredom while you were recovering?

Pretty much, yeah. I was like "fuck soccer", it was too much, and I just stuck to music.

And do you think growing up in the UAE influenced your music taste and the trajectory of your production?

Oh yeah. Because there's no music culture in Dubai. People only go there to make money, there's no real music culture basically. So everyone listens to completely different shit, so I didn't know what was popular and what wasn't. I was just listening to random tracks that I downloaded off of websites. They were mostly rap tunes, but some of my friends showed me some other tracks. That was kinda like my first dive into music.

How do you think it changed when you came here to Canada? Especially switching between Vancouver and Toronto, do you think that also developed your taste and artistic direction?

Not really, actually. Ever since I moved here to Toronto I haven't been hanging out with people as much, because I guess I'm more introverted now. But I've been listening to more music that I actually like and I don't have to give a shit about what others like, we're not listening together, it's just me in my room so I discovered some new and weird genres.

Talk to me about your creative process and some of your artistic influences.

My influences keep changing. I get bored really quickly, the shit I used to listen to six months ago, I just look back and think "I don't wanna listen to this right now". But I'd say one of my current influences is *JPEGMAFIA.* He's a rapper and producer from Baltimore, he's pretty cool. He's weird, he's just being himself, that's what I like about him. *Slowthai* too, he's a really good rapper and he knows how to pick good beats. He's also really unique, there's only one *Slowthai*, he's not some generic rapper.

And you mentioned during our conversations that *Flume* was one of your major influences back then.

Oh yeah, for sure. Before *Flume*, I only used to listen to hip hop and shit. Then I listened to his *Skin* album around 2016 and thought "Yo, this is sick". It was like a good introduction to literally every other genre that I listen to now, especially IDM.

So it's safe to say that *Flume* made you appreciate music in a wider context.

Yeah.

Are there any upcoming projects that you're working on? Because you've only released singles thus far, are you working towards a more cohesive full-length album or EP?

I've been dropping music since I was 17-18, that's literally when I started making music. But I've actually been making music since I was 16 and never told anyone. Wait, what was the question again? [laughing]

Are you working on a cohesive full-length project?

At certain points I'm really interested in one sound a synthesizer makes, or I find a bunch of effects that I think makes for a unique sound for myself. So without knowing it, I just started using those sounds and they sound good in different contexts. When you put them all together, it feels like one cohesive thing. But I don't think I'm going to release an EP just like that, at first I want to drop a few singles here and there and maybe later I'll drop a full length project.

Why didn't you share your music during your first two years of producing?

It's just the people I used to see around me. They were really whack, I used to make fun of them. It's just these rappers and producers, they just wanted to do it because it was cool. It just looked funny as shit, so I didn't wanna end up being like that. If I want to show my music to someone, it has to be really good, and once it's really good I'll show it off like "Yo, this is my shit man".

So I guess you're a perfectionist in a sense. You don't want to release music that's not up to your standards.

Yeah.

And I'm assuming it's especially difficult because you're constantly experimenting with your style and using sounds in different contexts. I remember you sent me one of your tracks, it had this avant-garde jazz sax sample but the drums were almost IDM-like.

I fell into this Spotify rabbithole and just discovered a bunch of artists that I ended up liking and kept replaying their songs. I listened to every one of *Floating Points* albums and liked his jazz influence, and I was kinda inspired by that which led to the creation of that track. I don't think I'm gonna make that my thing, I was just experimenting. It keeps changing. I make literally everything. I started off with dubstep. I hate dubstep now, but the one good thing about it is that I personally feel like it's one of the hardest

genres to make, because the technical skills you need for that like sound design and mixing & mastering are required just to make it sound half decent. You need to know your shit.

So you changed genres multiple times, how would you describe your current sound?

Like, really underground obscure shit. Electronica, I'd say. But I do mainstream shit too, shit inspired by *Charli XCX* and the whole *PC Music* collective stuff. I like to combine obscure stuff and pop music and turn it into something more digestible. Like how *Kanye West* produces his stuff, he's got really obscure influences but he's a mainstream artist. He knows how to have experimental elements present in his music but still maintain the pop and mainstream appeal.

We both usually get frustrated with our creative work when things aren't going as smoothly as planned, and we fall into a slump as a result. How do you get around that so that you can create more music?

I don't think it happens to me anymore, to be honest. It used to happen before, because I was still learning everything on Ableton. If I wanted to do something and didn't know how to do it, I had to watch some tutorial on Youtube or something. But now it's just like second nature to me, I know what to do. Whatever's in my head I can translate that into Ableton.

When it comes to collaboration with other artists, do you feel like you work better with them or do you prefer to work alone where you have more control over your sound?

Everytime I try to bring in an artist it always turns into something else, it's not a studio session anymore. Most of the fucking people I bring in, they just do drugs. I don't like that when we're making music. In their head they think it's dope, but it just ends up sounding like shit most of the time. I'm really picky with the artists I choose to work with. At the moment I like working with myself, but I want to change that. If I need to make a good record, I know I need to bring in an artist that's comfortable working with a producer.

As a producer in Canada, would you even describe yourself as a Canadian musician? Do you draw a line when it comes to regions, or do you consider yourself a global artist?

I'm definitely an online global artist. Even though I stay here and have been here for a long time, I wouldn't call myself a Canadian producer. I represent the international student community in this country. I know a lot of people from my background haven't made it, I just want to be the first one to do it.

What do you think of the influx of young producers trying to make it big? Like, they pick up FL Studio and try to make whatever music and maybe gain some clout and a bit of fame.

They wanna make their own shit. Like everyone else, they wanna make music. It's kind of a personal thing, at least for me, music is really personal. It's like someone opening up your personal diary and reading your shit out loud. The thing is, a lot of artists wanna do it so they look cool, that's how I started as well, but the ones who keep going at it and genuinely want to do something with their music or bring something new to the table, I respect those people. But for the rest of them, if you really wanna do it just then just do it.

You've gained a lot of experience in the past couple of years of producing, do you have any words of advice for young and upcoming producers?

My advice is not to take advice [laughing]. The way you learn is different for everyone. I learned production in the most nerdy way possible, I read the entirety of the Ableton and Serum manuals. It was really boring but I was desperate to learn, because the Youtube tutorials were shit at the time. I just started practicing and experimenting from there.

Do you have anything you want to say to the world?

Yeah. I don't know how long it's going to take me, but you'll see me soon. I'm still building my stuff. I've got some life shit going on, but once I fix that I'm going to launch my career.