

= Perfectionist ( album ) =

Perfectionist is the debut studio album by English singer Natalia Kills . It was released on 1 April 2011 through will.i.am Music Group , Cherrytree Records , KonLive and Interscope . Despite having started out as an actress , Kills later became a rap artist and released a single in 2005 ; however , her label went bankrupt . Songwriting remained her principal activity until 2008 , when she was signed by will.i.am and started recording the album .

Kills worked with musicians including Fernando Garibay , Jeff Bhasker , and Martin Kierszenbaum , and created a concept album based on perfectionism . Its lyrical content contains references to love , sex , and money , complemented by a sonority rooted in synthpop and dance @-@ pop . Perfectionist received mixed reviews from music critics , who asserted that the singer 's visual projects were superior to her music . Obtaining top 50 positions in some European countries , the album performed moderately on international record charts . In the United Kingdom and United States , the set attained chiefly low positions ; in the latter , its sales as of September 2013 were of 14 @, @ 000 copies .

The album spawned three singles ? " Mirrors " , " Wonderland " and " Free " ? which were generally successful in Europe and were accompanied by music videos . " Mirrors " managed to peak within the top 5 of the US Hot Dance Club Songs . In association with Guillaume Domet , Kills produced a web series titled Love , Kills xx in order to promote the album , based on her secret thoughts and desires . Comprising 10 episodes , it features Kills seeking revenge and hurting men .

= = Background = =

Kills was introduced to singing and dancing at the age of 3 , and until she was 12 , she studied in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art . Kills initially pursued an acting career , appearing in some TV series including All About Me and The Archers ; however , in her hometown of Leeds , she developed an interest in hip hop music . She subsequently entered various rap battles , for which she started writing lyrics , and in 2003 , Kills won a BBC Radio 1 @-@ sponsored " MC Battle " . From there on , she began writing songs for artists and film soundtracks . Kills released her first single on 21 February 2005 , titled " Don 't Play Nice " , under the moniker Verbalicious and with label All Around the World ; it peaked at number 11 on the UK Singles Chart . She was also recording for her debut studio album , then @-@ scheduled for an Easter 2006 release . However , the label entered bankruptcy , causing her record deal to be dissolved and the album shelved . Kills continued to work in the music industry , mainly as a songwriter with the alias of Verbz . In 2007 , she relocated to Los Angeles ; the next year , she lent guest vocals to French artist M. Pokora 's song " They Talk Shit About Me " , and changed her stage name to Natalia Cappuccini , under which she self @-@ released an extended play ( EP ) titled Wommannequin .

One of Kills ' demos , " Shopaholic " , was remixed by the Remix Artist Collective . After it was posted in American blogger Perez Hilton 's blog , Kills ' MySpace received a high amount of views , and she reached the top of the social network 's unsigned artists chart . While shopping , she was noticed by a man due to her clothing , and gave him her website address ; he subsequently introduced her to a DJ , who took Kills to the American musician will.i.am 's house . In November 2008 , she signed a contract with the latter 's record label , then an imprint of Interscope .

= = Recording = =

Kills started to prepare material for Perfectionist after establishing her record deal with will.i.am , who served as an executive producer for the album . During the recording sessions , Kills prominently worked with producers Jeff Bhasker , Fernando Garibay , the album 's second executive producer Martin Kierszenbaum , and Theron " The @-@ Ron " Feemster . Akon and Giorgio Tuinfort co @-@ produced " Mirrors " in collaboration with Kierszenbaum . Bhasker was responsible for the entire album 's songwriting and engineering , and mixed " Zombie " . Feemster and Tuinfort provided instrumentation , along with Zach Kasik , Carlos Keery @-@ Fisher and Robert Horn . More artists

including Robert Horn and Tony Ugyal were commissioned for engineering .

Most of Perfectionist 's songs were recorded at Cherrytree Recording Studios or Enormous Studios ; the latter served as the recording location for songs produced by Bhasker . " Break You Hard " and " Superficial " were produced at the American Dream , while " Wonderland " was produced at that studio and at The Hive . Kills recorded " Love Is a Suicide " and " Broke " at Paradise Studios , " Mirrors " at Chalice Recording Studios , and " If I Was God " at The Boom Boom Room .

Kills described working with will.i.am , " [ ... ] it 's almost difficult having a normal conversation with him because he 's firing out ideas all the time . [ ... ] His entire life revolves around creativity , and that 's something I could really relate to . " Kierszenbaum praised Kills ' work ethic during the recording sessions , stating that she would focus simultaneously on the melodic and lyrical structure of song , as well as its soundscape . He went on to say that she " influenced the timbre of the sound " and assisted the production as if " she 's making a movie . "

= = Composition = =

Perfectionist is a concept album which focusses on how perfectionism influences Kills . " All the songs revolve around my ambition , celebrations , frustration and disappointments of being a perfectionist " , she stated . " I think we 're all perfectionists ? we 're all looking for the best to fulfil our ideologies and dreams . " Kills was also inspired by " women 's obsession " with fashion in general . She described the album 's sound as " dark pop " due to its " opinionated " and " confrontational " lyrics which , according to her , differ from mainstream music . The lyrical content is occasionally comical and uses metaphors frequently .

Perfectionist is a dance @-@ pop and synthpop album , characterised by " driving rhythm sections and edgy minor @-@ key melodies " . Its opening track , " Perfection " , runs for thirty seconds and sees a " robotic @-@ sounding " therapist listing Kills ' flaws . " Wonderland " , which fantasises about romance and a relationship 's " perfect ending " , includes synthesizer arrangements and choir sections ; the line " Take me to wonderland " is repeated throughout the song . A track including a bassline , piano , club beats and synths , " Free " samples " Wuthering Heights " by Kate Bush . It was written by Kills when she worked as a waitress , and discusses " bailing on a budget " . " Break You Hard " is an industrial pop song with " hypnotic rhythms " , which talks about " breaking a lover " , while " Zombie " incorporates electronic organs and " mumbling bass " in an electronic R & B sound .

" Love Is a Suicide " follows , detailing the " self @-@ destruction " that comes with love , as Kills sings , " It 's so surgical , how you dissect every mistake I make , you ? re like an animal , you bite me hard " . " Disco @-@ pop " track " Mirrors " references sadomasochist sexual practices , while portraying Kills with a dominatrix @-@ like persona ; it contains electric guitars , and a bassline which Robert Copsey from Digital Spy compared to that of Eurythmics ' " Sweet Dreams ( Are Made of This ) " . The song 's chorus features Kills singing in a falsetto note . Writing for Consequence of Sound , Alex Young opined that the song discusses " the duplicity of identity , hubris , and objectification " . " Not In Love " is styled in electronica and influenced by acid house . AllMusic writer Jon O 'Brien wrote that it " provides a welcome respite from the album 's constant floor @-@ filling leanings " .

On " Acid Annie " , Kills plots a revenge on an ex @-@ boyfriend , while on the synthpop track " Superficial " , she confronts her " consumptive impulses " and appreciation of " finer things . " " Broke " sees Kills talking about money ; " Nothing Lasts Forever " is a duet with Bhasker , who performs under the alias of Billy Kraven . It was noted by O 'Connor for its prominent use of Auto @-@ Tune . Perfectionist closes with " If I Was God " , in which Kills asks her partner if he would love her if she was poor . For musicOMH , Blair Kelly likened its chorus ' melody to that of Bush 's " Running Up That Hill " .

= = Release and promotion = =

The cover art for Perfectionist , which depicts Kills sitting on an exam chair , with a red cross

covering her eyes , was unveiled by Cherrytree on 11 March 2011 . In Austria , Germany and Switzerland , the album was released by Universal Music as a CD and digital download on the first day of April , while in Poland it was issued on 14 April . The American release proceeded on 16 August , as well as for Canada . That day , Kills performed songs from the album at the New York City @-@ based building Atlas , accompanied by a keyboardist . On 19 September , it was released in the United Kingdom .

= = = Singles and music videos = = =

" Zombie " was selected as Perfectionist 's first promotional single , and was released on 21 December 2009 . Its music video , which features Kills being tortured in a laboratory , was released on 16 March of the following year . The song was used in the sixth episode of the first season of the Syfy reality television series Face Off , aired 2 March 2011 . Despite not having been included in the album , " Activate My Heart " was released as its second promotional single on 13 April 2010 , while an accompanying visual was uploaded on 17 December .

" Mirrors " was digitally released as the album 's lead single on 10 August 2010 , while a CD single was issued six months later in Germany . An accompanying music video was released on 1 December 2010 , featuring Kills being dragged into a mirror and subsequently exploring the concepts of vanity , control and sex . The song charted . " Wonderland " followed as the second single from Perfectionist , and was available for purchase on 25 April 2011 . It only charted in Austria and Germany , respectively at number 55 and 45 . Doubet was commissioned to direct its music video , which sees Kills being forced into a mansion , being fed a cooked heart and ultimately climbing up a table , leading to chaos and violence inside the house .

Selected as the album 's third single , a remix of " Free " with guest vocals from will.i.am , was released on 24 June 2011 , with an accompanying visual being released ten days later . It obtained top 20 positions in Germany and Austria . A video for " Kill My Boyfriend " was released on 10 January 2012 . It was filmed in France , and depicts Kills attempting to murder her boyfriend by drowning him in a tub of milk . Despite not having been released as a single , it peaked at number 19 on the Flanders Ultratip chart .

= = = Love , Kills xx = = =

To promote the album , a web series titled Love , Kills xx was written , produced and directed by Kills and Guillaume Doubet . The episodes feature the former as their protagonist ; Akon , Far East Movement and Colette Carr appear as guests . According to Kills , the series are mostly devoid of dialogue in order to center on " emotion and action " . She also said that the visuals were an " expression " of her secret thoughts , regrets and desires . Each episode contains an instrumental of a song from Perfectionist , and most videos contain narration from Kills .

The first episode starts with Kills furiously walking with a revolver in direction of a blonde man ; she later ties him up on a bed , as he screams and tries to resist . Kills calls a friend whose name is not revealed , and asks him for help . During the second episode , Kills assassinates another man and takes his photograph ; the next episode , she is arrested by a group ? played by Far East Movement ? who threaten her . She manages to strangle the leader of the group , and later leaves a message for her anonymous friend , warning him that her face is being distributed on wanted posters .

The fourth episode begins with Kills and a man involving in sexual activity . By the morning , the latter wakes up while Kills is asleep , and steals her passport and revolver . Kills is surprised to see that he has left and gets angry after realizing that she was robbed . During the 1970s exploitation film @-@ inspired fifth episode , a victim of Kills denounces her to a detective , revealing that she left him in a desert . In the following episode , Kills runs over the man who robbed her two episodes earlier , with her convertible , and retrieves her passport . As the seventh webisode begins , Kills argues with her new boyfriend , who slaps her . Kills meets with him a week later , telling him that she 's not angry , however she hits him with a baseball bat .

In the eighth episode , set in a hotel , Kills wins a checkers game between her and a man ? played

by Akon ? who carries a black box ; she exits the hotel carrying the box . The box , which contains a list of men names , is opened by Kills during the penultimate episode . She takes the list and crosses the name " Jeremy " off it . The camera shifts to a field where Kills makes a man jump from a cliff , by playing a game of " cold , warm and hot " with him . The last episode sees Kills and a friend of hers ? interpreted by Carr ? burning the car of the latter 's boyfriend .

= = = Tour = = =

To further promote the album , Kills went on a 58 @-@ date promotional tour , starting from 24 June 2011 and concluding on 22 November 2011 .

= = = = Tour dates = = = =

A ^ Marked dates supporting The Black Eyed Peas on their The Beginning Massive Stadium Tour .

B ^ This concert was a part of the Glastonbury Festival 2011 .

C ^ This concert was a part of the Wireless Festival 2011 .

D ^ Marked dates supporting Ke \$ ha on her Get Sleazy Tour .

E ^ Marked dates supporting Katy Perry on her California Dreams Tour .

F ^ Marked dates supporting The Sounds on their 2011 tour .

= = Reception = =

Upon release , Perfectionist received polarized reviews from music critics . Jon O 'Brien from AllMusic summarised it as " formulaic and gimmicky " , and observed that the music was secondary to Kills ' attempts of establishing a mature image . AltSounds staff member Jack Stevin deemed it " disappointing " and unfocused , writing that Kills was not in control of the album and that she had an " air of pretension around " her . Stevin additionally said that Kills was stronger as a " visual artist " . Darryl Sterdan of Canoe.ca rated Perfectionist with three out of five points . Comparing it to the music of Lady Gaga , Kesha and Robyn , he opined , " Guess that 's why it 's not called Innovator . " Writing for Consequence of Sound , Alex Young noted that Kills expressed herself better as a musician through music videos , and surmised that " not all the songs on Perfectionist hit their mark " . Digital Spy 's Lewis Corner described it as " finely tailored " and " exciting " , and gave it four stars out of five. musicOMH writer Blair Kelly characterised the album as imperfect , " uninspired , unoriginal and obvious " while negatively comparing it to the works of American artist Lady Gaga .

In Europe , the album achieved moderate chart success . On the chart issue dated 1 October 2011 , it entered the UK Albums Chart at number 129 . In Austria and Canada , the album respectively reached number 35 and 36 , while in the German and Swiss album charts , it peaked at number 50 and 94 . Perfectionist managed to top the US Heatseekers Albums and reach number 6 of the Dance / Electronic Albums , despite entering the main Billboard 200 chart at number 134 . By August 2013 , it had sold 14 @,@ 000 copies in the United States . In Canada , the album reached number 36 . Kills credited the success of the album and its singles with changing her life , commenting , " I had nowhere to live , [ ... ] got on a plane to LA and then two years later I had sold over 800 @,@ 000 singles . I wrote 14 songs and that 's what happened ? [ ... ] I would never have thought this . I would have probably thought I was dead by now . "

Kills discussed Perfectionist during 2013 interviews . She revealed that after having lived a deplorable life in London , her ambitions and dreams influenced the album 's lyrics . " I was not as aware of ... how I was " , she stated . " I almost had a bit of fear where everybody wants to be loved , everybody wants to be understood in a way that 's not full of judgment or blame . So I put all of myself into the album and then [ kept ] bits out . " That year , Corner hailed Perfectionist as " one of the most underrated pop collections in recent memory " , and Idolator 's Sam Lansky opined that although it had " killer " choruses , the album suffered from excessive similarities to other artists .

= = Track listing = =

## Notes

^ a signifies a co @-@ producer

= = Personnel = =

Credits adapted from the liner notes of Perfectionist .

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =