

## Sigrid

On first listen, the songs on *Sucker Punch*, Sigrid's debut album, might not seem all that different from mainstream pop. They range from two and a half to just under five minutes. They're catchy and upbeat, songs that are easy to dance to. A number of them focus on romantic relationships. The difference between the music of Sigrid and standard pop is that Sigrid presents herself authentically, without the spectacle audiences have come to expect from a pop artist.

Sigrid performs in minimal makeup, wearing nothing fancier than a t-shirt, jeans, and a pair of tennis shoes. Her music videos feature only herself (or the director in one case when a flight got cancelled) without any background dancers. Nothing resembles the flamboyant costumes or sets one would find in one a Lady Gaga show, or the army of background dancers in the music video for "Despacito." By presenting herself authentically, Sigrid separates herself from the rest of pop music, an anti-pop pop artist, which gives her space to critique the genre and industry.

Though the majority of the songs on *Sucker Punch* are about different points in romantic relationships, many come at those points from views not typically seen in pop songs. "Don't Feel Like Crying" is a breakup song, but one that expresses an individual's current emotional state as denial to avoid negative thoughts.

I know I should be ordering takeout  
Sitting on my couch, that's what you do  
I know I should be all in my feelings  
Staring at the ceiling, but here's the truth

Wallowing in it would be such a waste  
That isn't gonna fix it anyway

Later in the song, the denial is more clear: "It hasn't hit me yet/and I know if I go home I'm gonna get upset."

Another song that portrays a nuanced look at relationships is "Strangers." The tune of the verses wouldn't be surprising to find in a film sequence as two characters fall in love, a fact affirmed by the lyrics. "Just like in the movies," begins the song, before building to a chorus that reveals the supposed happy relationship as empty. "Like strangers...We're falling head over heels for something that ain't real," Sigrid sings.

The music video for "Strangers" also pulls this pseudo-film fake-out, beginning with shots similar to those that would be found in a film, before the camera pulls back and reveals just how manufactured those shots are. The backs of sets can be seen, as can the fans blowing her hair and the stands on which fake palm leaves are suspended. By showing the fabricated aspects in the video, Sigrid critiques the spectacle of the current culture of pop. The contrast is enhanced by adding the singer's own, authentic persona to the mix, solidifying that though this music may sound similar to mainstream pop, that's not the entire picture.

- Sam Tuit

## Upcoming SAO events:

Men in Black: International | 9/28 8PM | CFAC Auditorium | Free  
Toy Story 4 | 10/5 8:30 PM | CFAC Auditorium | Free