

GREYSON CHANCE – CAREER AND SONGS 2010/11

The first one and a half years of his career (with YouTube-videos)

Greyson Chance's story is among the most incredible there are.

A 12-year-old from Edmond, Oklahoma, participates in a students' music talent competition, posts a video of his performance to YouTube and, so to speak, achieves overnight stardom. He goes on to be handed around among networks, is offered contracts, records discs and gives concerts. Barely a year after his 'discovery' he tours the country with his own band and is priced more highly than most other artists by the powers that be: he performs at official functions in New York and Washington D.C. and almost seems to have a hotline to the President.

The secret of his speedy success is hard to fathom: He is a singer/songwriter and pianist and especially sets standards with his combination of both. He is modest, authentic and open-minded, and he derives his energy from an intact, music-minded family. His strong personality subordinates many things to music, nor does he forget to make his music serve other human values.

What he dares do is unusual for his age: to be 'uncool' in his performances and to show emotions – sometimes pushing them to the limit. It will be exciting to observe his further career.

As he is still insufficiently known outside his own country, and as the plethora of videos that have mushroomed makes it difficult to obtain a general view, I have attempted to filter out what is essential, and with this article I hope to contribute to making the name Greyson Chance better known outside the US as well.

For a short overview I recommend:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxDIC7YV5is>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU1yyyAt4&ob=av2e>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7SuhCWfrv0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwXML9I0GSg>

If you want to see him in concert: two songs with band:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3u5kJZAJyY>

and again solo at the piano:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-4pdVpLM0>

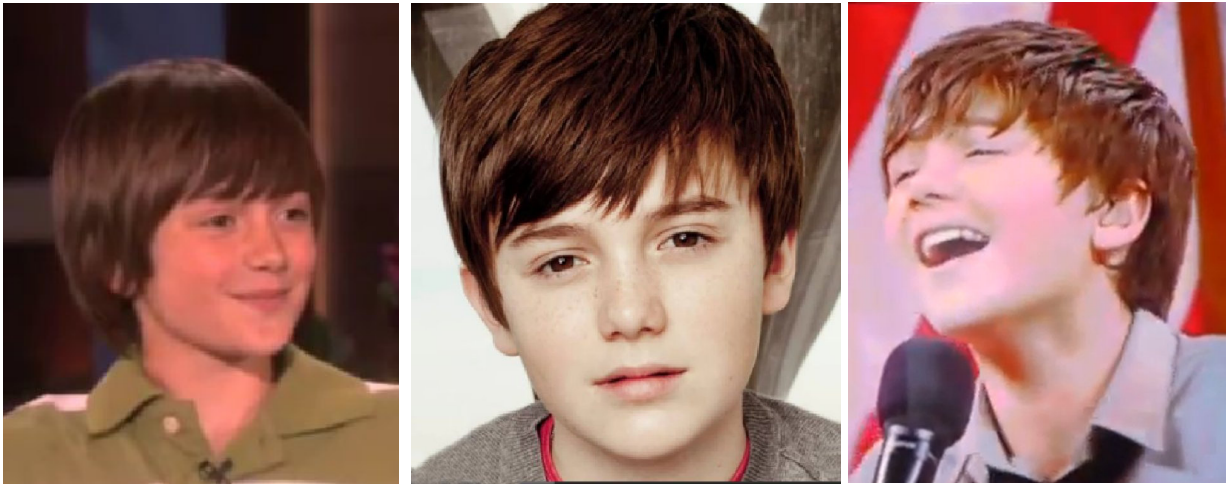
For those who want to take a deeper look here are two chapters; the first about his life (page 3), and the second about his songs (page 5).

I think his strong points are the following:

- Naturalness (performs only in workaday clothing, excepting official functions)
- Perfect combination of piano and vocals
- Expressive, highly variable voice with a large register
- High creativity and variability (he never sings the same song the same way twice)
- Some great performances that have real pull, **one of which I deem unsurpassable**

The videos I like best will be indicated by red text.

Greyson Chance has the YouTube name *greyson97*; this allows you to take note of a video having been released by himself.



Greyson Chance at the age of 12, 13 und 14



Greyson Chance in the video „Waiting Outside the Lines“



The cover of his album

CAREER:

Greyson Michael Chance (GC) was born on August 16, 1997, in Wichita Falls TX and now lives with his parents and two older siblings in Edmond OK. From the age of eight, he received piano instruction; since 2010, he has been making a name for himself in the music industry.

The earliest video on display here shows him at the age of five, singing **Proud To Be An American**. In spite of his siblings' diversions he sings securely, with full concentration, and maintains considerable presence: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmX3VAPyaS0>

In April 2010 he participated in a students' talent competition in Edmond, singing his own cover version of Lady Gaga's **Paparazzi**, posted the video to YouTube on April 28 and unleashed an unexpected tempest, because it collected millions of views within a few days; his voice and performance had captivated many:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxDIC7YV5is>

Apart from this, GC had also composed songs of his own and equipped them with lyrics (his songs are generally on the moody side and surprisingly mature for a twelve- to fourteen-year-old; the lyrics are frequently preoccupied with love troubles, disappointment and sorrow; they do, however, create a positive impression due to his way of performing them).

Another video published on April 28 is of his own song **Broken Hearts** (a recording from his parents' house where he performed barefooted):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AwoiGR6c8M>

A few days later, on May 2, came the recording of **Stars** (again, music and lyrics by himself; this is about a young woman who dies of cancer and rises to the stars). The song exists only in this one recording and is one of my GC favourites:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emblM4a76jg>

This film adds atmospheric pictures to the song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJsZtLoyEYY>

These successes earned him, on May 13 2010, an invitation to the Ellen DeGeneres Show. He talks away, projects the image of a quite natural, normal boy, and hardly suggests extraordinary capabilities; as soon as he begins to play and sing, however, he seems utterly changed. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1tX8hKghYU>

Just a fortnight later he is again invited to the show and very charmingly sings **Broken Hearts**. Ellen has recognized his potential and created the label *eleveneleven* in order to produce songs and now takes GC under contract as the label's first artist (he is to be managed jointly by Guy Oseary, Madonna's manager, and Troy Carter, Lady Gaga's manager). In this episode of the show he is also given a Yamaha concert piano:-
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwNjMJKway0&ob=av3e>

On October 26, 2010, GC presents the song **Waiting Outside The Lines** on the Ellen DeGeneres Show. For the first time he performs not solo but with a band that is going to accompany him from now on: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_sAUdtsAXE

On the same day *Waiting Outside The Lines* dropped as GC's first single.

And on December 13, 2010, a professional video of this song, in which GC played on his now specially styled Yamaha piano, was released:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU1yyy_At4&ob=av2e

A view behind the scenes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yXRgy3RWI>

Here is a dance version of this song, sung by GC and Charice:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1UyyXRXIj4>

For more about *Waiting Outside The Lines* see page 7.

In January, February, July and August 2011 he was joined by Miranda Cosgrove for her **Dancing Crazy Tour**: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3u5kJZAJyY>

In April and May he was joined by Cody Simpson for his big 4U Tour:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-JZMjmy_dc

On 23 May 2011, GC presented his song **Unfriend You** on the Ellen DeGeneres Show; it was to be released as his second CD single on 17 May (for more see page 7):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKuOVEo5xbU>

An official video of this: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rd-tfJRMLI>

And here is GC in duet with Ariana Grande on the occasion of her eighteenth birthday (in the video, she impersonates the girl the word 'you' in the title refers to):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EC2tYkQI2g>

Further versions have been indicated in the list of LP songs on page 7.

On 2 August 2011 his first **album (Hold On 'Til The Night)** dropped; it contains, apart from the two singles songs, eight new ones (plus an iTunes, Amazon or United Kingdom bonus track). There will be more about this in the next chapter.

GC is also very much in demand with the powers that be: At Easter 2011 he gave a concert at the White House, and on 27 August 2011, he performed **Empire State Of Mind** and the **national anthem** at the opening ceremony of the U.S. Open:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PXMb-Yv6G0>

For his performance at the HRC Dinner in Washington that was addressed by President Obama, see **Purple Sky** on page 5.

In the second season of the TV series *Raising Hope* GC has a guest role; in the season premiere he performed the song **Hard To Handle** (the video farther below on this page is, again, from his parents' home and impressively demonstrates his mastery of the piano; he is now able to incorporate new elements of style, such as jazz rhythms, into his performances). The premise: In *Raising Hope*, character Jimmy Chance (the homonymy is a coincidence) at the age of twenty-three is suddenly confronted with the task of raising his infant daughter, of whose existence he has not so far known, because her mother is dead. He still lives with his parents and is hopelessly out of his depth in this situation. In flashbacks, GC impersonates Jimmy at the age of 13.

Here is a uniform series of three grandiose videos recorded at his home:

I Wanna Be Where You Are (June 25, 2011, a cover version of the Jackson Five original):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DODgQ35Xr6Q&NR=1>

You and I (September 16, 2011, a cover version, with considerable pull, of the Lady Gaga original): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2PZEBLNqgE>

Hard To Handle (September 21, 2011, a cover version of the Otis Redding original of GC's *Raising Hope* guest role music): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwXML9I0GSg>

GC in his guest role: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CiwYA1VJE8>

In November 2011 GC gave solo concerts in Malaysia, Singapore, in the Philippines and in Indonesia. **Some great performances of songs from his album (page 7):**

Home Is In Your Eyes: http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=QJK_U-UFYLO

Cheyenne: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=GI4BrEEUUG4>

Waiting Outside The Lines: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN7Et5qT2rE>

Unfriend You: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= vhnlnpAwBQ>

LIST OF SONGS:

Songs by Himself:

Broken Hearts <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwNjMJKway0&ob=av3e> (at 0:46)

Stars <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emblM4a76jg> (more on page 3).

Within The Lights A wonderful, almost unearthly, song about a child whose mother abandons him into an adoption agency; unfortunately, it exists on YouTube only in this one complete recording (with background noise) from YouTube Headquarters, San Francisco (August 2010): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljDbbl69rFU>

Past <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyBCyX9DZV0> (unsatisfactory sound quality)

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|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Waiting Outside The Lines |) | These six songs were co-written by GC and other |
| Home Is In Your Eyes |) | songwriters for his album |
| Hold On 'Til The Night |) | Hold On 'Til The Night (cf. p. 7 for more), |
| Heart Like Stone |) | with GC predetermining subject-matter, melody and |
| Little London Girl |) | rudimentary lyrics and then polishing them in |
| Take a Look at Me Now |) | co-operation with others prior to recording. |

Light Up The Dark Co-written by GC with Danielle Brisebois and Matt Squire and released in the 'Scholastic' special edition of his single *Waiting Outside The Lines*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSWP4wTIZ4c> (with lyrics)
In concert: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOnKvKR1KXs>

Slipping Away: The bonus track for his album from iTunes; no available in a concert; with lyrics: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhpk9BA4AqU>

Purple Sky: The Amazon bonus track for his album; it deals with bullying by fellow students and was written together with Danielle Brisebois. Not an easily accessible song, but probably one of the most important as far as the subject matter is concerned, because it points out spasmodic suicides due to bullying (towards the end he enumerates the names of victims). After the suicide of her fourteen-year-old fan Jamey Rodemeyer, Lady Gaga is now campaigning to have mobbing made a criminal offence in the United States. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4Jaq4olWR8>

On October 1, GC sang a modified version at the HRC Dinner, Washington D.C., which had been addressed by President Obama in a welcome speech. Jamey is now the last victim he mentions. This produces goose-pimples once you are into it: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qC-NFuAn-U>

Running Away: The UK bonus track for his album. GC's best band-accompanied song so far: For the time being, there are only stills and lyrics; but on account of its being very well arranged and sung this song has already been marked in red. It is about relationship troubles, but at the same time GC manages to make it a wonderful antidepressant: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPDWDeR21QQ>

Cover Songs:

100 Years (Original: Five of Fighters) This video probably predates the Paparazzi video and seems to have been recorded during a students' competition, although it was released later. Here GC is accompanied by somebody else on the piano. On account of the large recording distance, the quality is modest:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PugYZTAmNAo>

Paparazzi (Original: Lady Gaga) The beginning of his career; for more see page 3

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxDIC7YV5is>

Fire (Original: Augustana) Two recordings only a few days apart.

Recording made at home: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovbn2xBUGLM>

The following video is a textbook example of self-assurance; it shows a thirteen-year-old GC having total control over an audience of 18,000 in a Toronto ON concert hall:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7Swsx4NdhQ>

Empire State Of Mind (Original: Alicia Keys)

GC turns Alicia Keys' commitment into yearning:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZpgZxEW8l0>

And here the opening of the U.S. Open in New York (visual quality unfortunately impaired; pitch problems could be due to the approaching voice change):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PXMb-Yv6G0>

I Wanna Be Where You Are (Original: Jackson Five)

At home: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DODgQ35Xr6Q&NR=1>

In public: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wY673yDPr3Q&NR=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMdswv8ceVU>

The Edge Of Glory (Original: Lady Gaga) Spiffing performance at a concert:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIRLMQ9pEbs>

You and I (Original: Lady Gaga) A home recording with enormous pull; GC is always best when he is alone with his piano – this is no exception:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2PZEbLNqqE>

To see Lady Gaga: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f03MbalKcy4>

Hard To Handle (Original: Otis Redding)

The brilliant rendition recorded at his home:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwXML9l0GSg>

Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree (Original: Brenda Lee) With a new rhythm this 1958 song becomes a musical gem: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33SFZ2VKz_M

Songs on the Album Hold On 'Til the Night:

Apart from GC a total of twenty-two songwriters worked on the ten official songs of this album; GC contributed to six (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10). Numbers 1 and 2 were released on singles before the album (more on this in the preceding chapter). All songs on this album are of a beauty that carries conviction, but their nature differs greatly; GC has expressed many of his feelings in them. The performances are masterful and contain vocal climaxes. The videos cited first in the following list show the lyrics.

1) Waiting Outside The Lines https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_sAUdtsAXE

This, his most frequently performed song, has become noted the world over; it is his signature melody and his first song intended to encourage his fans: he invites them to cross the limits of everyday life; he, who has already done so, is waiting for them outside the lines ...

Official video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= AU1yyy_At4&ob=av2e

2) Unfriend You <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDAm-yirkew>

In the area of social media, especially Facebook where it originated, the word 'unfriend' means to deprive of 'friend' status. In this rocky song, GC decides to unfriend a girl because he thinks she has cheated on him. When the famous Billy Steinberg (Like A Virgin, True Colors), who wrote the song together with Josh Alexander, heard GC sing for the first time, he exclaimed: "Whoooo, this boy can sing! We're going to make a lot of money!"

Official video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rd-tfJRMLI>

In concert with his band: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3u5kJZAJyY>

From his Asian tour (until 3:28): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= vhnlnpAwBQ>

3) Home Is In Your Eyes <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VP4xGcf-vSY>

This song expresses yearning for a girl GC was separated from while working on the album. From a concert with his band: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJDIGbE49TQ>

Solo in Singapore, with a background of wonderfully slow swing:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJK_U-UFYL0

4) Hold On 'Til The Night <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HI5VN8siDUc>

The title song of the record is a very rallying-cry. GC wrote: 'When I went into the studio to write this record I was kinda sad. I was away from home, missed my friends, and I needed some courage. So I went into the studio and told myself that I was going to write a song that was about gaining confidence. And this was the result. I love the lyric, "Running to the light, get out of your own way, not afraid to fight, believing what you say." I am telling my fans to not be afraid. Whenever I listen to this song I instantly feel happy and strong.'

Official video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrT1EfdO67s&ob=av2n>

With piano in concert (Indonesia): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vh13lxiB8rA>

5) Heart Like Stone http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ud_UDccPNr0

GC wrote about the time he spent in LA working on his album: 'At the time I was going through something rough and it just felt like my heart was lifeless like a stone.' Thereupon he wrote this song together with Danielle Brisebois to console his fans in case their hearts, too, felt as though they were lifeless like stones.

From a band-accompanied concert given during his tour with Cody Simpson (the song begins at 4:28) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-JZMjmy_dc

- 6) **Little London Girl** http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Algr7iP_W8
GC wrote this rock n' roll style song in London to highlight this town he was much impressed with. *This song is also on the concert recording (at 2:58) listed at [Home Is In Your Eyes](#).*
- 7) **Cheyenne** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbB0cmHKg7A>
Although GC did not contribute to this song it is his favourite among the new ones (and mine also).
This song also brings with it the unsurpassable performance I referred to. In a studio recording, alone with his piano – without the slightest disturbance – GC interprets what the song triggers in him in so emotional a way that it almost hurts to watch. Why I deem this recording unsurpassable? Well, even if somebody could keep up pianistically and vocally, the unstudied intensity of this rendition would probably be his undoing – this is pure Greyson Chance!!! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E45xm6gCDk>
A second fantastic performance of this song with a great number of variations as compared to the previous one: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gl4BrEEUug4>
- 8) **Summer Train** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07V3GJ9KM50>
With piano in concert: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLzFmmMkNN8>
- 9) **Stranded** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo32NenLmr4>
- 10) **Take A Look At Me Now** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FHMs47SgsM>
GC wrote: This song is telling all the people that didn't believe in me, and doubted what I was capable of, to take a look at me now.
With piano in concert: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNrvQ-1rXhQ>

Bonus tracks for the album:

Slipping Away (from iTunes) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhpK9BA4AgU>

Purple Sky (from Amazon) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4Ja4olWR8>
(a self-written song about school bullying; more about this on page 5)
With piano at the HRC National Dinner in Washington DC:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qC-NFuAn-U>

In the United Kingdom:

Running Away <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPDWDeR21QQ>