

Biography Greyson Chance

with a very small number of video references
(more of them will be found in the career articles)

His Personality

Greyson Michael Chance is an American pop/rock songwriter, pianist and singer. He performs with and without a band, and I think he is by far at his best when he accompanies himself on the piano. Apart from his own songs, which he constantly varies, he also likes to cover other people's songs, mostly to his accompaniment. He is one of a small number of musicians capable of making good songs even better. Apart from this, he is also a gifted entertainer and actor, is cosmopolitan, fundamentally intelligent, and possesses one of the most fascinating and inspiring personalities I know of. He is mature beyond his age – somebody once called him 'an old soul in a young body', which is quite an apt description. Why I diagnose him as a genius Why I think he is a genius I have explained in my specialised article with this title.

One could almost call him conservative: he comes from an unpretentious background and appreciates the simple life, among cars he prefers the vintage ones and concerning pop music the 'sixties and 'seventies, when it was still 'great'. He believes in God, likes black, is nocturnal and likes to rise late. Due to his charm and good manners he is highly likeable and never forgets himself. In his concerts he largely dispenses with stage machinery and background dancers and thrills his fans with his combination of personality, lyrics and music.

Although he was predicted to, he never became one of Bieber's rivals, which may be explained as follows: most teenagers find his music too demanding or miss the fuss in his concerts, and older people are mostly prejudiced against somebody his age. In order to captivate the masses he will simply have to grow older, in order to become, not a second Bieber, but the first Greyson Chance, one of the all-time greats of pop and rock music.

Before His Career

GC was born on 16 August 1997 in Wichita Falls, Wichita County, North Texas. About 130 miles to the north-east, he now resides in Edmond, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, in a one-family house with his parents and siblings (an elder brother and an elder sister). Being musically gifted, he received piano instruction from the age of eight on an old drawing room pianino, on which he accompanied himself to songs by himself and others.



Greyson aged 5 performing 'Proud To Be An American':

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImX3VAPyaS0>

2010

How His Career Took Off

In April 2010, he participated in a sixth-grade talent competition at an Edmond school, performing Lady Gaga's *Paparazzi* and accompanying himself on the piano. His father filmed the event and posted the video to YouTube on 28 April:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxDIc7YV5is>

The same day, to demonstrate his ability to compose something himself, he released a home-made video that shows him singing *Broken Hearts*, a week later this was followed by *Stars*.

Some time went by before the video garnered attention, but on 11 May a media avalanche broke loose. TV and radio host Ryan Seacrest had discovered the video via BuzzFeed and sent word to influential people; the same day talk show host Ellen DeGeneres found out about it, invited GC and tweeted: 'Never been more excited to have someone on my show.' On 12 May he was in the papers and on TV, and on 13 May he appeared on the Ellen Show in Los Angeles. Arranged by Ellen, but to his surprise, Lady Gaga phoned into the show. 'Hi, Miss Gaga,' he laughed into the microphone, and she told him, 'Greyson, you're so sweet and so talented, and I was so excited that you covered *Paparazzi*. Everyone loves you so much. Just keep following your dreams and work really hard, and stay away from girls and be focused.' This was followed by another performance of *Paparazzi*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1tX8hKghYU>

Ellen was so taken with him that she invited him back for 25 May, when he performed his own song *Broken Hearts*. Then Ellen broke the news that he had inspired her to launch a new music label and sign him on as its first artist, and on top of that he was given a Yamaha concert grand: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwNjMJKway0>

During the fortnight of 11 to 25 May the *Paparazzi* video collected more than fifteen million views. Ellen's influence procured him two managers, Lady Gaga's and Madonna's, two share the work, as well as a contract with Interscope, who had also signed on Lady Gaga. There is no doubt, of course, that without Ellen's and Lady Gaga's good offices his career would not have taken off quite as perpendicularly; Ellen kept inviting him to her show, and he stayed friends with Lady Gaga and covered two more of her songs in 2011, *The Edge of Glory* and *You and I*.

Greyson with Lady Gaga and his sister Alexa



The Remainder of 2010

Having presented himself as an ideal and humorous interviewee, during the time following this sensational take-off GC had a large number of TV appearances. Then he plunged himself into work and relocated to Los Angeles, the American capital of pop and rock music, to work on his first single and also his first album. Separated from family and friends in this big and unaccustomed town, he felt lonely and forsaken, and evoked this feeling in two songs on his first album (the title song, *Hold On 'Til The Night*, and *Heart Like Stone*). Apart from the studio work, he gave many concerts, and one of them produced an almost unique video showing how a self-assured thirteen-year-old a few months into his career can maintain a total hold on an audience of 18,000; it was recorded on 30 September in Toronto (a cover of Augustana's *Fire*):

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

26 October saw the publication of his **first single** **Waiting Outside The Lines** he had created in Los Angeles together with other songwriters, and the same day he presented it to the public on the Ellen Show. For the first time he was accompanied by a band that was to stay with him until April 2012. The official video, in which he plays on a specially styled Yamaha grand in a rainshower, is worth a look:

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

This song, with which he wants to inspire his fans to cross the boundaries of daily routine, was to remain his greatest success for some time, performed during every concert and constantly varied.



Greyson in the video *Waiting Outside The Lines*

Here, for afters, are two of his own songs dating from 2010 and documented in rare videos:

Stars from May, played on the domestic piano; a beautiful but sad story that inspired many people:

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

Within The Lights from October, the lament of a child abandoned by his mother into an adoption agency:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljDbbl69rFU>

More details will be found in the article *Career and Songs 2010+2011*.

2011

What he achieved in this year may be quite unique in pop/rock history for somebody his age. Work on his first album, begun in 2010, was completed and he picked up the know-how for extended concert tours. In January/February and July/August he opened for Miranda Cosgrove on her Dancing Crazy Tour and in April/May he accompanied Cody Simpson on his 4U Tour, both in the US. His voice was in its prime; he sang vigorously and with a large register, besting both Cosgrove and Simpson; physically, he was somewhat behindhand, of lower than average height and build.

On 17 May, his **second single**, the rocking **Unfriend You**, was released. This is the official video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rd-tfJRMLI> .

On 2 August, the **album Hold On 'Til The Night**, the result of much hard work, was released, a debut album without a single weak spot. Apart from the two singles songs it contained eight new ones – asterisked titles are also available as singles:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Waiting Outside The Lines * | 6) Little London Girl |
| 2) Unfriend You * | 7) Cheyenne |
| 3) Home Is In Your Eyes | 8) Summer Train |
| 4) Hold On 'Til The Night * | 9) Stranded |
| 5) Heart Like Stone | 10) Take A Look At Me Now |

To these he added three bonus tracks for various special editions of the album:

Purple Sky, Slipping Away, Running Away

Soon after his fourteenth birthday, voice problems began to materialise and he was no longer able to hit high notes with the former reliability; unruffled, he gave one concert after another, participated in the opening ceremony of the US Open in New York, in charity events, had photo shoots and TV appearances and a guest role on a TV series, *Raising Hope*.

Greyson on 27 August during the opening ceremony of the US Open, performing *Empire State of Mind* (an Alicia Keys cover) and the national anthem.



November saw a bandless tour of South-East Asia that rang in a new phase: from now on, that region, not America, was to be the focus of his attention. His blandness and good manners earned him points there and he took Asia by storm, creating problems only for security personnel when he broke ranks to get to his fans.

In December he began to experiment with his looks, especially gelling his hair to trim it upwards.

Greyson with his new hairstyle on the Ellen Show on 9 December 2011, covering *Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree*. He wore this hairstyle only occasionally and soon discarded it again.



Some of his best 2011 appearances:

Unfriend You and **Waiting Outside The Lines** performed in February on the Dancing Crazy Tour where he opened for Miranda Cosgrove:

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

The Edge Of Glory, his second Lady Gaga cover, performed in August:

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

You and I, his third Lady Gaga cover, a performance with considerable pull, recorded at home in September; it inspired Lady Gaga herself to an enthusiastic tweet:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2PZEBLNqgE>

Hard To Handle, an Otis Redding cover he had performed on the TV series *Raising Hope*, again recorded at home in September:

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

Purple Sky, one of the album bonus tracks, performed in October at a Washington D.C. event addressed by President Obama: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qC-NFuAn-U>

Home Is In Your Eyes, one of his album songs, recorded in Singapore in November, where he actually plays the 'tired swing' he sings about:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=QJK_U-UFYL0

Unfriend You, recorded in Kuala Lumpur in November, which you can compare with the January version:

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

From April 2010 until the end of 2011, he released eighteen original songs (fourteen of them on CD/iTunes) and eight covers (two on CD/iTunes) and already did some work for his second album.

More details will be found in the Article *Career and Songs 2010+2011*.

2012

In this year, the most difficult so far, he recorded another five songs **for an EP (see below)** in February and went on his second tour to South-East Asia in April. About the middle of the year he had to cope with a considerable growth spurt, and his voice kept changing. For these reasons his third tour had to wait until November, and it took him, once again, to South-East Asia.

On the April tour he was accompanied by the band for the last time. After the band's departure he stayed in Asia for some short appearances, photo shoots and TV recordings. His album, with songs added for Asia, went platinum in Indonesia and the Philippines, and gold in Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

There is no better way to assess his voice change and its effect on performance than to compare his covers of Adele's *Rolling In The Deep*:

A Manila performance recorded in April with a rather fast tempo:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKGpDgw4pFQ>

And here a Vancouver performance recorded in August where he appears far more mature. He is accompanied by guitarist Michael Warren, with whom he recorded his new songs in February:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTQUkXsME44>

Instead of his second album, planned for 2012, only an EP (Extended Play) titled **Truth Be Told part 1** (with guitar accompaniment by Michael Warren) was released. It was a worthy continuation of the example set by his first album, containing five songs that resulted from co-operation with various songwriters, sounded like the result of a single-mould casting and completely novel, and yet typically Greyson Chance – a remarkable feat for a fourteen-year-old.

Truth Be Told part 1 contains the following songs:

- 1) Sunshine & City Lights (also a single)
- 2) You Might Be The One
- 3) Leila
- 4) California Sky
- 5) Take My Heart

Obwohl er die Songs schon im Februar aufgenommen hatte, als seine Stimme noch relativ hoch war, begann er mit dem Promoten aber erst im August mit deutlich tieferer Stimme, und so sah er sich gezwungen, die Songs neu zu gestalten, was ihm aber dank seines Variationsvermögens locker gelang. Hatte er zunächst die Single-Auskoppelung *Sunshine & City Lights* favorisiert, so konnte er später *Take My Heart* fast noch besser interpretieren.

Promotion of the single hit *Sunshine & City Lights* began in August, when his voice was markedly deeper, forcing him to revamp the song (which he found easy enough due to his knack for variations). Initially, *Sunshine & City Lights* was the song initially favoured by him, but later he was almost better at interpreting *Take My Heart*.

His preference for Asia is demonstrated by the fact that the EP was in the shops there from October, while the rest of the world had to wait until 2013.

His First Music Award

Although he had not been in China before (excepting Hongkong), he was invited to Peking in August to be given the CCTV-MTV Mandarin Music Award for Most Popular New International Artist of the Year. Before receiving the award he performed *Waiting Outside The Lines* (a version differing greatly from the official video – see p. 3) and *Sunshine & City Lights*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29X9yPmshGM>

Greyson on 21 August 2012 with the much coveted first Music Award of his career.



November saw the second South East Asian tour of the year, with accompaniment by guitarist Michael Warren and (beginning with the MTV session on 9 November in Singapore) percussionist Leonardo Costa. Some excellent videos commemorate this session, especially the one of the Gnarls Barkley cover of *Crazy*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRMn6Sym394>

Further 2012 videos that should be remembered:

My Way, covering Frank Sinatra and recorded in February in his new room in Edmond (its one black wall is visible in the background); he brought his own accompaniment and dignity to the performance:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wW8dEi7qQ1U>

Landslide, covering Fleetwood Mac in September, best heard with one's eyes closed:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShMA1o4YUA>

Take My Heart, one of the EP songs in a nice performance in Manila; the acoustics are very good, but the optical quality not so:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR4_b7l4fql

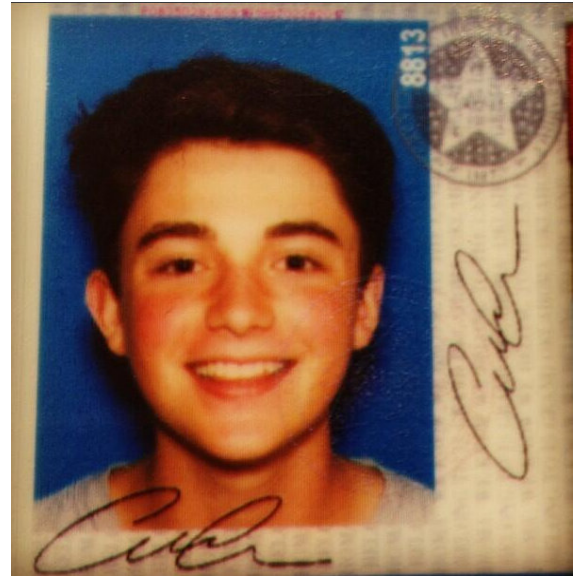
From April 2010 until the end of 2012 he released twenty-three original songs (nineteen of them on CD/iTunes) and fourteen covers (two of them on CD/iTunes).

More details will be found in the article *Career and Songs 2012*.

2013

Throughout 2013, his fans waited in vain for a continuation of his first EP *Truth Be Told part 1*. This was the year in which he accomplished his first high school year online, bought his first car (a 1966 Ford Mustang he named Moses) and got his driving licence.

Greyson's driving licence photo.



In January, he announced he was parting ways with his record company Interscope, and in February he reacted to rumours about an end of his career with an open letter to his fans, assuring them he was not quitting music.

In May, he announced his transition to a new management company (Bill Silva Management, Hollywood) and went to Bali to write and record songs. In June he announced about his new music:

'It's definitely alternative sounding. The drums are really big and the songwriting is a little more personal. The new music gets really gritty at some points. I'm not really holding back on anything.'

The world had to wait until July before, performing in Manila, he presented one of his new songs (*Football*) for the first time, which he then followed up with two more he performed in New York in September, *Tempation* and *Victim*.

With lyrics:

Tempation: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybRHi-3_Xio

Victim: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK8ngunzdNs>

From April 2010 until the end of 2012 he released twenty-six original songs (nineteen of them on CD/iTunes) and fifteen covers (two of them on CD/iTunes).

More details will be found in the article *Career and Songs 2013*.

This article will be continued!

Erwin Kohaut ©

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