

# The Humour Of Greyson Chance

(to mark the third anniversary of the beginning of his career)

28 April 2010, when he posted his cover of *Paparazzi* and his own song *Broken Hearts* to YouTube, is usually regarded as the beginning of his career.

A year ago (on 30 April 2012), during a private function in Hongkong, he recounted that his fans had tweeted to him two days previously 'Two years, two years, two years' and that he had wondered 'What's two years?' which provoked merriment among the audience. Upon this, he performed a liberally modified version of his cover of Lady Gaga's *Paparazzi*, originally the commencement of his career:

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

It is reassuring that his fans remind him of this anniversary when he himself fails to remember it!

This was the time that followed his (band-accompanied) first concert tour in South-East Asia, when he stayed on for a few weeks to perform solo and give interviews. His most frequently varied song, *Waiting Outside The Lines*, he often interpreted in an exuberant manner, winding up by repeating the 'wo-o' for up to forty seconds. Unfortunately, the videos are often of a bad quality:

24 April in Taiwan:	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL2Qa_6XGZg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL2Qa_6XGZg</a>
20 April in Hongkong:	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnsZkuCKwUs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnsZkuCKwUs</a>
4 May in Bangkok:	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHI65bMUj9o">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHI65bMUj9o</a>

These videos show clearly that he entertains not only his fans, but also himself, and that it is one of his basic characteristics to vary the songs from each performance to the next.

In spite of his youth, he mostly wields a very fine blade, in his lyrics as well as in his interviews. Especially what he says in interviews is frequently entertaining. An example from the Ellen Show will follow later, for now I will begin with his concert humour.

Now even most fans will be surprised (humour in concerts?), because one generally has to look closely to recognise the humour he deploys in seemingly entertaining himself. His pronounced thirst for variations, hardly permitting two identical performances of a song, seems to have the same objective – to keep down boredom in his music. Apart from this he sometimes builds in little pranks that seem to amuse him if they come off.

## Example 1:

My first example is the final note of *Waiting Outside The Lines* which he varied especially often in the beginning. In this video (recorded on 2 August 2011, the day his album was released) he keeps his audience waiting rather long for it (from 2:05), and it shows that he enjoys it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnKdcwG6PLc>

## Example 2:

As a rule, he clearly marks the end of his songs, but when performing his cover of *Paparazzi* at Joe's Pub, New York, he seems to be relying on the audience's not being familiar with how

the song ends. Having finished, he again places his hands on the keyboard and waits for the applause, which does not materialise. After a while, he interrupts the silence with the words 'Thank you very much!?', provoking amusement and the due applause:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oEXpC-kzio>

### Example 3: Comparing *Cheyenne* in two different concerts:

In a video recorded on 13 November 2011 in Singapore he began a performance with tone sequences that did not reveal which song it was going to be. At 0:28 he calls on his fans to sing along, holding the microphone towards them with a broad grin. For half a minute he sings tone sequences aped by the fans and only then does he announce he is going to sing *Cheyenne*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41f0uus8Ezw>

(There are several videos of this, but in the others his facial expressions are not as observable)

Five months later he again performed *Cheyenne* during his second Asian tour, making even greater demands on his fans from 0:30. This is an example recorded in Manila on 22 April 2012:

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

There are other major differences between these two interpretations: in the first, unlike the second, from 4:45 he howls like a dog that had its tail stepped on – and it is characterised by another curiosity: after mastering the lyrics of *Cheyenne* many times, he strikes off down a different route here (possibly on purpose?), singing correctly 'with a guy like me with a girl like you' at 1:22 and then following it up with 'could you ever see a guy like you with a girl like me', which provokes some reclamations.

### Example 4: *Rolling In The Deep*

We shall probably never know whether GC was aware of the effect of the microphone tucked between his thighs; if he was, it does not show. This, too, is from the Manila concert on 13 November 2011, from 3:22:

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

### Example 5: The Ellen Show

The Ellen Show of 9 December 2011 contains a goodly dose of humour:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRuFOphU2EI>

GC tells about the South East Asia tour of November 2011, where he visited an orphanage and certain of the boys advised him to 'get some of the girls' numbers' (from 1:04); he accompanies this with a gesture of the arm at 1:08.

At the end of the conversation Ellen remarks 'There's crazy rumors' in order to prompt an explanation, and he explains: 'Ellen has to take me home tonight, because she and Portia are adopting me, supposedly. [...] My dad was like, "If that was happening, I would gladly let you go"'.

Here are some of the more robust shades of his humour:

#### Example 6: Prank calls

In the video 'Five things you don't know about Greyson Chance' number five is that he 'likes prank calling people'.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaB8nTRCVbo>

There is a video about one of these prank calls – he molests a radio reporter by claiming that he knocked a girl in the face with a microphone:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WLmoORocDk>

#### Example 7: Exuberance

The video 'Funny Moments 6', collecting a large number of humorous scenes from 2012, predominantly recorded in Asia, shows that he can also be frisky and even foolish. It lasts for 23.5 minutes:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3TJJxx1IYs>

At 3:23 you can see the latest addition to the family, a black Labrador puppy named Whiskey (tweets at @whiskychance).

And here, to wind up, an Easter tweet of 31 March 2013:

Happy Easter everybody! I asked my parents why the Easter Bunny didn't come, they said you're too old. I don't wanna grow up!

Erwin Kohaut ©  
Vienna, Austria, Europe, 28 April 2013