

Waiting Outside The Lines

To mark Greyson Michael Chance's seventeenth birthday on 16 August 2014

After rising to celebrity status by publishing his cover version of Lady Gaga's 'Paparazzi' at YouTube on 28 April 2010 and demonstrating his ability to create his own songs with 'Broken Hearts' and 'Stars', Greyson was soon working on his first single, *Waiting Outside the Lines*, prescribing the tune and lyrics and working them up into the final product together with five other songwriters. At that time, he was thirteen years of age.

The single and the official video were both published on 13 December 2010:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= AU1yyy_At4&ob=av2e](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU1yyy_At4&ob=av2e)

But he actually presented the song earlier, in October 2010, on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show* (Ellen DeGeneres supported him prodigiously; it was for him that she created the record label eleveneleven, meant to promote young talents). In November 2010 he sang it with the choir of Public School PS22 in Staten Island, New York:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgDfn9nizxk>

Mit einem guten Überblick über alle Videos, die von Greyson verfügbar sind, lässt sich unschwer feststellen, dass keines seiner anderen Lieder eine solche Bedeutung erlangte wie *Waiting Outside The Lines*. Kein anderes Lied sang er so oft und kein anderes wurde von ihm im Laufe der Zeit von ihm so sehr umgestaltet wie dieses.

A comprehensive overview of all of Greyson's videos easily reveals that no other song of his reaches the importance of 'Waiting Outside the Lines'. No other song was performed by him as frequently and in as wide a range of successive variations as this one.

Why is this song so special? I think it is the most lucid incarnation of his desire to influence his fans in a positive way, to use his music to entice them into following him into his world. He seems to be intimating that as he used his creativity to transcend the limits of the commonplace, his fans can do likewise, and he is waiting for them outside those limits – outside the lines. Again and again, when on stage he called on the audience to follow him ('Come on, Singapore!' 'Come on, Beijing!'); wherever he was, he called on people to break out of their workaday world, and, I am sure, many of his fans found it inspiring.

And now I should like to introduce you to a few versions of 'Waiting Outside the Lines' in order to showcase Greyson's ability to vary a song.

Here, to begin with, is an energetic interpretation presented in Maryland in January 2011, when he was accompanying Miranda Cosgrove on her *Dancing Crazy Tour*. He, in turn, was accompanied by his band:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3u5kJZAJyY> (from 3:15)

Altogether different is this quieter version he sang at the Billboard Studio in February 2011, his own piano-playing being his only accompaniment:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huAUMj-7y_I

Performances accompanied only by his own play on the piano or keyboard became, in a sense, his hallmark after this.

April 2011 saw the publication of this video, in which Greyson teamed up with Philippine singer Charice (actually Charmaine Clarice Pempengco). Charice, five years older than he, was a YouTube discovery of 2007, three years before Greyson's discovery. The video uses ballet as an optical accompaniment:

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

In the autumn of 2011, Greyson, by now aged fourteen, began to perform in South East Asia, and somehow I came away with the impression that he felt more at ease there and caused even more enthusiasm than in his native America. Two videos recorded within a few days of each other in November, when he was touring bandless, demonstrate how much two interpretations of the same song can differ from each other:

In the first, recorded in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, on 13 November 2011, he provides all the accompaniment on a keyboard:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZ8VfvSi4YY>

In the second, recorded in Singapore four days later, he takes advantage of pre-recorded accompaniment to leave the piano and sing on the forestage:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN7Et5qT2rE>

Another video, recorded on the same occasion, gave me a still I decided to execute in oil on canvas:→ → → → → →



Now came the time when his voice changed, for which he had to make allowance by performing the song as the condition of his voice permitted. Here are two examples dating from 2012, when he was fifteen:

On 21 August 2012, he was given an MTV Mandarin Music Award at the CCTV/MTV Mandarin Music Festival in Beijing; on that occasion he performed a new, very emphatic version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Toc0M5v6zyl> (till 3:23)

But in my opinion the high point in the development of this song came on 9 November 2012, when he performed at an MTV Session in Singapore with Michael Warren (guitar) and Leonardo Costa (drums):

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

What a development in the course of just two years!

To wind up, I will permit myself to take you back to a light-hearted interpretation. After his second South East Asian tour in April 2012 (on which the band accompanied him), Greyson spent a few days alone in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand, where he gave only short, private performances. In this Hong Kong video he dedicates himself primarily to the wo-o, exuberantly stringing it out for a full forty seconds:

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

Waiting Outside The Lines

You'll never enjoy your life,
living inside the box
You're so afraid of taking chances,
how you gonna reach the top?

Rules and regulations,
force you to play it safe
Get rid of all the hesitation,
it's time for you to seize the day

Instead of just sitting around
and looking down on tomorrow
You gotta let your feet off the ground,
the time is now...

I'm waiting...waiting...just waiting...
I'm waiting...waiting outside the lines
Waiting outside the lines
Waiting outside the lines

Try to have no regrets
even if it's just tonight
How you gonna walk ahead
if you keep living blind?

Stuck in that same position,
you deserve so much more
There's a whole world around us,
just waiting to be explored

Instead of just sitting around
and looking down on tomorrow
You gotta let your feet off the ground,
the time is now, just let it go

Don't want to have to force you to smile
I'm here to help you notice the rainbow
Cause I know,
What's in you is out there

I'm waiting...waiting...just waiting...
I'm waiting...waiting outside the lines
Waiting outside the lines
Waiting outside the lines

I'm trying to be patient
the first step is the hardest
I know you can make it,
go ahead and take it

I'm Waiting...waiting...just waiting...I'm waiting
I'm waiting...waiting...just waiting
I'm waiting...waiting outside the lines
Waiting outside the lines
Waiting outside the lines

You'll never enjoy your life
Living inside the box
You're so afraid of taking chances,
How you gonna reach the top?

Erwin Kohaut ©
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