



HOZIER

His rise to fame has been steep enough to give you vertigo. ELLE joins Hozier for lift off

Interview **Maybelle Morgan**



Meet Andrew Hozier-Byrne - known as Hozier - the unassuming Irish fellow in the corner. He appears an unlikely candidate for music-world domination, yet last year he scored the most played song on Spotify, won a Grammy nomination *and* claimed a coveted spot on the Victoria's Secret catwalk (memorably performing with his eyes closed so he didn't get distracted). It all kicked off in 2013, when the 24-year-old posted the video for his song *Take Me To Church* to YouTube: it racked up 10,000 views every hour. And it's only just the beginning...



Performing on the Victoria's Secret catwalk

So Hozier. How does it feel to be famous?

This last year has been mental, but I don't feel famous. Things are going great and I'm very happy, but no, I'm not famous.

We think you might be in denial...

Someone will ask you for an autograph, but I certainly don't feel any different. For *Take Me To Church*, the vocals were recorded in my attic and the video was made on a shoestring. I never thought it would end up on Irish radio, let alone go international.

What inspired your album?

A lot of the songs were written after the end of my first relationship. It's only in misery that you have time to reflect. Love is a wonderful and freeing

thing, and also like watching a part of yourself die. The things people believe about themselves are often the worst, but to believe someone loves you and see yourself through their eyes? It's the end of many awful things.

Now, the hair. Do you get asked about it a lot?

[Sighs] Sadly, I do. I've had TV interviews in America where they've done whole segments on 'man buns'. I didn't know what a man bun was! As a teenager I was certainly not desired for my looks, so it's all very strange.

Your Twitter bio says you're a 'Hoodoo enthusiast'. What does that mean?

It's a form of folk magic. You know the saying, 'I've lost my mojo'? That's where it comes from. You're meant to have a mojo bag of charms and trinkets, and it brings you luck wherever you need it.

We're guessing you don't need one of those right now.

Not at the moment. I'm one of the most fortunate people I know. The last year has felt

like watching my dreams come true, one after another. I feel very, very lucky.

What would you have done if music hadn't worked out?

I would have loved to have studied psychology. Looking at what is at the core of a person is a big part of my songs. But even though I knew there would be a risk pursuing music, the risk of not trying was far greater.

Taylor Swift and Adele are fans. How does that feel?

Those moments are just as surreal as you think they might be. What's astounding about Taylor is how driven, ambitious and hard-working she is. And Adele? She's hilarious - very down to earth.

What do your friends back in Ireland have to say about you meeting huge stars?

[Laughs] They just make fun of me. They jump straight to jokes that I'm injecting heroin into my eyeballs and racing towards an early grave with every success.

Hozier's eponymous debut album is out now

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