

Ellen Once Again: PAO Productions Interview

Ellen Hinton, aka Ellen Once Again, is a very talented singer and keyboardist whose star is rising quickly. Ever since a 2011 iPad video became a YouTube sensation, garnering over 100,000 views, her lively, upbeat performance style and musical blend of pop and soul have helped carry her to the forefront of up and coming local performance artists. Her first CD, Spreading the Love, was independently released in 2011, and she can be seen performing regularly around the Dallas/Fort Worth area and on [her YouTube channel](#).

PAO Productions: Thanks for agreeing to speak with me.

Ellen Once Again: No problem. I am honored to come and speak with you. *(laughs)*

PAO: What was the inspiration for the stage name “Ellen Once Again?”

EH: Oh, *(laughs)* that is a very interesting story... You know it’s like Ellen, everybody is named Ellen, you have Ellen DeGeneres, you have all these Ellens *(laughs)*. There’s so many Ellens it’s hard to compete, so it’s kind of a joke, like Ellen - there’s Ellen once again. I know that’s a very weird way to come up with a name but you know, when you have Ellen Page and Ellen DeGeneres and Ellen Pompeo and... *(laughs)*. So I said we’ll just do Ellen Once Again.

PAO: What made you want to play music?

EH: I have always been around music, from as long as I can remember, from at least age five. My mom sings, my dad plays the guitar, my sister plays some guitar, and it’s just been one of those things, it’s just been a musical family. I remember singing with them. There were always pianos, guitars, instruments in the house. And so from a very young age I just really loved music and was just always around music.

PAO: What’s your earliest musical memory?

EH: Hmm... my sister started out playing the piano, and all my sisters are a lot older than me, so I would always want to play and they’re like “oh you’re too young, you’re too young.” And um, *(laughs)* this is a little bit embarrassing, but when I was younger I would always have this problem where I wouldn’t talk a lot. I would just have my fingers in my mouth and I’d just



observe the world (*laughs*). And the first deal I made was, if you let me take piano lessons I will stop. I didn't talk much, I was an observer, so music has really helped me put all of my thoughts and feelings into words.

PAO: When did you first start playing music?

EH: I'm sure I started probably around ten years old. I can't actually remember what age I started, but I remember playing at age twelve, so I always say twelve but I'm sure it was before twelve, it had to be ten at least. Nine or ten years old.

PAO: What were your early influences?

EH: My early... oh gosh, my early influences were such a drastic range. My parents would listen to a lot of soul music, so there was Aretha Franklin and B.B. King and all those legends of soul, but then I remember watching television and I would just love musicals. I would just sit down and watch musicals from *Bye Bye Birdie* to *The Wizard of Oz*, and so I think it's been a little bit of everything from the soul all the way to the music theater (*laughs*).

PAO: What did you do before deciding to commit to music?

EH: Well, you know what, music has always been there. I denied it for a long time, so I tried a lot of different things... I went to college and the first thing I did was nursing, and I did well in nursing, but it just wasn't me. I think I got halfway through, it wasn't anything bad, I wasn't failing or anything, but you get there and you're like, *I can't see me doing this for the rest of my life*. Still didn't do music - I went to education. It's so funny because I kinda dabbled in a couple of music classes here and there, and I got to my first interview and she's like "Have you ever considered teaching music?" (*laughs*) It just so happened that she needed a music teacher so I did teach elementary music for several years before I really focused a lot on just my own music. I teach private music now to young students so I try to encourage them to... don't give up on the music. (*laughs*)

PAO: What would you describe as your musical epiphany?

EH: Oh wow. You know, it's... I think it was actually when I was teaching my students and getting them ready for the shows... it was so exciting for them because, you know, a lot of times it's their first show, their first time on stage. I pushed them to pursue their goals and, you know, you have to follow your dreams, but it was funny because I wasn't really following mine. So it really came to me, like, I just have to do this, I have to step out and I have to be brave enough and not encourage others but yet not be brave enough to do it myself.

PAO: What was your first live performance in front of people?

EH: I've had different live performances. Around when I was early teenagers I played for a

small church, and, I don't really consider that a live performance, but it is playing, still that feeling of playing in front of other people, and am I gonna mess up (*laughs*). I've done a couple of music recitals where I had to sing solos and different classical pieces. Another one was when I first started doing the YouTube videos. Then when I just performed my own stuff, it was hard, I can't remember where I was... but it was in this area (*laughs*).

PAO: How would you characterize your musical style? You've been called easy listening, or a mixture of easy listening, R&B, and soul.



EH: Wow. I always say I have, um... I am not a drinker, but my slogan is one part bubbly, one part vintage with a shot of pop soul (*laughs*). And it sounds like a mixed drink, but I think that's a perfect way to describe it. I think it's a little bit of pop, it's a little bit of soul, and it's a little bit of, my influences, you know. Like with "Doctor," it kinda has a slight musical theater feel to it with a bounciness to it. I just try to take from all those different elements, but I do think pop, soul, and a little bit of bubbly in there with a little bit of happiness (*laughs*). I think that

characterizes it for anybody who would ever see me perform.

PAO: A little bit of happiness?

EH: (*laughs*) Even my sad songs sound happy. I'm working on that. Like, this is a little bit too upbeat to be sad. I thought about maybe in the future creating an EP called *Happy Sad Songs*, and I don't know how that would go over (*laughs*). They're sad songs with sad lyrics but the music is not necessarily. Happy sad songs. So yeah, that would be interesting (*laughs*). I have slow songs but they're not necessarily sad songs.

PAO: They're slow but upbeat?

EH: Yeah. It's a weird mixture going on right there. (*laughs*)

PAO: Would you consider yourself more of a classical or a pop style pianist, or another style? Have you had any classical piano training?

EH: I have. I've actually done a little bit of jazz as well. I can't even say, it's hard, because... it's not necessarily pop, but it's not necessarily classical, and it's not necessarily jazz. It... kind of circles in between depending on the music. When I perform live, my music tends to sound different than it does on my album, because when I'm playing I pull more from my references.

When, you know, you're playing on an album you have to kind of stick with more of your part. You don't want to get in the bassist's space, you don't want to get in the guitarist's space. But when you're by yourself you have the freedom to just go anywhere you want to, throw a little bit of jazz in there, a little bit of classical.

PAO: You know Eddie Van Halen's a classically trained pianist.

EH: I think it's amazing. You never know. When I hear [of] a lot of artists being classically trained it's always amazing to me. It's like, *yes! (laughs)* The good thing about music to me is that it doesn't necessary tie to a certain genre. I think music is just really all about expression, you know, because even with the brand of pop/soul I do, it's still very... it still has a lot of pop elements. So, you know, to some people it may not be soulful enough for them or for some people, it may be like, "oh, that's a lot of soul." In the past I've listened to a lot of different artists who weren't in my genre at all but their music is just amazing, like Radiohead. I've listened to Switchfoot... just a lot of different influences, not necessarily all soul.

PAO: Would you characterize yourself primarily as a soul singer?

EH: I don't think I'm necessarily just a straight soul singer. I know a lot of straight soul singers and I don't necessarily make the music they make. I do like to experiment a lot... in my song "Chasing Rainbows," it's very carnivalish, you know, it's like a roller coaster ride and it's not necessarily like a soul song. But you know it just depends on really how I'm feeling that day. Some days I'm feeling very soulful and other days I do like to have a little bit more fun, I like to experiment and try different styles on. *(laughs)*

PAO: What do you draw from the most, stylistically or creatively, in your songwriting?

EH: I think it's gonna be a mix between experiences, and, I know this is very similar, but feelings. It's very, very similar but it's not necessarily my own experiences. I've written a couple of songs by watching a television show. I feel like, *Oh, I can write a song for this part, this scene, because this is going on in the scene.* I've written a song recently called "Drug." And it was just based off of a Lifetime show. It was a woman and she was very stalkerish, she was a stalker and I'm not a stalker *(laughs)*. But, you know, based on how the show was going it's like, I can write that song. I can write "I need your drug" and not necessarily have that experience of being that person. But a lot of my music is experiences. A lot of my music does have to go back to, *I was feeling this way this day*, so I write based on this experience.

I think a lot of my music tends to sound a little bit happier because a lot of my songs have a resolve, and not all songs have a resolve. Even if I'm experiencing something at the time and it hasn't been a resolve to that situation, usually when I write the song I always kind of write the ending ahead of time, or at least the ending I want *(laughs)*. So if I was down that day or something bad happened, I can write about it, but I try to write the resolve in the song, or at least the part of the song that I can say *Okay I can do this, you know, I can be stronger.*

PAO: The first time I ever saw you play was the Crown & Harp Open Mic, back when Emmeline was still hosting, February this year.

EH: I remember (*laughs*). Yes.

PAO: How did you find that open mic?

EH: I found that open mic through Emmeline. She was one of the first artists that I met in this area. I found that through her, and then I met a lot of other artists as well and people who've been out in this area a lot longer. I'm a big community person, so I love meeting new people and I like being open to what they present, even if it's not necessarily my thing. It's always very cool.



PAO: We've both spent a lot of time in the company of poets and spoken word artists. Do you feel that there's a type of brother- or sisterhood between poets and musicians as artists?

EH: I do. I really do. A lot of time the poetry... it just feels like a song without the music, it just feels like lyrics. And I've seen so many lyrics that didn't need an instrument. I mean, I'm definitely for playing, I think music definitely brings something to the mix but there are some words that can be spoken that are just so powerful that it can stand alone. And that's a lot of what I love about hearing poetry as well as songs. I like the mix, because there's so many things that are said and that are just... unhindered (*laughs*). I've seen a lot of... especially from Mochalux, I've seen a lot of poetry, and a lot of it is funny, and a lot of it is sad. A lot of it is just a life experience, you know, and I just feel like, as an artist, you can get so much just from being around that atmosphere and hearing what other people have to bring to the table and what they have to say.

PAO: Do you consider your lyrics as a kind of poetry? When you think about very well-known musicians who are musical poets in a sense, people like Jim Croce or Cat Stevens...

EH: Right (*laughs*).

PAO: When you write lyrics, do you approach it as a kind of poetry?

EH: I think the more I write songs, the more I see them as poetry. And it's so funny because

when you're first starting out, or I can speak for me, when I [was] first starting out writing music, I would try to build my song around the music, you know, it would just be mainly about the music. And now I think, um, I go back to just the feeling that, *Okay, what am I saying?* You know, what am I saying that can jump off of the song and stand alone? So that's one thing I've really gotten from a lot of the poetry. And... there were so many great songwriters. Carole King is just one that I love. And you know she just has a way, with the way that she writes her songs that are timeless and... you can say a line and it can just stand by itself, and just be powerful. And then you put it to music and it takes on a whole different shape or form. So... I definitely can really learn from a lot of those musical geniuses or poets. It's so funny, you know (*laughs*). I'm just trying to think. I wonder... I'm sure there are poems that have just been made into songs. I know there are. I know they've taken examples from poems, but I wonder, has a whole poem just been made into a song?



PAO: It's been done, I just can't think of an example off the top of my head, other than the Byrds song "Turn Turn Turn" if you consider that poetry, lifted straight from the Bible.

EH: That's true.

PAO: There have been songwriters who wrote poems and then turned them to songs.

EH: Right.

PAO: I don't know if you'd count Jim Morrison...

EH: Mm hmm. That's right, that's right.

PAO: ... or John Fogerty from Creedence Clearwater Revival, possibly, but I think those were just written as lyrics.

EH: Well, and even when you think about some of The Beatles' lyrics... you know you always see a Facebook [post] that's notorious for taking lyrics to a song and just letting them stand alone. You see the positive quotes and they've just made this from a Beatles song: "*Imagine there is no...*" But I think there are some lyrics that can stand alone as poetry, and probably vice versa, that some words that can be put into a song form, and so I think they really go hand

in hand. The Beatles [are] another great example of just timeless lyrics that reach several generations. I love The Beatles. I really do.

PAO: I saw Andre play at the Crown & Harp one night - I think it might have been the night of your feature - it was Andre and Felix Flores and another guy on harmonica...

EH: Yes.

PAO: ... and another guy on guitar who was a country singer...



EH: Right.

PAO: ... and Felix doesn't come from that musical background, and I don't believe Andre comes from that musical background, or does he?

EH: No.

PAO: But watching him, you got the sense of... this is a group of real musicians speaking a common language of music.

EH: Right.

PAO: Here we have people from very disparate backgrounds, musically, yet they somehow manage to synthesize all of their styles into a song or into a performance that works. They all had a shared musical language in common. So when did you realize that you had this musical vocabulary?

EH: Hmm. I really do think that it really goes back to when I was younger. Both of my sisters played piano... and then, when I play music, because I see them, I can see that I relate to it a little bit differently. I feel like it's a connection, that I **need** music, you know (*laughs*). And it's a different connection for them - it's like, music is fun, it's something that, you know, if I'm around it I'll play it or if I'm around it I'll sing, but it's not that same language that's spoken when you see musicians.

And it's so funny because when you go to the open mics, I see a lot of musicians who are like, you wanna come play? (*smiles*) It's a different language that's spoken, I think, among artists and musicians. It just draws you to it. I think some people have that and some people just don't have that draw. They can be good at it but it's a different language that is spoken. And I've known I've spoken that from a very young age because I just wanted to be in that community (*laughs*). It's like, *I want this*.

PAO: There's a lot of crossover in certain scenes, like between rockabilly and punk, and metal and industrial. Chris Robinson of the Black Crowes once told Rolling Stone that there is no new music, it's all a reinterpretation of everything that's come before. And a lot of musicians that I know draw influences from a wide variety of styles, because new styles and new creativity very often comes from cross pollination that occurs between different genres.

EH: Right.

PAO: You could say rock 'n' roll is an example, that was a synthesis of blues, country, gospel, and R&B. And you can see that a great deal of ska and reggae influenced a lot of punk music, especially bands like The Clash. And then Jimi Hendrix is said to have picked up on pretty much anything, including hillbilly music.

EH: Mm hmm. I can see that.

PAO: Do you, as a musician, see these other styles of music as fertile ground for experimentation?

EH: I do. I do. I know a lot of musicians who will stick to one style, and that'll just be their bread and butter style, like "this is who I am and this is what I do," but I think a lot of the best songs come from experimentation and being able to step outside of the box. I have a friend who is a known soul producer, and most of his music is gonna be soul, but you know every time I talk to him he's very excited, like "I'm working on a country album today!" (*laughs*) And then I've seen songs that can just go into so many other different styles. I think that's so important because there's nothing new - I agree with that - but I think because there are so many styles to pick from, that you can come up with something very unique that's based on several styles. I think a lot of times we run the risk of everything starting to sound the same. And even if something is great, if everything sounds the same then, you know, I just don't think that was ever the point of music. I think it was supposed to be everybody bring something different to the table and you come up with something new. Jazz is a great example. You have the straight jazz, but then you start branching off into bebop, into different forms of it, and it's because people are bringing different elements to [the] table. And I think you have to do that in music. I don't think it's good to be so isolated that you can't pull from another style of music.



PAO: Have you ever thought about a musical collaboration with someone from a different musical genre?

EH: I have. I look forward to doing that soon. Recently a friend did a[n] electronic mix of one of my songs and I just thought it was very cool. He put his own spin on it, and I just thought it was really great. I was like, *Wow, this is great. It's your own style, it's your own rendition of this.* But I do look forward to actually collaborating, working side by side.

PAO: **Johnny Cash did a cover of Soundgarden, and a cover of Nine Inch Nails.**

EH: I think that is awesome. I actually like to hear different versions of the same song, because you may like one version and you may not like another but everybody has their own interpretation of a song and I think that just makes it so great. "Heartless" is another example. Kanye West did a rap to "Heartless" and then like twelve people made it into a song. Some of 'em I liked, some of 'em I didn't, but it's so interesting to know so many people's take on the same song. I think Dia Frampton did a cover of it, a piano cover, and it was really good. There are always going to be a couple of people who won't like a song unless it's from the original artist, but I don't think music is supposed to be like that.

PAO: **What do you think of the recording experience as opposed to the live experience?**

EH: The recording experience is actually... the more I record the more I'm very meticulous because during my live shows, you know, you're telling your story... for instance, "Doctor." I can tell the story behind "Doctor." I can tell you what was going on during this song. But if I'm recording that song, on a recording you're not necessarily giving the history behind the song or the things that make people say *Oh okay, I get this song.* It's really like the music has to speak for itself. So the more I go forward before I record, I try to make sure that all the songs can stand on their own. I don't have to tell you about the song, you can already understand the song when you hear it. I go over the lyrics and I make sure that the lines are strong, like *Okay is this the strongest line, is this the best way that I can express this line right here?* So I do a lot more of that when I start recording, but when I'm live it's definitely more stories, it's definitely more *this is what was going on from this song.*

PAO: **Your lyrics are generally positive lyrics. Your outlook and disposition appear to be very bright, sunny, and very positive. Auditoryasylum.com states that your songs "offer a world of possibilities to her audience, help lift spirits and refresh the atmosphere."**

EH: Awww (*laughs*).

PAO: **Do you think that music has a responsibility to be socially conscious and/or uplifting? Do you feel you have any responsibility as an artist to promote certain values, whether in your lyrics or in your associations with other musicians, or your interactions with your audience?**

EH: I know there's a better word for this but I try not to... judge... a lot of songs even if I don't necessarily like them. You know some are just silly, some have no purpose other than to make

you laugh (*laughs*), or to make you smile, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that. But I do think as more and more people can do music independently, I think that we're gonna have a responsibility to say something with our music. For instance political songs... Bob Marley was good for that, you know. "What's Going On," you know, Marvin Gaye, or even John Mayer, "Waiting on the World to Change." Some songs are sad, and if you're that type of artist you may have a responsibility to express what somebody else is feeling at that moment in time. I don't think we all have the same responsibility, but I think whatever you're doing you have a responsibility not to throw something out there, or not to handle it lightly. I think music is more important than a lot of people give it credit for. When you look back through history, there are songs that have spoken what was going on at this period in time and it's almost like a timestamp, it's a picture of what was happening. And I think it's even... you know, silly things like the 80s (*laughs*). You know what was going on during the 80s, but you also know what was going on during the 60s. You know what was happening during the 20s based on the music. There's certain styles that represent a certain time. For me I feel like there is a responsibility not just to throw it out there. I don't think that music should be just thrown out there and treated like *Oh, this is just clutter*.



PAO: Some people write songs to make sense of the world, or to help them through hard times. Some write lyrics solely to entertain people. Some are trying to make social commentary.

EH: Right, right.

PAO: What is your goal or purpose as a songwriter?

EH: I will talk about a lot of what I'm going through, and a lot of what I write does make sense of what's going on in my life or at the time. That song "Plasticland (Save Me)" on here is hidden behind a very poppy tune but you know it's pretty much saying... *save me from having to be factory, look like this, feel like this, all that you are is just a mannequin or shell of society and you don't think for yourself, you just fit, and that's it*. To me it's very happy but what I'm saying behind it is I don't wanna be just one of those cookie cutter... you know, where it's all about just fitting the molds.

PAO: Is there anything that you've written with a deep personal meaning for you?

EH: Yes. I've mainly released a little bit more of my upbeat material, but I do have songs like "Dark Days," which I really haven't released yet. It's a break up song. I just have a couple that aren't happy and that one really doesn't have a resolve. That's a little bit different for me because it really doesn't have that happiness. Another one I've written recently is called "Never Let Them See You Cry," and it's about being strong. I used to love "Smile" - you know, smile when your heart is breaking - and "Never Let Them See You Cry" is kind of built off of that. You know, even when you're sad, even when everything else is going wrong, even when you fall apart, don't let 'em see you cry. And "Dark Days" is pretty much one of those *I said I was fine on the telephone but to tell the truth, I'm dangerous alone, don't leave me with my shadows*. As I release more EP's you'll see a couple of different EP's with different vibes.

PAO: This is the only one to date? [ed. note: *Spreading the Love* EP, released 2011]

EH: That's the only one. I am working on a new EP coming very soon, so I'm excited about that.

PAO: What do you see as the place for a classically trained pianist in the current pop scene, where most music by and large is created electronically, with a lot of studio processing applied?

EH: Well, I know music is being consumed differently, and there's so many electronic things coming out. And it's hard because you can make electronic music using three chords or three notes. For some genres it's not as hard, but I do believe that the classical stylings and the notes and the chords are always gonna have their place in music. I don't think you're fully ever gonna be able to get away from that. And it's so funny that you mention that 'cause on YouTube we just experiment, we just try to see all the different things that we can make music with, and so a lot of it has been the iPad, and you can see all of the apps, like the piano apps. Can any of these really stand up to, you know, a real instrument, can they be played, can you make a song from these? But even when we're playing these songs we're using chords. Normally we have a output device that we can hook a piano up to, that way I can still get the full flexibility of playing a seventh chord, or a diminished chord. I think it's pretty cool that technology's growing (*laughs*), but I honestly just don't think we'll ever get away from the foundations of music. We can't.

PAO: How important would you say that a record label is in today's musical environment?

EH: I don't think it's as important as it used to be. There were always people who could sing really well but getting onto a label meant, you know, that my music can get out. Well now if you have the internet, you can upload your own music to YouTube, you can build your own following, versus having to depend on a label to do everything for you.

PAO: They have the promotional machinery to break artists, in more ways than one.

EH: Right, right. And if you have a lot of control or if you have a label that cares about your music, I don't necessarily think it's all bad. I just don't think it's [as] necessary as it was. Like for instance, you know Amanda Palmer, you heard about her Kickstarter, she raised a million dollars online, for her music. A million dollars, without a label (*laughs*). So I don't think it's where you *have* to be on a label nowadays. I'm seeing more and more independent artists who can play several instruments and do a lot of things themselves. And I think that's a great thing.

PAO: You got your big break via YouTube, with a mashup of “Hey Soul Sister” and “New Soul,” created using an iPad and uploaded to the internet. You have your own website with a blog, and a presence on ReverbNation, Facebook, and Myspace. How important do you see social media outlets as being to an independent, local artist?

EH: (*laughs*) You know what, I can't... it's hard to say that was a big break. It feels different for me, it feels more like... it's almost like I found a community. I found other people who love music too, and... one of the great things about social media is that I can put a video on YouTube and I can share, like *Hey guys, this is what I'm doing*, or *this is what I love to do*, and you can have people who love to do the same thing, or you find people who are just like you. I think it's great. Ultimately it comes back to the music, you know, it comes back to the expression. But I think it has opened up a doorway where people can express who they really are, and not necessarily be tied into the social norms. Social norms aren't that bad, don't get me wrong, but I just don't think we can all be the same person.

PAO: You played the “Chicks With Pianos” feature at Opening Bell Coffee as a co-headliner with Emmeline and Karyna Micaela and Micha Goolsby. So there are more female keyboard players out there than you might think.

EH: Woo hoo!

PAO: You're all there hiding in plain sight. Not just the four of you, but people like Anna Thomas...

EH: Right.



PAO: ... and many others. Do you feel there's enough exposure in the music scene overall for more traditional types of music/musicians, like a singer-songwriter such as yourself?

EH: Ummm... gosh (*laughs*). That's a great question, and I think... is there the exposure there for traditional music? That goes into my theory that it's easier to do music now, but it's also harder to do music now, because unfortunately sometimes some of the traditional playing and

styles aren't widely accepted, or it's not the mainstay now, where you're competing against over processed sounds and different things like that. And I think that goes back into that last question where fortunately you can build a community and now you have different ways to build a community. But I would like to see different ways of doing music. I love to see the traditional - I can go and watch a piano concert, for instance Chick Corea, and just be amazed and just love the fact that he's a jazz player and he can play so awesome, you know. But it's cool when I can go and also watch other people just do amazing things with new technology as well.

PAO: What would you consider your greatest achievement if you could accomplish it with your music?

EH: Well, it's so funny. I know everybody says you should have these goals, like I wanna do this, but it's... I don't necessarily set those type of goals. Like, I mean, one day it would be awesome to win a Grammy, but if I never were able to win a Grammy, that doesn't mean that I'm not successful. I know some people who are like, *I've never won this so I'm not successful*. That's not true. You know who you're able to reach with your music, and who you're able to connect to with your music. I keep on mentioning it, I'm really, really happy that I was able to find a community. And I'm hoping that that can continue to grow. I do have a dream one day to write songs for television and film and commercials, so if that happened that would really be awesome (*laughs*), but I'm not holding myself to that, just in case (*laughs*). As you can tell I try to keep high spirits.

PAO: What do you feel are the key ingredients to success as an artist?

EH: I think... the most important keys to your success in my mind are you're gonna have to be true to yourself and be true to who you are. Does selling so many albums make you successful if you've had to completely change who you are? I mean, to some people yes, to some people that's like *okay I've made it*. You know, I may look different, I may sound different, but... some of the artists who made the best music are the ones who were true to themselves. And that goes back to people like The Beatles. Um, totally different spectrum, but Prince is another artist like that. You know what type of artist he is. I think he's a genius with some of the songs he's written and what he's done. You can really connect with people who are true to themselves and it feels like Adele is another one of those artists, you know, it feels like she's very true to herself, and I think a lot of people accept her for who she is, because... it's just Adele. And I'm hoping she'll never have to conform to those standards, or she never will feel like she'll have to conform.

PAO: Do you play any other instruments?

EH: My main instrument is the piano. I do dabble a little bit with guitar, and I'm hoping that I can expand on the guitar a little bit, but it's very, um... it's about two or three chords (*laughs*).

PAO: You could play in a punk band with that. (laughs)

EH: Exactly! (laughs) A little bit of guitar but mainly piano, mainly piano. (laughs) You know Norah Jones was in a punk band, and a country band, so...

PAO: I know musicians who play heavy metal and industrial music who listen to R&B and soul so... you can't ever tell.

EH: Right.

PAO: You can often tell people who only listen to one style of music.

EH: Yeah. And that's what I don't wanna be. I don't want to be that person who is closed off to anything else, like I'm only soul music and I listen to nothing else. That's just not who I am.

PAO: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

EH: Hmm. I can't think of anything. I've enjoyed it though. It's just been a big long conversation. (laughs)

PAO: Thanks for agreeing to this interview today.

EH: Well thank you for having me. I have enjoyed it.



Denny's, 9/16/2012

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