

Porter Robinson has revolutionized electronic dance music with his 2014 debut album *Worlds*. He put aside his old music tastes and followed his heart to make the music he truly wanted to make which led to an entirely new sound. Fans and others around the world could not wait to hear what direction Robinson had taken with his art. His new style of music challenged everything popular in its genre and became one of the most anticipated pieces of electronic music released in recent years. The album reached #1 in electronic/dance album charts, hit #18 on Billboard's Top 200, and hit #13 for all albums in Australia. Accompanied by two music videos, a brand new album-based live show experience, and with the help of social media and music blogs, Robinson's new album would be one of the most influential and groundbreaking electronic albums ever released.

Porter Robinson is a 23 year old music producer and DJ who was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He became very popular in the electronic dance music scene with his early singles including "The Wildcat" and "Say My Name". "Say My Name" reached #1 on the Beatport Electro House charts and gained Robinson a lot of popularity. Though "Say My Name" gave Robinson his original fanbase (which included myself), I'd have to say his breakthrough moment was most likely the release of his *Spitfire* EP. In 2011 he was signed to Skrillex's newly founded record label *OWSLA* upon which his *Spitfire* EP was the first release. This EP was first heard when a popular YouTube gaming channel, "Machinima", released a music video for the title track of the EP which gained a few hundred thousand views and potential new fans. *Spitfire* was first released exclusively to Beatport and crashed their servers upon release. It proceeded to

claim the #1 spot on both Beatport's overall releases, and the iTunes Dance chart. *Spitfire* reached #11 on Billboard's (US) Dance/Electronic Albums chart as well as #10 on their (US) Top Heatseekers Albums chart. This release really got Robinson's name out to the masses and was his next big breakthrough following his "Say My Name" fame.

Another noteworthy release by Robinson was his single "Language" which came out in early 2012. This song reached top 10 in Billboard's (US) Dance/Mix Show Airplay and UK Singles, and top 5 in Scotland, UK Dance, and UK Indie. The chart position that really portrays the success of this song is the Billboard Airplay chart. This song in my opinion might've been Robinson's biggest success. I personally heard it played multiple times at places such as my high school prom where I usually only heard top radio hits. I believe this song might've been more of a success due to its live appearances than personal downloads. I know it was played live all over the world by many big-name DJ's which definitely could have been a big factor in its popularity. The second and a major reason I call this his greatest success is because he stated that this song bridged the gap between his old DJ-friendly music, and this new *Worlds* style that he had been longing to make for years. He stated if he never released "Language" he possibly would have quit writing music under the name "Porter Robinson" and started writing his new *Worlds* sounding music under another alias. This song really saved him and helped him guide him on the path to making the music he truly wanted to as "Porter Robinson".

Apart from those successes, Robinson also helped write and sing background vocals for Zedd's Grammy winning song Clarity, but opted out of being credited for his work. He won Artist of the Year for 2015 at the MTVu Woodie awards. Robinson had been a huge force in electronic dance music but really came out to make a significant change with *Worlds*. Robinson

put all touring and DJ'ing to a halt from spring of 2013 to spring of 2014. He wasn't content with electronic dance music and his place in it. He felt as if his heart was somewhere else so he set out to follow it and make the music he truly wanted to make.

He released *Worlds* on the label, *Astralwerks* in August 2014. Robinson wanted *Worlds* to be released on a label who understood his vision. He didn't want a label who was looking for the next big EDM hit. He chose *Astralwerks* in the end because they understood his vision and saw the potential in the music they heard. He describes his new album's music as huge, vast, and beautiful. Video games and Japanese culture inspire Robinson greatly so he incorporated some of those elements into his album. Video game inspired sounds and Japanese vocals are only a few of the things that *Worlds* is made up of. The BPM of most of the songs on the album is much slower than most of his previous music. Robinson also included more melody, synths, and emotion in his work, compared to the big kick drums and heavy bass used in his past. Since the release of *Worlds* I have seen a lot more emotional and melodic music than I did before. Robinson came clean with his art. People have worshiped his new sounds and drew a lot of inspiration from it. The album truly changed the way people think about electronic dance music and inspired so many people to follow their hearts and not just aim to please the crowds.

Robinson did what many artists fear to attempt. He stayed true to himself and made the music he truly wanted to make instead of what music everyone else wanted him to make. He has a whole new outlook on the entire music industry and is very open with his contrasting opinions which is a reason why he appeals to a lot of people. He really pushed this new ideology of making what *you* want to make and not what other people want to hear. He inspired many people to follow their hearts and not make music just for the money. He also disagrees with aggressive

marketing practices. Robinson is all about the art of music and naturalness of song making and music selling. Robinson stated in a Facebook post once “I generally don't like marketing on facebook and twitter because i think artists should provide something interesting and valuable to their fans on their social networks”. He then continued to state how he thinks it's insulting and an exploitation of fans when artists pay companies to post on social media for them. Although he doesn't believe in going out of his way to promote his music, he doesn't need to because his music promotes itself. Social media has played a huge part in Robinson's career because most of his popularity has come from it. He got so popular early in his career thanks to people talking about him and spreading his music around. His album *Worlds* has now achieved success in the same way. He uses quality over quantity to gain his popularity and with the help of social media and blogs to spread the word, his music gets spread without anyone pushing it into fans' faces. The music speaks for itself and that is how Robinson has had a successful career thus far.

A lot of people relate to him because of his avid love for video games and Japanese culture which he discusses often on social media. Recently these two subjects have been very popular on the internet and a lot of people who like Robinson share these common interests. The internet played a major part in getting *Worlds* its popularity including social media and the ease and quickness of verbal information spread online. Robinson uses his social media effectively in staying in contact with fans and promoting himself and his music. When Robinson revealed the first song off his album on twitter, the name of the song became a worldwide trend during the live airing of the Oscars. This followed a series of tweets where Robinson explained his shift into his new style of music. He posted almost 20 tweets about how he started to hate his old music and wanted to make something that meant more to him. A lot of people were really moved and

inspired by this. Every since he starting promoting this idea of making the music you want, a lot of artists took his advice and changed the way they looked at music. I recently saw a post on twitter where an artist said he threw out all his new songs because he made them with money in mind. He then said he is going back and making music only for the sake of love and not just to make him money.

Robinson's YouTube page is another social media platform in which he gains much popularity and can release content that he wouldn't be able to anywhere else. Robinson has stated before he cares a lot about visuals and his music is really created with visuals in mind. He made *Worlds* based on the nostalgic thoughts of old video games he used to play. He became very attached to the worlds they created for him to play in. These games he loved were online and couldn't be physically purchased so when they were shut down they were gone forever. Robinson lost these worlds that he became so attached to. The memories of these old video game worlds are part of what inspired him to write this album. Visuals are very important to him because they are what he based his music off of. On YouTube Robinson had music videos for two of the songs on his album, an animated lyric video for one, and the audio of another. The first song ever previewed from his album, "Sea of Voices", was the first one posted to his YouTube channel "PorterRobinsonVevo". This was just the audio with the artwork which received a little over 900,000 views.

The second song posted was "Sad Machine" which was his supposed to be a duet between a human boy and robot girl, sung by him and his vocaloid software which created vocals electronically. The idea of the song is a robot girl and human boy falling in love and the lyric video made for it represents this well. The video shows a robotic hand floating through

different animated background scenery such as mountains or jagged canyons. While this is going on, the lyrics for the song are displayed on the side of the screen. On the right side are Robinson's vocals which represent the human boy and are written in human handwriting-style font, and on the left the vocaloid's vocals which represents the robot girl, and these are written in a robotic text. Once the song ends the robotic hand is shown connecting with a human hand to symbolize the robotic girl and human boy's relationship. This video got 3.6 million views.

The next video was the biggest production; the music video for "Lionhearted". Robinson starred in this video himself along with a few female Japanese actresses. In the video they go around a town, and later a city, and start doing damage with guns, grenades, and sledgehammers. Every time they hit an object or a building instead of causing destruction the object or building erupts in glitchy flashing lights. This video got 3.1 million views. It represent the song well because Robinson said he made the song with a rebellion in mind. Not a big one however just a fun childish almost playful rebellion.

The rest of the songs on *Worlds* had only audio YouTube releases with the most popular reaching 2.4 million views. The only exception was "Flicker" which was the last music video. It's a view from inside a train looking out the window at different scenery. The scenery is edited with different colors and animations along the way. This video reached 1.5 million views. All of these videos help Robinson further convey the emotions that went into *Worlds* and enhanced the experience of the music by adding another medium to experience his artistic creation.

Music blogs played a huge part in the success of his album. The night he announced the first song to be heard from the album, he was the talk of almost every electronic music blog. The tweet revealing that "Sea of Voices" was out on SoundCloud was posted at 6:15PM and the

websites, Billboard, Dancing Astronaut, and EDM.com, had articles out in due time. Billboard posted their article almost exactly an hour after the song was posted with around 5 paragraphs about Robinson's new album and the new song, including a link to the song and a picture of his tweet saying "Sea of Voices" trended worldwide. Dancing Astronaut got their article out around an hour after the tweet was posted with 3 paragraphs, a picture of his tweets, and a link to the song. EDM.com posted theirs sometime before midnight, most likely within hours of the announcement, and included just one short paragraph and the link to the song. All of these blogs helped spread the word of his new album and attract the attention of anyone who hadn't heard about it yet.

Porter Robinson has had many huge hits and great successes. It seems as though any time he releases some music it becomes his new greatest hit. The future looks bright for him now that he's gained so many fans throughout the years. Old fans of his old music and new fans of *Worlds* alike, still wait in anticipation for any sign of what will come from him next. If he really wanted to maximize his success there are ways he could go about gaining more popularity for his next release. He and Astralwerks did a great job promoting his album but there's always more they could have done. They could have made *Worlds* more interactive with fans. Maybe some kind of contest or giveaway would have done a lot for the popularity of the album by getting a lot more people interested. *Worlds* was very well known in the EDM community but I think it would have gotten a lot more popularity if it was somehow spread to outside the genre. I think if the album had some more advertisements on music websites, facebook, or YouTube it would have gained a lot more popularity. They could have done search result optimization to cause his name and album name to show up more often in search results. Since this album was such a big release

they could have really amped up the anticipation by calling it the most anticipated electronic album since Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories*. Then people would feel like they have to listen to it or they're missing out on something huge. I think if they just spread the word earlier instead of letting other people slowly spread it, *Worlds* would have reached a much wider audience.

Although those strategies would have gained Robinson more exposure, they truly weren't necessary because his music never fails to get enough recognition. He never needs to go out and promote his music at every possible opportunity like many of his colleagues. He just needs to keep being himself because that's worked for him up to this point and I doubt it will fail him anytime soon. After gaining such a massive following I know whatever Porter Robinson does in the future will end up being great art that a lot of people will come to love. He will gain new fans and lose old fans as his styles change, but he will always find success with the name he's made for himself throughout his years in the electronic dance music industry.

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