

GEORGE MAPLE

AND THE TRUE ARTIST WITHIN

Story **BECKY WHITE** • Photos **MANON THORE**



"I'M VERY PROUD TO BE ABLE TO CONQUER MY OWN DEMONS AND THE THINGS THAT WERE HOLDING ME BACK; NOW IT'S THE TIME TO HAVE MY OWN VOICE."

The sun was already warming the tops of the skyscrapers dotting the skyline outside of the Shilla Hotel. A sliver of golden light gleamed against the white wall of the hotel room, lighting George Maple's face with a warmth that seemed to radiate more from her own eyes than from the sun. The morning was not yet old, and George Maple, looking fresh and dressed in a simple robe, smiled as we chatted like familiar friends. She's gracious and warm, and speaks with a curious sincerity that I often find only in those who are in love with art itself. George Maple loves and lives a creative life.

The name George Maple is a mystery of some sorts. The name itself carries no meaning; the significance of the name is created by the artist. The true human behind the name "George Maple" is Jess Higgs. Singer, songwriter, musician and record producer, Jess Higgs grew up in Australia but has stretched out far beyond her hometown and produced music with artists all around the world. Upon asking her the origin of the name George Maple, Jess spoke frankly.

"I think because I have been a songwriter for so long, I think there is this fear... I love being behind the scenes, the magician that kind of puts everything together. I'm not super attached to being the front person. Whilst I have learned to embrace it and love it, at first it scared me, because there's no protection, particularly when you're writing the music and producing it yourself. You're revealing your soul to everyone. When I started the transition into the performer, I wasn't ready to reveal myself to the world. I hadn't dealt with some of my own insecurities. It's through vulnerabilities that we create. I wasn't comfortable with my vulnerabilities, so I created a name that had absolutely no meaning. It was a canvas, where I could channel this character and this tiny piece of my soul that needed to be expressed and put it into creative form. It's an ever-evolving name. You can create any meaning you want, there are no connotations or presupposed meanings." She then laughed and added, "My mom liked it and that's what sealed the deal."



What do you hope others will feel when they hear the name George Maple? I asked. I myself had been listening to her music for a while and wondered who the artist was behind the beats and sound. When I initially heard the name George Maple, I felt a somewhat powerful yet open energy. Upon hearing her response, I realized my thinking wasn't too far off from what she hoped.

"Strength," she said, without hesitation. *"In a really pure way. I think the concept of strength has been over-masculinized over the years and I think there's so much strength in connecting to what you believe and retaining a sense of integrity. Strength and integrity are the two core elements particular to this phase of George Maple."*

Those values help us make sense of this crazy world. If you're connected to something, if you have a sense of belonging away from external things... that sense of belonging comes from within. I do believe that. I hope that's what shines through this new record."

The layers of George Maple were peeled away as Jess Higgs spoke freely about herself and her life; the years of nomadic lifestyle for her career and the price paid in making relationships work, her journey through love and pain to learning empathy and the power of vulnerability. Wisdom and questions gained from her years as an artist flowed out in her words like the lyrics she so honestly writes. ▶



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Jess has been writing songs since she was nine years old. She's no newcomer to the music world, but admits she is always on a journey of creative exploration; from songwriter to producer to now the transition into a bold artist connecting a face to the voice that has so long worked behind the curtain. Though the journey is never straightforward, Jess embraces the mess that comes with the magic.

"I feel very lucky to be able to do what I do every day," she said, "I have to remind myself

when I get tired or it gets overwhelming, 'look at what you're doing.' It's very special. I promised myself this album cycle that I wouldn't lose this essence. It's a connection to the source, whether that's creative or the divine, whatever you want to call it. I promised myself that I wouldn't forget how much I love that. Because it's very easy to get caught up in the day to day of the profession, rather than your passion, which is where the fulfillment lies."

The world of George Maple is simply beginning to be revealed. With so much to say, Jess Higgs has taken George Maple from the pain expressed through her last record, "Lover" to a place of rebirth.

"This last year, Champion came together very quickly and from a very pure place. There was no kind of overthinking of anything, and it was a taking away of the layers that I had obviously been slowly chipping away at, and just allowing the voice to speak for itself and what it wanted to say. It really is what my soul wanted to say in these stories. The inspiration of my new record is not about a guy. It's putting the focus on this community of women that has been growing around me in this strange way, in all different walks of life. This concept of femininity being strong, and the power of vulnerability. There's a power to softness and grace. It's been a



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always think about that. I think developing that sense of empathy is the only way you're going to move forward as humans. Once you tap into that sense of connectivity, it starts to unlock a lot of the mysteries. Whatever you do in this world, you can't do it alone. It's a connection to the world, whatever binds us, that atomic binding of the world. It's magical. It's embracing the mystery as well. No need to try to understand everything. Simply acknowledging that you're a tiny speck within the ethos. There's no need to conquer, but simply a need to just be."

"It comes down to what you are trying to say. What's your line? And that's where integrity comes from. You have to get to the source first. Strip back all the layers. Figure out what connects you to the world. That will in turn give you your voice and the decisions you make will reflect that. Find your voice first. Take your time. Be gentle. Be kind to yourself."

Spoken by a strong woman with a bold voice and bolder words, I hope all the listeners of George Maple will love not only her music, but also learn to love the power of vulnerability and the strength of fragility. 🎧

combination of an internal journey and the journey of what was going on in my life."

There is the theory that the physical, the mental, the spiritual and the emotional parts are all connected and when aligned, constitute the genuine, whole human; this idea that we cannot be complete when something is missing. Often, in the pop music world, honest emotion is blunted and lost among the dollar signs and selling out to the public opinion. This reborn George Maple reflects Jess Higgs' true self. She

hopes that her music will impact a young audience, and that listeners will see past the aesthetics of the sound and rather hear her saying, 'I'm here for you.'

"There's a beautiful symmetry between all these different elements and when they are in harmony, it feels right," Jess Higgs said, thoughtfully. "It's not about happiness. It's this sense that 'I'm connected to the world.' It makes it less scary, I think. I always think of that Prince quote, "We're all gathered here to get through this thing called life," and I

Find out more about George Maple at www.georgemaple.com | Her music can be found on Youtube, Itunes, Apple Music, Google Play, Melon, Genie, and more. Follow on instagram [@georgemapleofficial](https://www.instagram.com/georgemapleofficial)