

Photography Jack Alexander Styling Ellie Witt

188

magazine



RYAN TEDDER

DIGITAL COVER

1883MAGAZINE.COM

1883

WHETHER IT'S PERFORMING AS THE FRONTMAN OF ONEREPUBLIC OR LENDING HIS SONGWRITING AND PRODUCTION SKILLS TO SOME OF MUSIC'S BIGGEST NAMES, IT'S NEEDLESS TO SAY THAT RYAN TEDDER HAS CONTRIBUTED A GREAT DEAL TO THE WORLD OF MUSIC.

RYAN TEDDER

PHOTOGRAPHY
JACK ALEXANDER
STYLING
ELLIE WITT

TEDDER

FORMING IN 2002, ONEREPUBLIC ARE EASILY ONE OF TODAY'S MOST SUCCESSFUL BANDS. WE'RE TALKING MULTI-PLATINUM ALBUMS, SOLD-OUT ARENA TOURS, A DIAMOND-SELLING SINGLE, COUNTLESS AWARD NOMINATIONS, AND BILLIONS OF STREAMS. WITH SO MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS UNDER THEIR BELT, ONEREPUBLIC HAVE BY NO MEANS ALREADY PEAKED AND HAVE SO MUCH MORE TO OFFER THEIR LEGION OF LISTENERS. WITH YEARS STILL AHEAD OF THEM, THE BAND ARE GOING MIGHTY STRONG AND ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A HUGE EUROPEAN TOUR.

Outside of the band, Tedder has been known to share his talents with our favourite artists. Beyonce. Kelly Clarkson. Adele. Gwen Stefani. Jonas Brothers. Lil Nas X. Miley Cyrus. Lady Gaga. No, that's not the guestlist for the Met Gala! It's a few of the many A-listers Tedder has helped create hits for over the years. And by the looks of things, that list is only going to keep expanding. Just recently, Tedder revealed he had teamed up with BLACKPINK and Zayn for their upcoming releases, cooking up more music we're bound to be obsessed with.

OneRepublic, of course, are always present on the music scene. At the end of May, the band kicked off a new era by dropping the energetic *RUNAWAY* and are gearing up for more releases as we speak. While in the middle of his busy schedule, Tedder sat down with 1883's Fabio Magnocavallo to discuss that new music we're all dying to hear, touring life, the ever-changing industry, and what it's like to still be achieving global smashes this far into his career.





Hello Ryan! Where in the world are you today? I know you're currently travelling across Europe with the band. I'm in Poland. I was in Berlin most of today. I'm in the northeastern section of Poland, almost near Kaliningrad. We're playing a festival here in about an hour. We then fly to Copenhagen tonight.

You were recently in the UK playing Isle of Wight Festival and a headline show at Wembley Arena. How were those experiences? It was as good as a UK experience as one could have, I suppose. I've played London and just UK so many times. It's different every time and there are just so many great venues in London especially, but Wembley was fantastic. I was a bit nervous going into it because I didn't realise Harry Styles was playing across the road. I was like, "How are we gonna do this?" I didn't realise we'd already sold it out, so it was all for naught. But needless to say, I think that show holds more importance given the competition that night [laughs]. The crowd was insane. It's a nice hot and sweaty venue. It was a classic, proper show. It was a lot of fun. I got a few days in London to run about and two of my closest friends live in the Notting Hill area. They've been spending a couple of years in the UK from Los Angeles. We got to hang out with them and do a bunch of Londony stuff. And then the Isle of Wight was fantastic. I mean, it was a bit nerve-racking because it was the first festival on this tour but then the music kicks in and you forget everything and you just start singing.



Since you've been coming to the UK

for so many years, would you say

that the UK is one of your most loyal

audiences? Yeah, I would say the UK

has been very loyal to us. I would say

that's a fair statement. That leads me

into thinking, "Okay, well who's disloyal

then?" [laughs]. Yeah, I'll save that. I'm

gonna keep that one off the record!

OneRepublic's latest single, "RUNAWAY," has been well received. Now that the band are so many years into their career, is the critical side of things something you care about or seek out when releasing new music? If I'm being completely honest, that has not entered my mind for one second since probably 2017. I'm more focused on a concert review. We got a great review from the London Times a few years ago, I'll remember that review because that was such a hard-earned feat for me. If I value anything that a quote-unquote pundit or critic would say, it would be more so for a live performance than anything else because the rest is just so ridiculous, isn't it? It's inherently subjective and it's kind of laughable at this stage. 10 years ago, you could say it held a lot of weight but now you'd think, "Wow, the audacity to be one person amongst billions to have an opinion and then broadcast that opinion," as kind of incontrovertible gospel to all of the purveyors of whatever that journalist, online zine or magazine newspaper is. It's kind of hilarious now. And I feel like the age of the critics wielding power has died pretty drastically. Who gives a shit? The world's gonna tell you at the end of the day, you know what I mean? It's like some of the movies that are panned that end up absolutely blowing up with the masses. And then movies that are beloved by the critics oftentimes fall on deaf ears when it comes to the masses. So yeah, it's an interesting moment in time that if I were a critic, this would be a very interesting time to navigate.

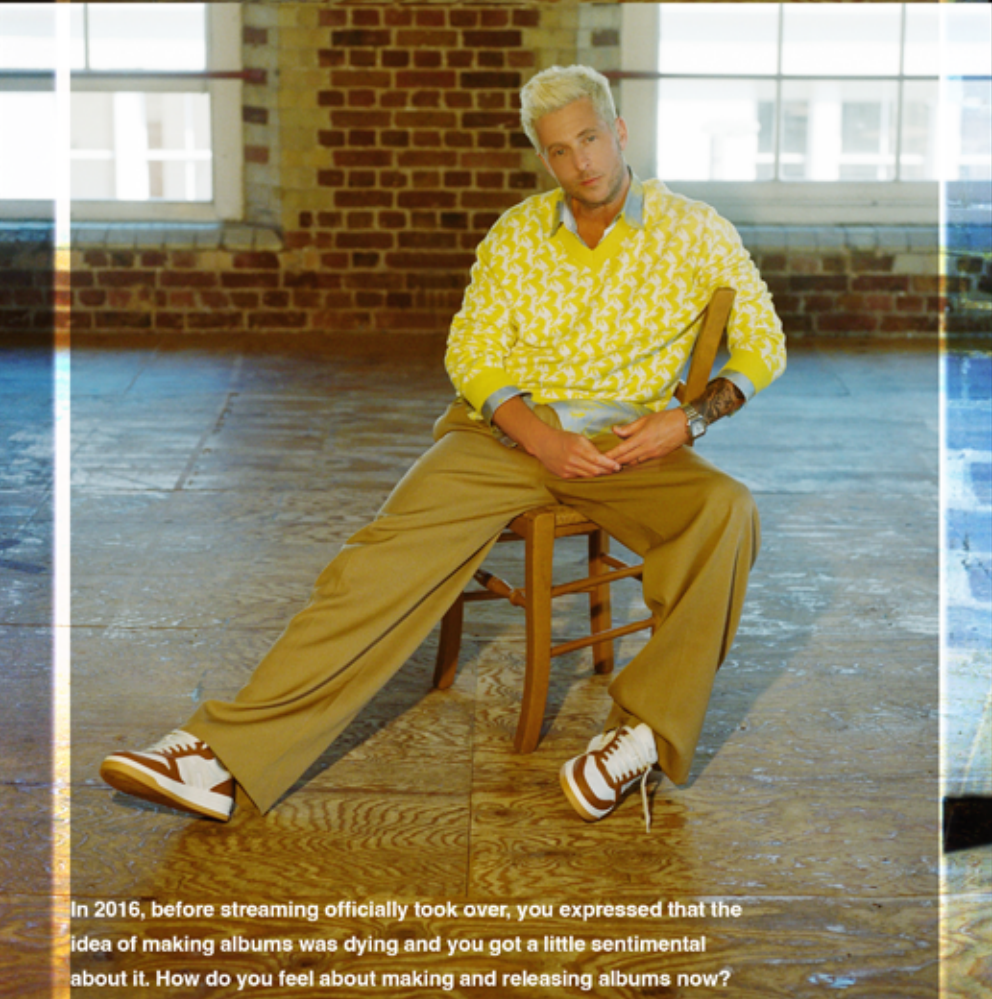
Is "RUNAWAY" leading towards a new album or are you just focusing on singles for now?

Yeah, it absolutely is. I mean, theoretically, speaking of weird times, it's just such a weird, bizarre time to release music. I was having a conversation with one of our international record label guys yesterday, and we were talking about "RUNAWAY" and the upcoming singles and songs. I think he was trying to gauge my expectation of anything. I just kind of said, "Listen, man, in the history of recorded music, this is the first time in that history where every time you release a single or a song, you are competing against every song ever written and recorded in the history of music." And it's a mouthful to say in one sentence, but that's the truth. I'm competing with regional, in terms of people, and when I say competing, I don't mean for which song is best that day. The competition is more: "Hey, this song exists!" There are over 700,000 songs a week uploaded to Spotify, so the real challenge these days is to make sure the song's great, just every time. It's gotta be the best thing you could possibly summon from your bones on that day. That's number one. Number two, how do you let the world know that it exists? And, you know, back in the day, we would just go on TV and do a couple of TV performances, crush the live performance on The Voice, or one of the music competition shows, or Graham Norton or The Today Show in the US, etc. If the song was great and people loved it and you did a phenomenal job performing it, it would turn into a hit.

You can't do that anymore. Like, none of those traditional levers exist anymore. So the real strategy these days is just how do you let people know that a song actually exists in the world? The game that I can't seem to join is, while I appreciate TikTok for entertainment purposes and have enjoyed it, I understand that it's very vital and has been for music and breaking stuff. I can't get on the whole bandwagon of posting our new song 20 times a day, doing different skits trying to trick the algorithm, or trying to game the algorithm. I have very few lines I can't cross and that's just one of 'em. The truth is, I don't want to be spending my time and day posting incessantly. I feel weird and it starts to feel like you're more of a salesman instead of an artist, if that makes sense. I don't like that feeling. It's a gross feeling to me. We're very lucky and fortunate and I'm beyond grateful that we have maintained relevance in this time and a fan base and still against all odds, occasionally have a big song that connects around the world. I feel like we're playing in the bonus rounds at this point. I'm extremely grateful and still have a total blast doing it, so I'm gonna keep doing it.

In 2016, before streaming officially took over, you expressed that the idea of making albums was dying and you got a little sentimental about it. How do you feel about making and releasing albums now?

For a long time, people have lamented the quote-unquote "death of the album." I don't think the album has died. I think a great body of work can still connect if it's just riveting. I think it helps if you're already a big name, right? It's pretty rare.



Something big has to happen before that album comes out to kind of prime the pumps, so to speak. I think for most artists, the album has become kind of more of a passive thing. I think the better quote is that the traditional album cycle is dead. And what does that mean? Well, what it meant was prior to 2016, like The Chainsmokers era you could almost call it, when it started to shift. You'd spend all year, or however long making your album. You would release the first single, and then the first single was such a big deal. It had to be a hit, it had to be great, it had to connect. If you connected one, then you'd go to the second single and usually you would release the album. And then, you could still put out two or three more singles off that album. If those singles connected with your fans and more fans around the world, that would lead to your album selling.

Trousers Lanvin Trainers Hogan Shirt and jumper Ferrari

I remember Apple back in the day had an actual formula for it. This is hilarious that I remember this, but it was two and a half hits equals one album sale. They had figured out that if you had somewhere between two and three hits in a row off the same album, people would just buy the album because they'd kind of do the math in their head and they'd go, "Well, the album's 10 bucks. I'm about to buy a third song. You know what? Screw it. I'm just gonna buy the album." The investment level was so much higher with an artist's album because you felt that there was this exchange of goods. They felt because they gave you their money, they needed to listen to every song, read the liner notes and look at the artwork and check out who engineered track seven and the studios listed.

That's all the stuff I did growing up in that era, which for the most part is dead. Now I say for the most part because of course someone's gonna call me out and tell me Taylor Swift is selling albums.



Trousers and jacket **Guess** Shirt **Ralph Lauren** Tie **Canali** Shoes **GH Bass**



They are always going to be exceptions to the rule. And tremendously huge artists will continue to be tremendously huge and artists that have galvanized a quote-unquote album-buying fan base, like Adele is a great example. But even with the larger artists, if you compare the numbers in terms of album sales now versus a long time ago or five years ago, I think what you'll see is that they'll have one huge song. For the average artist these days, because of the way social media works with TikTok and Spotify, it's very difficult.

I'm not saying it's impossible, but I'm quoting one of my friends from Spotify saying it's very difficult for any artist, no matter how good they are or how big they are to have two hits off the same album. Think about how absurd that is. We used to complain if we didn't get four!

It used to be just regional. You would be doing well in Germany and then you could be told that might probably break France, then the UK next. It's everywhere at once nowadays. I'm not complaining, I'm just kind of pointing out the bizarre quality of the era that we are now operating in and how different it is from when we started, and even how different it is from say three, four years ago.

Talking of big hits, "I Ain't Worried" was released during the streaming era and managed to rack up over a billion streams within a year. Does that kind of success today take you by surprise? And how do you react when those crazy moments happen? Oh, man! After my like burnout phase in 2016, I just had complete just burnout from just going too hard, too long, and being too emotionally attached to every song. Now I'm very sanguine about it. I don't wanna use the term cynical because that's not the word, but if anything, I have a sense of humour about it. When "I Ain't Worried" blew up, I literally laughed and I just thought to myself, "Huh, okay, that's the one!" [laughs]. We were working on a different record called "West Coast" and we were getting traction with it on radio in the US, Europe, Australia, etc. "I Ain't Worried" came out and it took about a month for it to really get going and then it unceremoniously walked up to our other song and shot it in the back of the head [laughs].

We were all looking at each other with a fair amount of incredulity just going, "Well, I give up predicting anything because I didn't see that coming." And I am definitely more grateful for that now than I ever was for having actual quote-unquote hits. Anytime I have one now on any level, my gratitude is five times more than what it used to be. I don't really take any of it personally. I'm glad that we connected with the world. The whole reason I got into music was the way music made me feel as a kid, and I wanted to do that for other people. I wanted to create things that triggered other people emotionally, whether it was happiness or sadness or someone who understands me, or just escapism. And that's still the drug that I am addicted to.

You've mentioned that more music is coming. With "RUNAWAY" sounding very different from previous OneRepublic material, how would you say the upcoming music is sounding? Oh man, different dude. "RUNAWAY" very much has The Police kind of energy, which I've always wanted to do.

The next single, it's funny, I'm not allowed to say what it's a part of yet, but it's attached to something that's fairly recognizable and fairly ubiquitous. I wrote it in Japan while we were on tour back in the spring. I'm obsessed with it. That's the best way for me to put it. We did have a David Guetta single that we have recorded that's coming. It was supposed to come in a couple weeks and then it's gotten moved so it could come out before our next single. I'll say the next actual OneRepublic single is the edgiest record we've ever done by far. And it's got an Arabic vibe to it, like a very Middle Eastern Arabic bent to it. I'm quite obsessed with it right now. I'm very excited about that one.

The album should follow shortly after that. This will be our sixth album with Interscope, which is, theoretically the final album from when Jimmy Iovine signed us. He signed us to a sixth album deal. So we just realized that recently too that it's kind of the ending of an era, which is wild. We love Interscope and hopefully, we can figure out a way to stay with Jimmy. It's crazy because he was such a central part of our career and my career personally from when I started. I'd have these meetings where he just kind of would sit around and kind of function like a mentor off and on for years and then ended up signing us. I think we might be the last Jimmy Iovine deal left in the building at this point. 2024 will be the new beginning and we're really excited about it.

RUNAWAY is out now

Interview Fabio Magnocavallo
Photography Jack Alexander
Stylist Ellie Witt @ The Only Agency
Grooming Sandra Hahnel using Rodial Beauty, YSL Beauty, Oribe
Styling Assistant Thomas Brackley

