



## Teddy Swims on His Upcoming Debut EP, Writing Process, and Metamorphosis [Q&A]

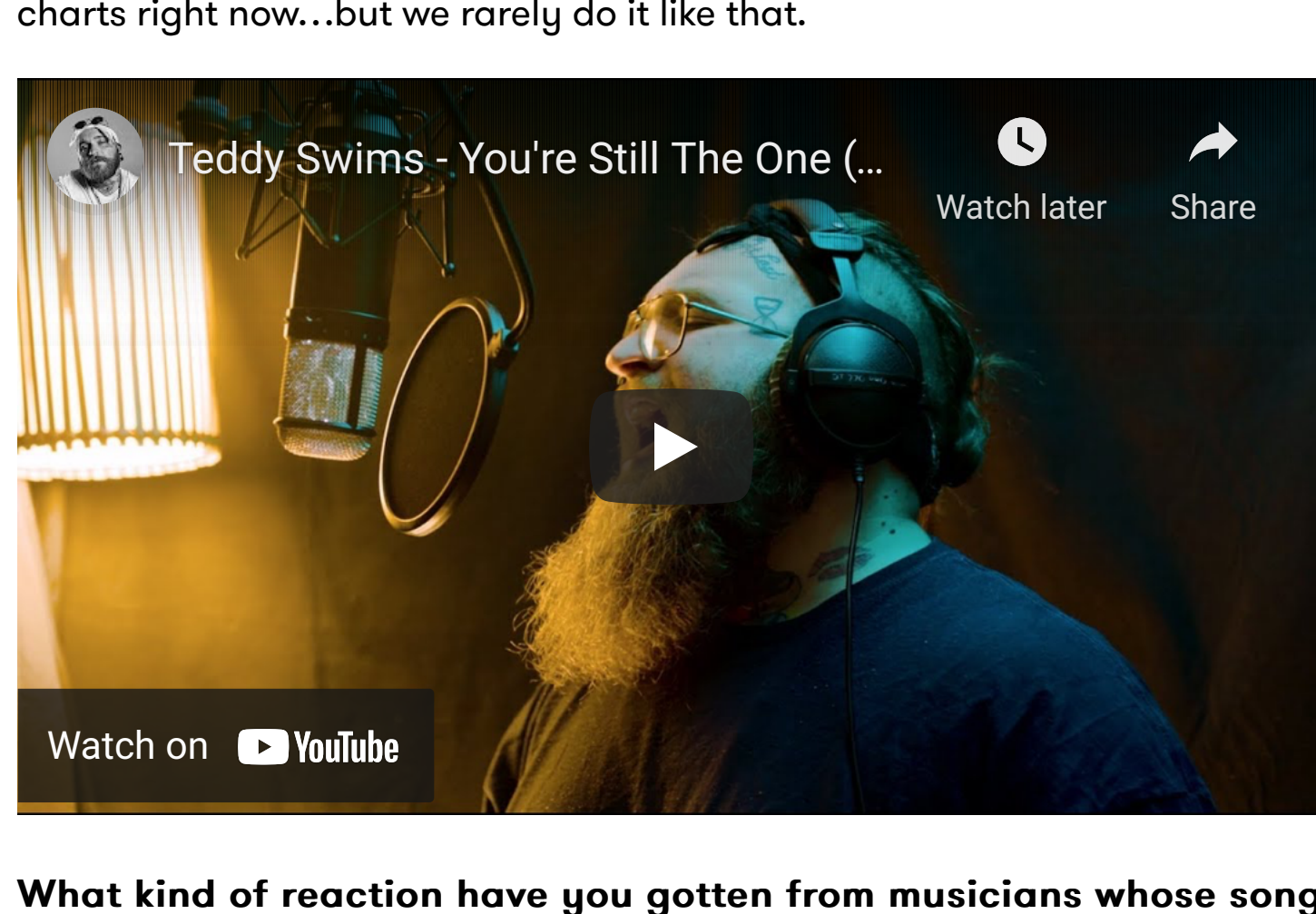


It's Spring time in Snellville, Georgia and the year is 2019. Teddy Swims is living in a spacious abode with his producer, his manager, his videographer, his photographer and all of the musicians from his former rock band (the Elefvnts). This was more than just a typical living arrangement in a party atmosphere. It was a bonding experience that lasted for about one year. And it was a pivotal time period where Teddy Swims developed a songwriting formula that would help him blend his love for R&B and Soul with heavy components of Country Rock and Pop music. The writing sessions at this house spawned the release of an original composition called *"Night Off"* and a series of cover songs that would go on to help Teddy Swims garner the attention of legendary mainstream recording artists like Shania Twain.

Fast forward to the year 2020. Teddy Swims has moved to Atlanta and he's now signed to Warner Records. With the studio release of "Picky" firmly notched under his belt, the brand new artist has set out for greener pastures. We spoke with Teddy Swims about his upcoming debut EP, his writing process and his metamorphosis from rock singer to hip-hop/R&B artist.

**Ones to Watch: With the help of your band, the name Teddy Swims has generated quite the buzz on the internet. Especially after releasing a series of covers that range from hit songs by The Weeknd and Luther Vandross to Shania Twain and Vanessa Carlton. Who's responsible for coming up with the arrangements of these renditions and how do you determine what songs to cover?**

Teddy Swims: It's all my guys man! When we did the first cover ["Rock With You"] by Michael Jackson, it was ten years after the day he died and that's what started us doing covers in the first place. And then sometimes we'll do a new song that's out and we'll try to kind of get ahead of the curve and maybe get a little play off of something that's number one of the charts right now...but we rarely do it like that.



**What kind of reaction have you gotten from musicians whose songs you've covered?**

We recently re-cut and put out a new version of a Shania [Twain] record. We did that with Dave Cobb. He knows Shania and he sent that to her. So just hearing that she loved it and is a fan now-that's what it's all about!

**You lived in a compound with your management team and all twelve members of your band for about a year. Tell me a little bit about the song selection process when it came down to finalizing tracks for your upcoming debut album. Was that something that you included the core members of your team in on or did you make those decisions on your own?**

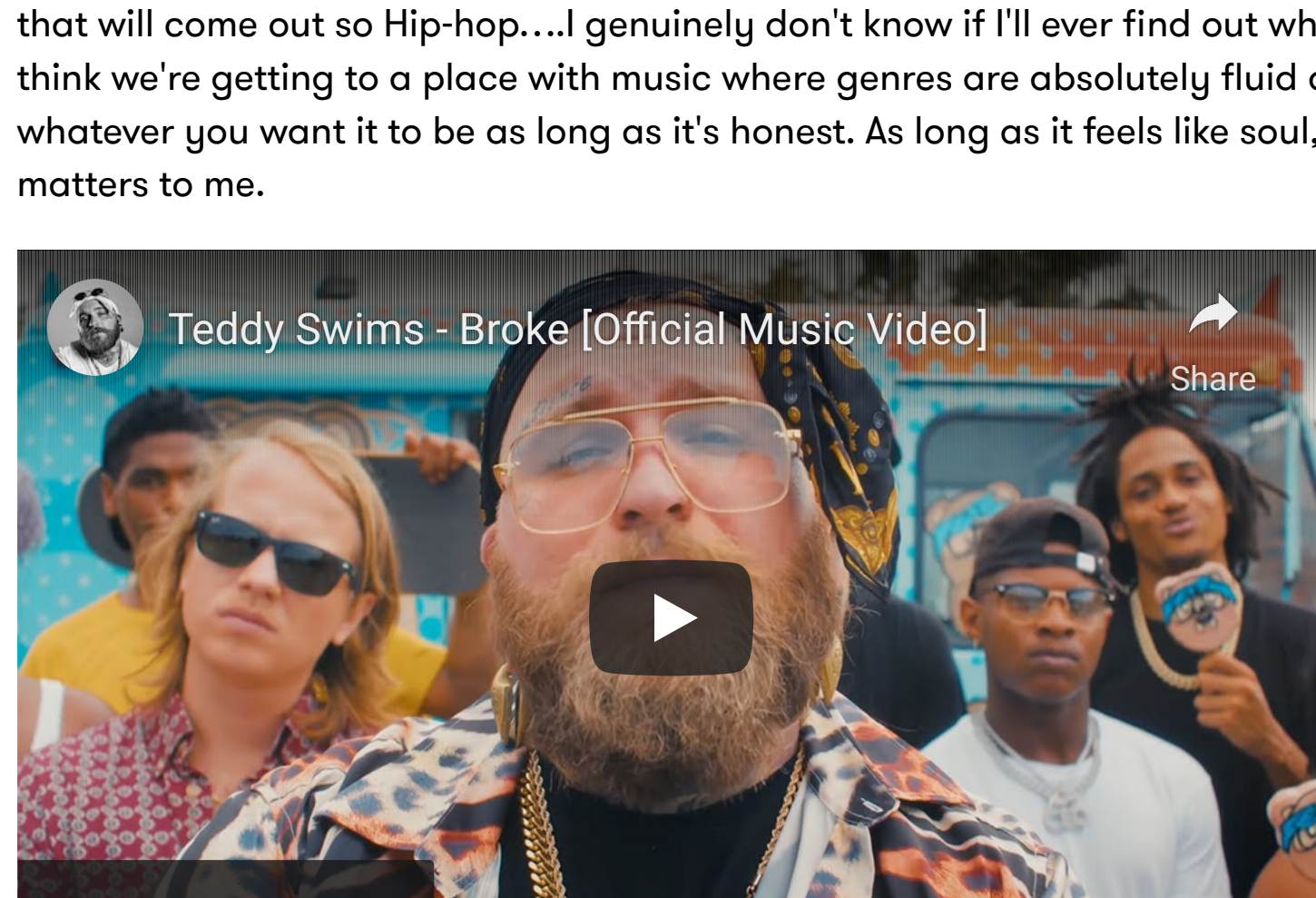
At the end of the day, I'm never going to say that my way is always the right way... We built this ourselves...I always say: 'If there's twelve of us here it's not a democracy - it's a jury.' We can all figure out why we have to make a decision. But if there's two or three people that don't have the same answer as us, there's always time to make sure that everyone can get on the same page. Because we trust each other and we have each other's best interest at heart.

**Your music videos seem to be just as charismatic as your live shows. Tell me a little bit about the inspiration behind the music videos for *Picky* (directed by Kevin Johnson) and *Broke* (directed by Joel Chivington).**

We do it all in-house. This whole past year we've been in a house in Snellville [Georgia] that had all twelve of us living there. My band, my producer, my manager... our whole team. So, what we wanted to capture with those is the story of family. Everything that we filmed in most of the music videos is right here in our hometown of Conyers, Georgia. Which is like everything that you see from the bar and the candy store in "Picky" to the coffee shop. It was right here in Conyers.

**I looked up some throwback photos of you on MySpace, your fashion sense has evolved so much over the past decade. I noticed a lot of Rock influenced clothing during your high school years, but then you slowly gravitated towards hip hop attire. How has your sense of style influenced your music and which genre are you truly the most comfortable in?**

Sometimes we'll write a song and it will come out so Country. And sometimes we'll write a song that will come out so Hip-hop...I genuinely don't know if I'll ever find out what my [genre] is. I think we're getting to a place with music where genres are absolutely fluid and [music] can be whatever you want it to be as long as it's honest. As long as it feels like soul, that's all that matters to me.



**If you had to pick one genre for the rest of your life-which one would it be?**

Soul music man...baby making music. I think that could be any genre. There's soul in Country, there's soul in Hip-hop and soul in R&B. I love to listen to a song and if you feel that nostalgic feeling even though you've never heard the song...that's what I chase, no matter what the genre.

**You're from Conyers, Georgia, but you're currently based in Atlanta. A lot of great musicians have come from your home state. You've mentioned in the past how much your home means to you. Who's on your Mt. Rushmore of recording artists from Georgia and why?**

Andre and Big Boi [from Outkast], Ray Charles, James Brown and Otis Redding.

**I read that the SWIMS in your last name is actually an acronym that means: Someone Who Isn't Me Sometimes. Give our readers an in-depth description of the personal meaning of that acronym for you. At what moment did Jaten Dimsdale become Teddy Swims?**

Last year in March, my buddy Addy Maxwell [producer, guitarist, trumpeter] was building beats and sending them to rappers around the area in Atlanta and they would send stuff back. So back in March, we ended up creating this SoundCloud rap song. The next thing you know we had the opportunity to go on tour. So, we built thirty minutes of music and went on my very first tour, after ten years of being in bands - we went on tour as Teddy Swims. At that time, when we started the rap thing I was going by "Swims" which is an acronym that I saw on forums and it just meant someone who isn't me. So, I thought that I could just kind of be whoever I wanted to be in rap and never really take it seriously. It was just going to be a little rap thing for me to not take seriously. And then, we took it on tour...and it just kind of stuck that way.

**The coronavirus has drastically recording artists who are signed to major record labels, like yourself, to cancel their plans for 2020. But what about your plans for 2021? Are we going to get a debut album out of you next year? And if so, can you tell us a little bit about it?**

I can't say for sure but that's the plan. We plan on having an EP out at the beginning of next year and an album out sometime next year...At this point we're writing right now, so I don't want to tell you what something's going to be about and then change my mind...I'm scared to commit something. Maybe the album will be about my fear of commitment [laughs].

**What events in your life have made you a better songwriter? Heartbreak? A tragic loss? Falling in Love?**

I'll definitely say that I tend to put myself in situations to sometimes get hurt, to write better songs. Some of my worst heartbreaks have been the best songs...it's definitely been super inspiring in making me deal with some things that I don't like dealing with and focus on some matters that I didn't know that I needed to focus on.

**What's a typical writing session like between Teddy Swims and Elefvnts?**

We have a B Room Studio and an A Room Studio in our old house. So I might be tracking vocals on something from yesterday and [the band] might be working on something or maybe Jesse [Hampton] has his own laptop and he's recording a guitar and he just drops [the track] in the dropbox and the next day Addy [Maxwell] pulls it up and hears some piano and puts a beat behind it. And the next day I might pull it up on my laptop and then get an idea and write and then we all get together and kind of piece it together. So, we just put a bunch of files in a dropbox and people will just pick songs and say: "Oh I have an idea for this!" We are able to sometimes be in the same room and just jam and write. But before [Covid-19] we were able to just jam as a band and always be playing, which was great.

**Not including anyone that you are currently working with, who would be your dream executive producer and why?**

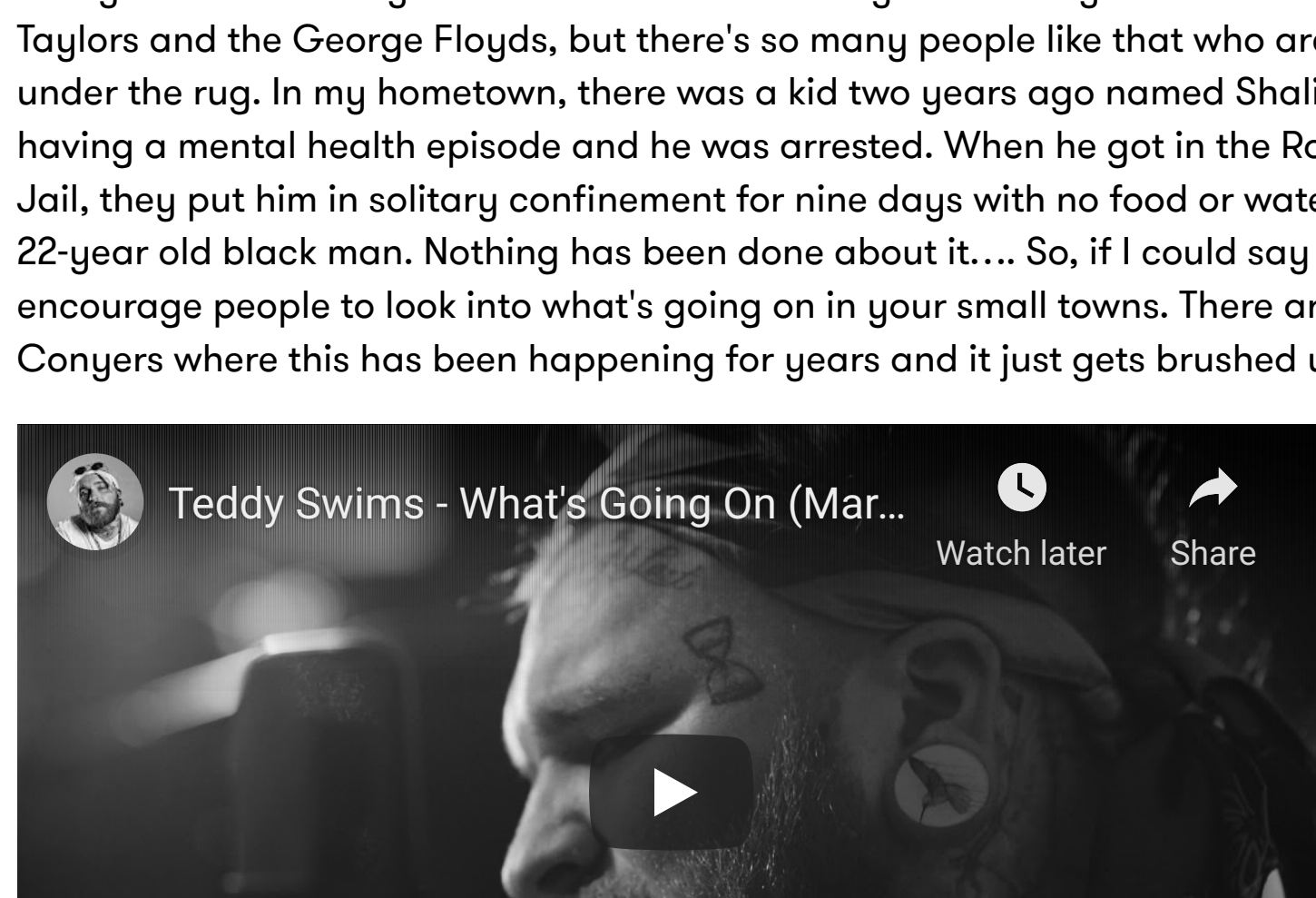
I would always have to say my best friend in the world, Lee Rouse [the band's producer and engineer]. But if it was someone that I wish I could work with? I'd have to say Timbaland. A record with Timbaland would be crazy! Pharrell would be crazy too...And Dr. Dre of course.

**What kind of music do you think you and Dr Dre. could make together?**

I don't know [laughs]. I'd do whatever he tells me to do. I'd be like: "You're the man, whatever you say. Let's go!" I would die to meet him, just to pick his brain and get the wisdom because I'm always a student to it. I would want to learn the mindset from producer to CEO to everything. Because that is everything that I want to be.

**You donated the proceeds of What's Going On (a song originally recorded by Marvin Gaye) to the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. Why'd you decide to donate to that cause in particular?**

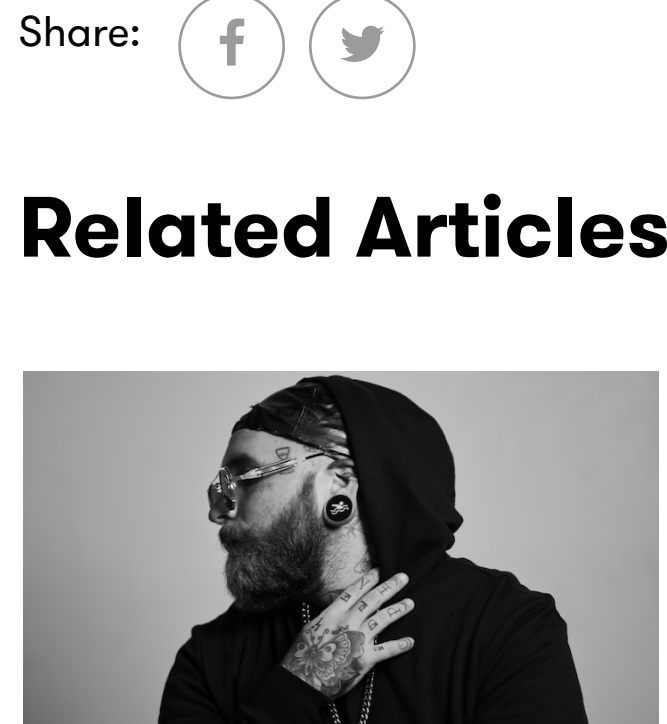
When we did it, I put a grand in to five different [social causes]. I wanted to give to something that was a bigger conglomerate in that way...I am so strong of a believer in the Black Lives Matter movement. Here we are, two hundred years later and we can't open our eyes. I think that "What's Going On" is perfect song written at the perfect time and it still just as powerful today! I think that says a lot about us as a society...We always hear about the Breonna Taylors and the George Floyds, but there's so many people like that who are getting brushed under the rug. In my hometown, there was a kid two years ago named Shali Tilson. He was having a mental health episode and he was arrested. When he got in the Rockdale County Jail, they put him in solitary confinement for nine days with no food or water and he died. A 22-year old black man. Nothing has been done about it.... So, if I could say anything, I encourage people to look into what's going on in your small towns. There are small towns like Conyers where this has been happening for years and it just gets brushed under the rug.



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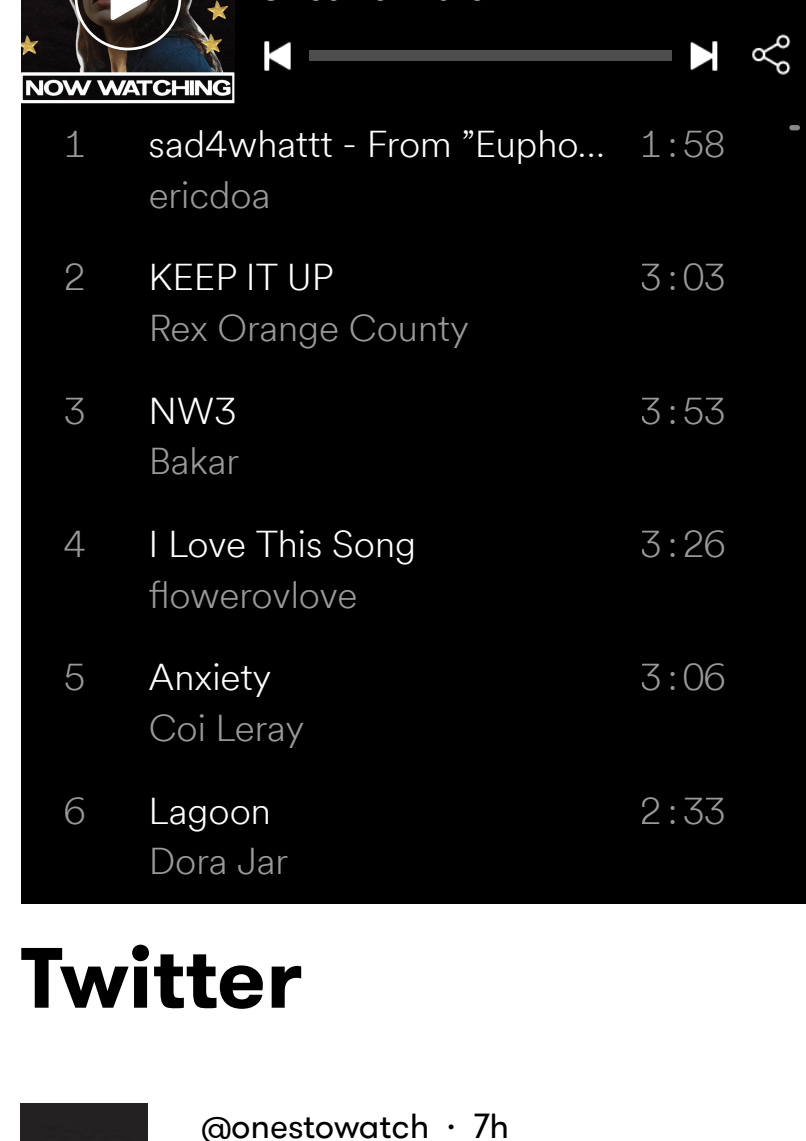
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