Arts' New Music Editor Will Pep Up Your Playlists

Meet Nastia Voynovskaya, KQED Arts' new music editor. Prior to joining KQED, Voynovskaya was the music editor at East Bay Express, and has written for VICE, the San Francisco Chronicle, SFMOMA Open Space, Bandcamp and more. She also served as the online editor for Hi-Fructose magazine and arts editor for The Daily Californian at the University of California at Berkeley. Voynovskaya graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 2012, with a B.A. in comparative literature.

What were your earliest experiences writing about music and when did it click that you wanted to do it professionally? The first piece I ever published was for a student fashion magazine at U.C. Berkeley; it was about a Lil B’s outfit at a Pack concert in 2008. Not long after, I joined the student newspaper, The Daily Cal, where I was assigned to cover Noise Pop in 2010. Since then, I’ve pretty much been addicted — though music writing became my main beat in 2015, when I became music editor at East Bay Express. Once I started writing predominantly about music, it clicked for me that my professional world could merge with what I do for fun, which is go to shows.

Which types of stories/artists do you gravitate toward? I have a great appreciation for most genres, but I’m most interested in stories with a strong human-interest angle, beyond “this album is cool.” I love to write about artists who are pushing boundaries creatively, sparking conversations about social issues or working to serve the community in some way. E-40, Goapele, Mistah F.A.B., Saturn Rising, King Woman and Brass Liberation Orchestra have been some of my favorite interviews.

Who’s your dream interview and why? Rihanna. I love her music, her confidence, her fashion sense and her business sense. Also, Björk and Missy Elliott.

How many shows do you see on average every week? What are some highlights from the past year? I’d say anywhere between one and three shows a week. The best performances I saw all year were Solange — at FYF Fest, Outside Lands and the Greek Theatre — Björk and Missy Elliott at FYF, Gucci Mane at the Warfield and Moses Sumney at Great American Music Hall.

What are your favorite venues in the Bay Area? Fox Theatre and Great American Music Hall for moving, near-spiritual experiences; Elbo Room, the Legionnaire Saloon, the Layover and Staline Social Club for intimate dance parties and shows.

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