

# ROYALS

# LORDE

APPEARS IN  
ROCK & POP  
2018

⚡ Released: 2013   ⚡ Album: Pure Heroine   ⚡ Label: Universal, Lava, Republic, Virgin

## ABOUT THE SONG

'Royals', by New Zealand singer Lorde, was released in June 2013, when she was just 16 years old. It topped the charts in many countries and broke several records, sitting in the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 for nine weeks. 'Royals' is one of the best selling singles of all time.

It was first made available for free on Soundcloud, included on Lorde's *The Love Club EP*. The track was noticed immediately and downloaded many times, before eventually being taken down. It was promoted by Lava Records in the US, however it was after 'Royals' was included on one of Sean Parker's Spotify playlists that it gained traction, subsequently topping Spotify's Viral Chart.

'Royals' was named the best song of 2013 by many media sources, and has since ranked on several all-time best songs lists. It won two Grammys, a Billboard Music Award, and an APRA Silver Scroll award among others.

## RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

'Royals' was co-written by Lorde and her producer Joel Little; Lorde wrote the lyrics for 'Royals' at home before she went into the studio with Little.

She told *Billboard.com*: *'I wrote it in like half an hour - the lyrics, anyway. I wrote all the lyrics and took them to the studio and my producer was like, 'Yeah, this is cool.' We worked on that and on two other songs on the EP in a week.'* She and Little recorded it during Lorde's school holidays at Little's Golden Age Studios in Auckland, NZ.

## COMPOSITION

Written in D major in Mixolydian mode, 'Royals' has a moderate andante tempo. It features minimalist instrumentation with finger snaps, and a synth-heavy production. Lorde's husky mezzo soprano vocal delivers lyrics with an anti-consumerism theme. She sings about the opulence seen in music videos: fun to look at, but far removed from the reality of a normal teenager.

“  
BUT EVERYBODY'S LIKE  
CRISTAL, MAYBACH  
DIAMONDS  
ON YOUR TIMEPIECE  
JET PLANES, ISLANDS  
TIGERS ON A GOLD LEASH  
”

## AWARDS

- ⚡ **Silver Scroll Award**  
APRA 2013
- ⚡ **Single of the Year**  
New Zealand Music Awards 2013
- ⚡ **Best Pop Solo Performance**  
Grammy Awards 2014
- ⚡ **Song of the Year**  
Grammy Awards 2014
- ⚡ **Top Rock Song**  
Billboard Music Awards 2014
- ⚡ **Best Rock Video**  
MTV Video Music Awards 2014

## THE VIDEO

Directed by New Zealander Joel Kefali, the video for 'Royals' was filmed in Auckland, with the intention of capturing the mood of what it was like to be a teenager living there. It was shot in two days on a tight budget, and featured several of Lorde's actual friends. Lorde wanted the video to feel right and be real: *'...and i'm at that particular train station every week. those boys are my friends. callum's wearing a sweater that used to belong to me. so it all feels right, and i can sleep.'* Lorde, YouTube.

The 'Royals' video premiered on Lorde's YouTube channel on 12 May 2013 and has since had over 73 million views. The US version followed in June 2013 and has had more than 840 million views.



## THE ALBUM

Although it was first released on *The Love Club EP*, 'Royals' was included as the third track on Lorde's debut studio album *Pure Heroine*, released on 27 September 2013. 'Royals' was released as the lead single, followed by 'Tennis Court', 'Team' and 'Glory and Gore'. Produced by and co-written with Joel Little, it was recorded at the same small studio as *The Love Club EP*, with no expensive technology, and was completed in under a year. The success of the album also thrust Little into the limelight and he has gone on to work with artists such as Sam Smith, Ellie Goulding and Tove Lo.

**“HER SONGS CAPTURE THE DRAMA AND DEBAUCHED REGALITY OF BEING A TEENAGER: THEIR SUBJECTS INCLUDE ONLINE GOSSIP, EMPTY BOTTLES, QUEEN BEES, AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ALREADY FEEL OLD.”**

LINDSAY ZOLADZ, PITCHFORK

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ella Yelich-O'Connor was born in 1996 in Auckland, New Zealand. After winning her school talent quest in 2009, her father sent recordings to Universal Music Group's A&R Executive Scott Maclachlan, who signed her for development. Maclachlan unsuccessfully paired Lorde with various songwriters and producers, before ultimately pairing her with Joel Little. After the success of 'Royals' and her debut album *Pure Heroine*, Lorde was featured on the soundtrack for *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, performing a cover of 'Everybody Wants To Rule The World', by Tears for Fears. She performed extensively over 2014 and curated the soundtrack for *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1* as well as recording the movie's lead single 'Yellow Flicker Beat'.

In March 2017, Lorde released 'Green Light', the lead single from her follow-up album *Melodrama*, released later that year. She embarked on an international concert tour, featuring Khalid as her support act.

Lorde has been called the voice of her generation, a spokesperson for a female rock resurgence, and David Bowie reportedly saw her as the 'future of music', according to his long-time pianist Mike Garson.

## MORE TO EXPLORE

**Songs:** 'Everybody Wants to Rule The World', Lorde (2013), 'Glory and Gore', Lorde (2014), 'Green Light', Lorde (2017), 'Team', Lorde (2013), 'Tennis Court', Lorde (2013), 'Yellow Flicker Beat' (2014). **Albums:** *The Love Club EP* (2013), *Pure Heroine* (2013), *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2013), *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1* (2014), *Melodrama* (2017). **Artists & collaborators:** Ellie Goulding, David Bowie, Joel Kefali, Joel Little, Khalid, Mike Garson, Sam Smith, Tove Lo. **Trinity Rock & Pop 2018 syllabus:** Vocals, Grade 3.

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