

## The Hot Seat



# Florence Welch

This machine has been known to run on liquid courage. By **Sarah Bruning**

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**So I've had "Drumming Song" and "Rabbit Heart" in my head all week. Oh, I'm sorry...but thanks!**

**Which songs do you find yourself humming most often?**

I've just been singing "Born This Way" by Lady Gaga for about five minutes. I recently got her new album, so I listen to that a lot. I saw her at Madison Square Garden, and when that song came on I ran down into the pit with all her other monsters and we were jumping around.

**What do you love most about performing live?**

I think the release—and the connection with the crowd. You're having a moment there, and seeing people have their own personal moments is really cathartic.

**Do you have any preshow rituals to get yourself psyched up?**

We used to have tequila shots and pineapple[juice] before we went on stage, but we thought that was pretty bad for your voice. Because we have show after show after show, we nicknamed this "the temperance tour." It used to be like drinking competitions before we went onstage, now I try to conserve my voice by doing warm-ups. I'll try it this way, and if it doesn't work I might go back to the shots of tequila.

**You have a funny story about getting signed. Did you really corner your now-manager in a bathroom and sing an Etta James song?**

[Laughs] I didn't corner her. We went there together—I think to talk about boys. I was kind of fronting it: I was pretending that I had a band, and I didn't

really have a band. I said, "Yeah, I'm a singer. I have this band, so you can book me to play your Christmas party." So I kind of had to get a band... I kind of got discovered, like, half in the toilet and half at that party. You know what's funny? I think Etta James herself auditioned for her manager in a bathroom!

**Really?**

Everyone sounds good in a bathroom; the tiles are good for acoustics.

**Are you normally that forward, or was it totally out of character?**

I was pretty drunk. I'm actually pretty shy. I had a lifetime of being asked to sing at family parties and never wanting to.

**I read that you say you write your best music when drunk or hungover. What's the thinking there?**

Maybe I was drunk when I said that. I'm not sure that that's true. As I said, I'm quite shy; it can take me a while to figure out what I'm feeling. Sometimes if you wanna let your inhibitions go and let what's going on in your subconscious come out, it can[happen] with a whiskey.

**It's totally true: liquid courage.**

I think a lot of my songs that seem very spiritual are about hangovers. [Laughs] Like, trying to transcend this trial. You feel almost otherworldly because you're moving between dreaming and waking, and you don't really know what's going on. And that can be quite a good position to write songs in, but I honestly wouldn't recommend it, kids.

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*Florence and the Machine play Central Park Summer Stage Fri 24.*