

# Observer Good Times

Our Night on the Town

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DAN CURWIN

Ed Sheeran has hit the tops of the charts in the U.K. with his single, 'The A Team,' and his album '+.' He is coming to America to build on that success.

## Ed Sheeran has conquered the U.K., America's next

By MIKE CHAIKEN  
EDITIONS EDITOR

Singer songwriter Ed Sheeran is on top of the world in the U.K.

His most recent album overseas, "+," hit the top of the BBC charts, even making its debut at the top slot.

The album went on to have the highest opening sales figures for a debut artist ever in Britain and has remained in the top 10 ever since. The album was one of the country's top 10 selling albums of 2011 and recently returned to the #1 position on the first UK Albums Chart of 2012.

His single "The A Team," which was released June 2011, debuted at #3 on the UK Singles Chart. The track spent 11 consecutive weeks in the Top 10, making history as 2011's highest charting, biggest selling debut single.

The "A Team" is a simple song, highlighting Sheeran's voice and guitar. It has a lilt and a sweet melody that belie a bitter and dark tale. The lyrics to the track go: "And they say

*She's in the Class A Team/  
Stuck in her daydream/  
Been this way since 18/ But  
lately her face seems/ Slowly  
sinking, wasting/  
Crumbling like pastries/  
And they scream/ The worst  
things in life come free to us/  
Cos we're just under the  
upperhand/ Go mad for a  
couple of grams/ And she  
don't want to go outside  
tonight/ And in a pipe she  
flies to the Motherland/ Or  
sells love to another man."*

In addition to all the sales and airplay success of "The A Team" and "+," on Jan. 12, Sheeran continued his winning streak, securing a spot as one of the leading lights for the U.K.'s top music honor, The Brit Awards (Britain's equivalent of the Grammys). Sheeran, 20, received nominations for best male, breakthrough act, best single for "The A Team," and best album for his debut record, "+."

Now, Sheeran has his sights set on America.

This past week, he had two sold out gigs in New York's Mercury Lounge. He also performed in Los

Angeles at the Hotel Café. He returns to the states in March when he opens for British act, Snow Patrol.

And to introduce himself to America, his label Elektra released his debut EP, "The A Team." The collection of four tracks, includes Sheeran's big U.K. hit.

With all of that activity, Sheeran took a moment for an email interview from the U.K. with The Observer.

**Observer:** America's first taste of Ed Sheeran is the song "The A Team," how representative is it of your sound in general?

**Sheeran:** Very, it's my voice and guitar

**O:** One of the striking things about "The A Team" is musically it's very angelic and very melodic. But the lyrics are very gritty and the topic is very weighty. What do you like about that approach? How did it develop?

**S:** That song came about after I worked at a homeless charity one Christmas in

London...lyrics to that song came first and the music followed and I love the difference between the two.

**O:** What inspires the stories you try to tell in your song? Are they drawn from your own history and the history of your friends? Or are you like a novelist, creating characters and trying to paint a story with your words?

**S:** Most of my songs are biographical, if not about my own experiences then about things my friends or family have been through.

**O:** You have a definite singer-songwriter approach. But you've collaborated with some hip-hop artists on other projects (in particular the U.K. only album "No. 5 Collaborations"). And sometimes your phrasing, albeit full of melody, sometimes has a hip hop feel? What attracts you to the world of hip-hop?

**S:** Lyrics. the phrasing and the way their put together is a huge influence

**O:** What artists do you admire for what they have achieved artistically? Why them?

**S:** Eminem - lyrically, songs like "Stan," (a six minute song (that reached) top of charts. (That was) no mean feat.

**O:** In the U.K., the album '+' has been a huge smash. How did it feel when you saw the album and your music was connecting to fans?

**S:** Good. You realise your job is to make people happy. (This is) One of best jobs to have.

**O:** You will be coming to America soon, opening for Snow Patrol. How does it feel to cross the Atlantic to play in a new country?

**S:** (I) can't wait. Hope you like it.

**O:** What are your hopes when you step out in front of an American audience?

**S:** That they take time to listen to the songs and hopefully I get to meet

some of them at the shows.

**O:** What do you hope American fans find attractive about the EP coming out and '+' when it's finally released here?

**S:** That they like the style and see where I'm coming from. There are so many different sides to the records and a lot to appeal to different sorts of people I hope.

**O:** Beyond the American tour, what's next for Ed Sheeran?

**S:** Summer festivals in the UK and mainland Europe as well as visits to Asia and Australia. (I) will be back in the U.S. in summer and autumn too hopefully.

For more information about Ed Sheeran, go to EdSheeran.com. To check out the video for his single, "The A Team," go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAWcs5H-ggQ> Comments? Email [mchaiken@BristolObserver.com](mailto:mchaiken@BristolObserver.com).