**CAVETOWN BIO 2020**

“I finally moved out of my parents’ houses,” Robin Skinner says happily, “but I haven’t been around very much.”

That’s not an extreme statement for most 21-year-olds, but for years, Skinner’s entire life existed inside those walls. When he formed **CAVETOWN** in 2013 at age 14 in Cambridge, England, the world outside Skinner’s bedroom seemed unreachable – but armed with an internet connection and his songs, the son of a professional flautist and Cambridge University’s director of music soon became an organic, self-made sensation.

He did so not with a viral hit or easy gimmicks but rather pure heart, filling his YouTube channel with day-in-the-life, behind-the-scenes vignettes – along with covers of his favorite songs and other musical treats – that allowed fans a barrier-free inside look at his life. Coupled with his original, self-recorded music, Skinner’s unassuming-yet-captivating personality took the internet by storm, catapulting him to millions of streams and subscribers and stages around the world.

In just two short years – from his very first, very sold-out solo shows in 2018 to his most recent run of packed full-band performances at venues like Los Angeles’ Fonda Theatre, New York City’s Webster Hall and London’s Shepherd’s Bush Empire – Skinner has become a dynamic performer capable of commanding rooms or crowds of any size. In addition to his headlining tours, he has been featured on international festival lineups like Reading & Leeds, Lollapalooza, Shaky Knees, TRNSMT and Ohana Festival.

No matter the setting, Skinner’s performances, like his music, are an inspiring celebration of life in all its forms, as fans come from points near and far to laugh, cry and revel in the deep-rooted sense of connectivity found in the songs – as well as the familial, fan-led communities they themselves have created around Cavetown.

Those grassroots connections spread further than ever with Cavetown’s major-label debut album, ***SLEEPYHEAD***, released earlier this year on Sire Records. Recorded, produced, mixed and mastered by Skinner himself in the bedroom of his new London apartment (some things never change), the 11-song collection has proven to the world why he’s become not just a cornerstone of the bedroom pop community, but a torchbearer for the next generation of his genre.

In addition to his own prolific output – including self-releasing 2015’s *Cavetown*, 2016’s *16 / 04 / 16* and 2018’s breakthrough *Lemon Boy*, along with the five-part *Animal Kingdom* digital mixtape of new songs, covers and updated versions of catalog material – Skinner has helped other up-and-coming artists carve out their own careers. He co-wrote and produced mxmtoon’s critically acclaimed 2019 album *The Masquerade* and worked with Chloe Moriondo on her forthcoming major-label debut, plus recently collaborated with labelmate MyKey on “Was It Something I Said” and Tessa Violet on “Smoke Signals.”

“I’ve been able to take a step back from the personal aspect of the songs and more objectively work on things,” he says of his outside production work. “It’s a skill that’s hard to do when you’re so emotionally attached to a song. I’ve been able to take that back into my own songs as well. A lot of the time you get hung up on something that doesn’t matter when it’s your own thing.”

By focusing less on the more imperceptible aspects of his productions, Skinner’s distilled his energy on *Sleepyhead* into what really moves fans: the songs themselves, occasionally lighthearted, largely poignant – but always authentically him. The album is awash in ambient indie-rock nuance, creaking acoustic guitars and Skinner’s poetic lyricism, all steadied by his tranquil melodies and reassuring timbre.

As a song like multi-movement “Snail” oscillates between achingly vulnerable acoustic bookends and boisterous Celtic-inspired vigor, the methodical, stomping single “Sweet Tooth” announces not only a more rock-based component of Skinner’s music but also a milestone in his personal life.

“I have trouble with romantic love; I’d never really felt it” he says of the song, an ode to his boyfriend written on a particularly restless tour bus night. “I equate it to being more of a savory person, but I felt like I’d gotten a new taste for sweetness. I have a sweet tooth for him and no one else.”

Melding the euphoric rush of head-over-heels love (“Sweet Tooth,” “Pyjama Pants”) with more reflective and pensive moments (“Empty Bed,” “Telescope”), *Sleepyhead* is an album that sits at the axis of modern life: acutely perceptive and self-aware of how difficult it can be, but also stopping to relish the moments that offer comfort and joy in the wake of both internal and external pressures.

These two thoughts collide on the springy “Things That Make It Warm,” as Skinner paints a picture of a pair of birds, washed out by a torrential storm, searching for a place to rebuild their lives. “You and me, we can make this hole a home/We can fill it up with grass and all the things that make it warm,” he sings on the track, less concerned about the doom and gloom of the events that led his protagonists to this place and more grateful for what’s currently in front of them – as sparse as their surroundings might seem.

Importantly, *Sleepyhead* lacks the pretense that one certainly wouldn’t fault Skinner for picking up over the years. Some 450 million Spotify plays and 1.3 million YouTube subscribers after launching Cavetown, he’s a radically different person than he was just a few years ago. “Basically every aspect of my life has changed since putting out *Lemon Boy*,” he admits. “Often when change happens, it’s so slow that you don’t notice it. The speed at which it’s happened has made me appreciate everything.”

But this stratospheric rise hasn’t changed the authentic substance of his songwriting, nor the message he hopes to spread with it. The songs are for him, but they’ve found their way into the ears and hearts of fans around the world. Along the way, Skinner’s stories – of triumph and failure, loneliness and love – have become theirs, too. This deep connection to his music is not lost on him, nor is it a responsibility he takes lightly.

“Ultimately, everyone has the same struggles when we boil it down, even if the details are different,” he says. “That’s what I’m trying to get across with my music. It’s basically just me telling myself what I need to hear.”