

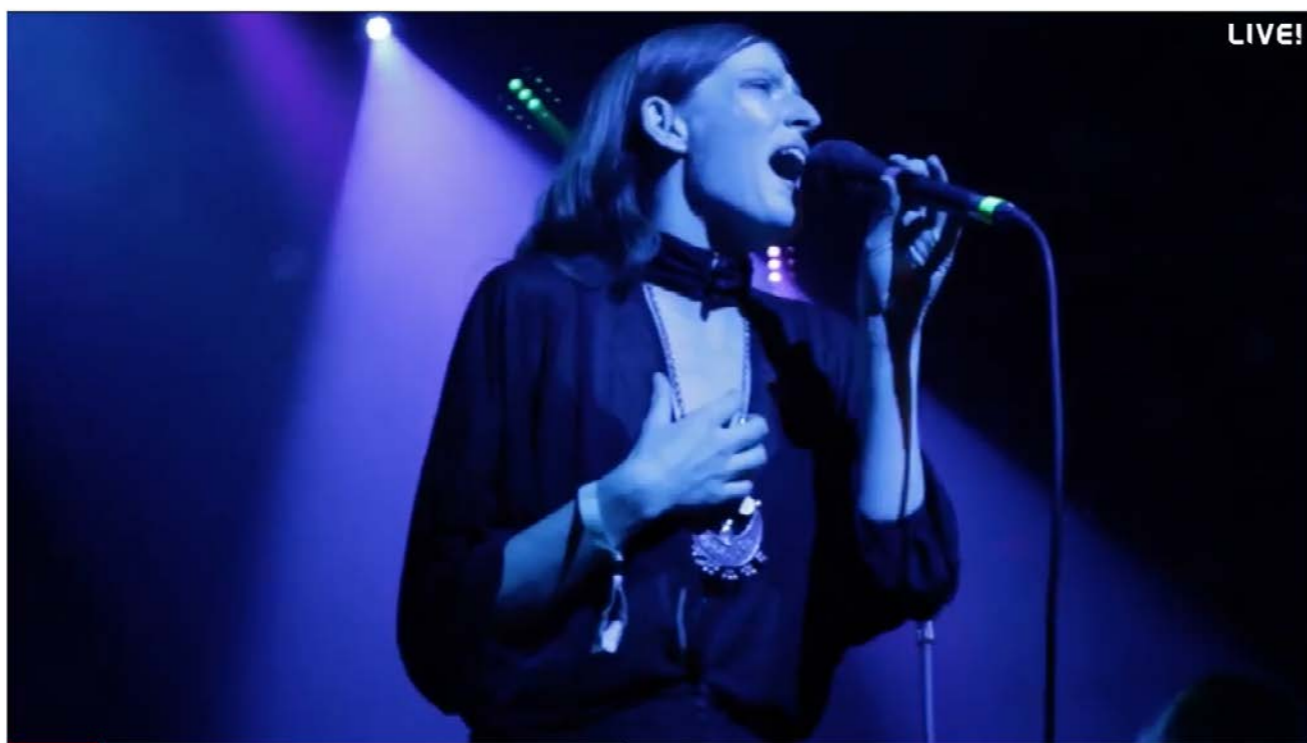
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JENNAE QUISENBERRY

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**PRESS &  
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## Jennae Quisenberry: la nostra intervista



News / Notizie del giorno / Jennae Quisenberry: la nostra intervista



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by REDAZIONE | FOLLOW REDAZIONE

Modella, certo. E poi cantante. Frontwoman. Bartender. Laureata in spagnolo. E anche in biologia. Non si può dire che la personalità di Jennae Quisenberry non sia poliedrica. Così come non si può dire che la sua storia personale, che l'ha portata da Seattle ai club dove si esibisce con la sua band Erie fino a giungere sulle passerelle dell'eleganza Balenciaga così come immaginata da **Demna Gvasalia** non sia più che interessante. Noi l'abbiamo incontrata per farci raccontare un po' di lei, di moda, di creatività e della sua passione di sempre: la musica. Ecco Jennae Quisenberry raccontata nella nostra video-intervista.

*Interview by Marilena Borgna*

## WATCH THIS FACE: JENNAE QUISENBERRY

*We meet the model, singer and Balenciaga exclusive*



Every week, *Bazaar's* booking team highlights one name to note, from the industry's best-known faces to girls who are just starting out. This week, we turn our attention to Jennae Quisenberry.

Elegant, androgynous and capable of pulling off any style, the American newcomer Jennae Quisenberry represents the kind of austere beauty favoured by fashion's upper echelon. The 26-year-old has had appearances at Balenciaga, Osman, Fausto Puglisi and Creatures of Comfort, and her momentum seems sure to propel her towards a key booking next campaign season.

Her sophisticated but raw look has sparked interest from top photographers, who rave about Quisenberry's catwalk and editorial potential. Her hypnotic gaze has many, well, hypnotised. Add to that her musical talent – Quisenberry is the lead vocalist for the band Erie – and you have a muse in the making.

"Jennae has this alluring, androgynous look and vibe about her, and I knew instantly when she walked in that she was going to be amazing," says Dean Cleary Patterson at D1 Model Management. "She reminded me of the models back in the 90s, the look, the attitude, plus when I saw and heard her music I fell in love, she's such a muse."

We chat to Quisenberry about her music, Seattle and Tilda Swinton.



#### **How were you discovered?**

"It is difficult to pinpoint one definitive moment. I started modelling when my mother agent, Nancy Pepler of Heffner Management, reached out to me through Facebook Messenger about two years ago. I was promoting a show for my band with another musician – who also happened to model with Heffner – and she took notice of my profile. When I finally got to New York, I met Dean Cleary at D1 Models who was quite excited to work with me despite what some may call my 'late start' to the fashion industry. Two weeks later, I met the lovely Henry Thomas during New York Fashion Week who cast me as an exclusive for Demna Gvasgala's debut autumn/winter 2016 Balenciaga show."

#### **If you weren't modelling, what career would you pursue and why?**

"I have always been a musician. I started playing instruments around the age of eight and I've been singing since the age of 10 or 11. I was a music major in college for the first two years, and while I graduated with a hefty degree in science, I quickly fell back into songwriting and performance not long after graduation. I started singing in a band with my boyfriend and another friend of mine. We wrote an album in 2013 under the moniker Slow Bird and are currently working on a new project called Erie. I would consider myself lucky if I could continue to create music and perform for the rest of my life."

#### **What would you say has been the highlight of your career so far?**

"I think most people would say walking in their first show. That alone seems incredible to me and I am so grateful for the opportunity, but my personal biggest moment had to be when I realised that I can thrive. Being a performer, I know that the lights fade, the adrenalin wears off, the cameras look for the next face. The high of walking in a highly anticipated show or creating a brilliant editorial with a group of brilliant creatives is quite incredible; but the realisation that I can keep going within this challenging industry was a totally different high."

#### **How do you spend your free time?**

"I write music. When I can, I fly home and record. We are relocating to NYC so we can start live rehearsals and performing again in the New Year. When I am not working on music, I often go for walks around the city. I have recently started going to museums again. I was born near Seattle, so naturally, I am a coffee fiend and enjoy people-watching at cafés. Good food and drinks with good people ranks very high on my favourite things. Very few days are worth living without a good meal waiting for you at the end. I also would like to start experimenting more with creating visuals and video work for my music."



David Urbanke

**Do you have any travel tips for those visiting your hometown?**

"When visiting Seattle? Eat! Seattle has no shortage of good and affordable food. I think people eat out every night of the week. Here is a list of places to check out: 8oz Burgers&Co, Pike Place Chowder, Sun Liquor Lounge, Revolver Bar, Rumba, Kedai Makan, Cafe Pettiroso, Momiji, and the first place I hit up every time I come home is Tortas Condesa for the Holé Molé Torta. The Olympic Sculpture park has guaranteed gorgeous sunsets anytime of the year and the Golden Gardens is one of the few beaches with actual sand. I haven't done this yet, but renting a hot-tub boat on Lake Union on a rainy day is on my bucket list. Also, as Seattle is still a big music city, you might want to check out the Crocodile, Neumos and Chop Suey for live and local music."

**What are the three products you can't live without?**

"Bioderma Sensibio/Crealine: an incredibly gentle micellar cleanser, I often use it to cleanse in the mornings and at night to remove make-up or to pre-cleanse in the evenings. I have sensitive skin and the busier the city the more dirt I see come off my face. Gross and necessary. Chanel hydra gel yeux: I started to use it on red-eye flights. I fell in love with it and now I use it in place of eye cream. I forgot that bags existed until I accidentally ran out. I also love Laura Mercier concealer for times of trouble, it has great coverage and is hypoallergenic so it does not further irritate skin."

**What is your favourite form of exercise?**

"I love hot vinyasa yoga. To me it doesn't feel like a work-out unless I am drenched in sweat and vinyasa keeps me focused on not just the poses but also during the transitions. My life is a bit unpredictable now and I haven't found a studio that permits pop-ins in NYC without a reservation, but the best thing about yoga is that you can do it anywhere. I also have this philosophy that 10 minutes is a lot more than none. If you have 10 minutes for a run, go for a run. Five minutes for sit-ups, then do sit-ups. It turns out a little goes a lot farther than nothing. Once you start it is much easier to talk yourself into continuing. Also running up and down subway stairs with heavy luggage turns out to be an excellent work-out!"

**What is your dream shoot?**

"I recently met Tim Walker, I would love to work with him. His work is so magical and the worlds he creates are so fantastic. It's like a couture fever dream that I would never want to wake up from. Of course, I would be honoured to also shoot with the iconic Steven Meisel. I love getting to see new places, so I'd like to shoot at any location out of the norm."

**Name your five essential items you wouldn't leave the house without**

"Wallet, phone, keys, phone charger, platform boots... I can't survive with them."

**If you had to wear only one designer, who would it be?**

"I adore Rick Owens. Ideally, I would waltz around town draped all in black and in leather, with a long-haired goat-skin jacket in platform boots with my fingers decked in silver rings. I wouldn't need another outfit."



David Urbanke

#### **What kind of advice would you give to new girls to the industry?**

"Here is my unsolicited advice: you are a snowflake. No, I am not trying to say you are special... you're different. Please don't compare yourself, your body, your face, or your career path to others. If another girl gets the job, accept that it likely had little to do with what is 'wrong' with you, because there is nothing wrong with you. When you travel, pack less stuff in general; but always pack lots of underwear. It is much easier to travel with a carry-on than a large suitcase, and if your trip extends you will be good on underwear. Don't be scared to ask your agent questions. The only way for you to make informed decisions is by being informed. Create a ritual that makes you feel at home. I always buy a scented candle if I plan to be somewhere for more than a week and cook this curried lentil soup from scratch. There is not a lot of consistency in this job, so for sanity's sake, create your own. Weekly metro cards tend to be the cheapest route for travel if you are staying in town for at least three days. Budget and be conscientious of your expenses and income. Get an accountant. And mostly, be kind. Kindness goes really far, whether it is to your roommate, a photographer, a stranger, a client or your agent. Being open to new people and experiences is essential."

#### **Whose career in the arts do you most admire and why?**

"I really enjoy the work of Tilda Swinton. There is a lot to be said about her editorial work, but more importantly her own work as a creative. She is more than a muse or an inspiring actress. She is a timeless entity. I also have immense respect for Karen Elson and Milla Jovovich. Not only are they multifaceted women, but they both continue to work and create stunning editorials. They established careers, which is no easy feat in this industry."

#### **Let's talk about favourites. What about...**

...**music?** "David Bowie, Cocteau Twins, Pat Benatar, Peter Green, Chet Baker, Heart, Fleetwood Mac... Recent music: Bon Iver (*22, A million*), Frank Ocean."

...**movies?** "*Aliens*, *Poltergeist* (the original – you can't recreate that), and *Blade Runner*. I also generally enjoy anything by Quentin Tarantino, Robert Rodriguez, the Coen brothers, Wes Anderson and Paul Thomas Anderson."

...**books?** "*One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez."

...**food?** "Pepperoni pizza with fresh garlic and a cold lager would be my comfort food. Although I have a newly discovered fondness for Korean BBQ and hot lobster rolls."

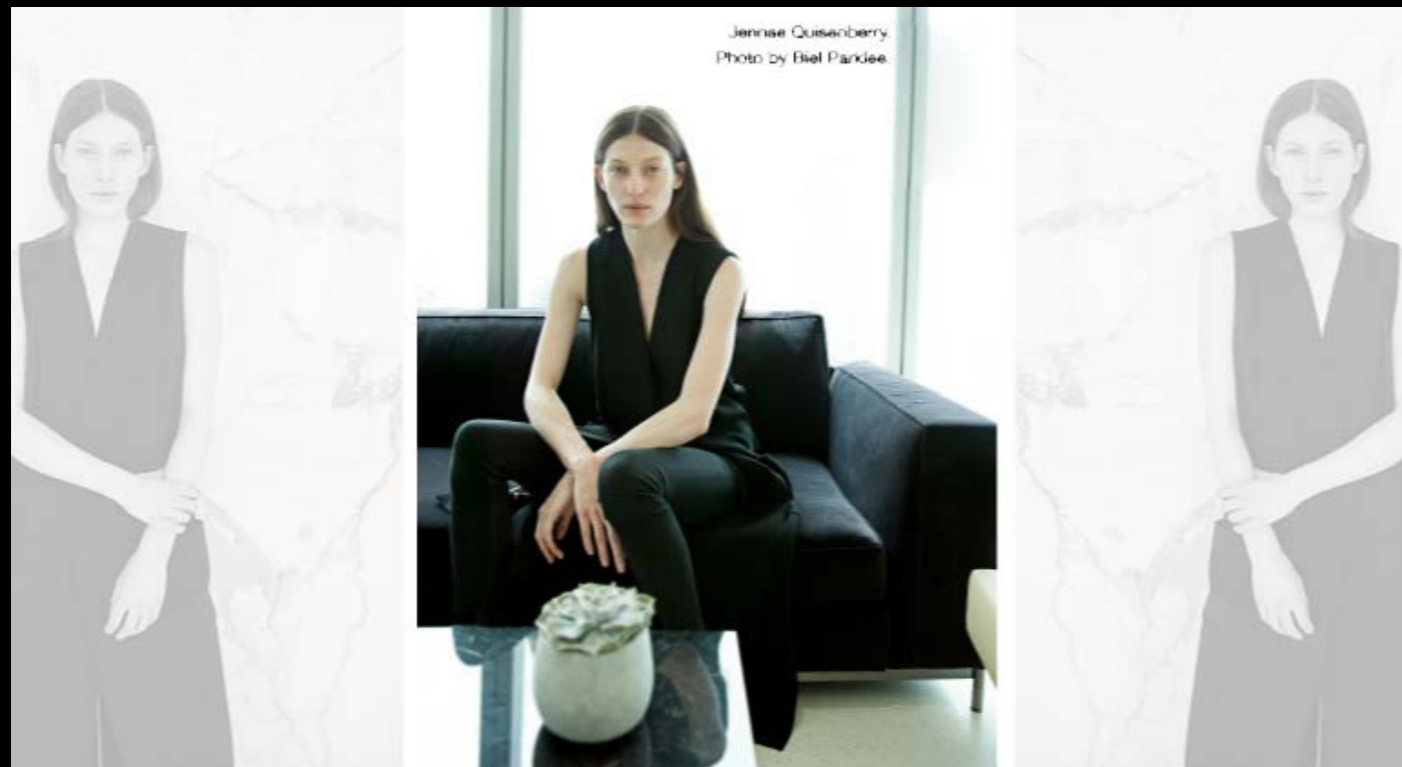
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David Urbanke

Jennae Quisenberry  
Photo by Riel Pardee



## Jennae Quisenberry Went From Molecular Science to Balenciaga

The model, singer, and  
Balenciaga exclusive knows  
a thing or two about biology.

by Stephanie Eckardt

A 27-year-old from Seattle with a background in science, Jennae Quisenberry might not have been the likeliest of first-time models to land a Balenciaga exclusive – which only made her debut alongside [Demna Gvasalia](#), the house's new rule-breaking designer, all the more fitting.

“I was going to go to medical school and do that whole thing, but with the economy and getting laid off, it never came to fruition,” Quisenberry

explained. She did, though, get a degree in Spanish and molecular biology, studying developmental neurology and mapping retina pathways before landing a stint in a malaria vaccine research lab.

“I pipetted, I killed a handful of mice,” she said, casually. “It was not a highlight of my life, really.”

So it was no matter, exactly, when they laid her off two months later. After all, science was always Quisenberry's second choice – something she took up after she found her school's vocal jazz program wasn't up to standards. She's spent the five years since as the happy vocalist of a band called Erie, and while modeling will definitely disrupt their three-tours-a-year show schedule, it's hardly something she's planning on giving up soon.

In the end, though, Quisenberry couldn't do much once there: She'd landed herself an exclusive slot with Balenciaga in Paris. So, after three weeks of castings, meetings, and test shoots, she headed home to Seattle for four days – even bartending for two of them. “I didn't make any money, you know?” she said with a laugh. “I went in so I could cover my rent, and then I was like, off to Paris!”



Any nerves Quisenberry had about her debut were soon calmed when she got there: “Demna is so easy – he was just hanging out and super nice, no stress, no panic,” she said. Even the show day was “really peaceful”: “I remember there was a moment when [Lotta \[Volkova\]](#) walked by and was like, ‘I’m kind of bored!’” she said of Gvasalia’s stylist and muse.

As a musician, though, Quisenberry’s favorite part was the show’s sound-proof room, which made for great acoustics for the soundtrack – a DJ set by the show’s closing model, who goes by [Clara 3000](#). “Her stuff was so good, and I’m getting really into bass drops,” she said with a laugh.

In one of Gvasalia’s structured suits, too, Quisenberry was definitely comfortable: “No matter how far back you put your shoulders it had that C shape, and Demna was like, ‘Just lean into it, that’s the whole point,’” she remembered, calling the construction “just brilliant.” (As for his all-white casting, Quisenberry said she didn’t really notice until she saw the boards, “and I was like hmm, I just feel lucky to be a part of [them].”)


Now back in the U.S., and signed with D1 Management, Quisenberry is planning to move from Seattle to New York soon with her boyfriend, who’s also her bandmate. In the meantime, there’ll be more campaigns, editorials, tours – she’s planning to squeeze them into the “dead month” of August – and eventually, fashion week.

“It’ll be nice to actually work more,” she said of September, before adding dryly, “though obviously, there’s always the option of exclusives.”

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ERIE

THE ROCK BAND



ERIE

SEATTLE, NEW YORK, United States



ERIE

American indie rock trio, born in Seattle, Washington during March of 2011. The musical collaboration was conceived by Joshua Dore (guitar), Matthew Street (drums, bass), and Jennae Quisenberry (Fender Rhodes, vocals.) Intensely dynamic, the composition flows with constantly evolving tones and interludes which ascend into pivotal zeniths of emotion.

**ERIE'S SONGS LINKS:**

**TEASERM - VIDEO**

<https://vimeo.com/184347101>

**ERIE**

<https://soundcloud.com/eriesounds>

**JENNAE'S INSTAGRAM**

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