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SIENNÁ “EMA” ALBUM REVIEW

Sienná has described her music as a car with “4 punctured tires that keeps rolling for a long distance”, which might be one of the better descriptions of experimental electronic music we’ve heard in a while. It also tells you plenty about *EMA*.

Born in Kyoto and long based in Oslo, Sienná has spent years being told her music sounds Japanese in Norway and Norwegian in Japan. That cultural no-man’s-land is actually where things get interesting. Rather than neatly stitching East and West together for an easily marketable bit of musical tourism, *EMA* sounds like someone who has stopped worrying about which box any of it belongs in.

Be A Seeker, Believer is an appropriate doorway into Sienná’s world. Electronic textures aren’t being used merely as decoration; they’re the environment itself. There’s a cinematic breadth to the sound, but underneath it is the sense of somebody pulling components apart just to see what happens when they’re put back together incorrectly. That’s important because Sienná’s best moments come when the machinery sounds slightly unstable.

Your Facts My Facts is a wonderfully 2026 title before you’ve heard a note. Musically it benefits from contrast, with electronic precision rubbing against something altogether less predictable. There is fun in Sienná’s world between technology and it’s considerably more compelling than simply throwing a Japanese instrument over some synths and calling it fusion.



The title track, *Emá*, brings the concept into sharper focus. Sienná told RGM that the album was initially created outdoors in a notebook, with the subsequent recording process essentially translating images into sound. Hundreds of improvisations were apparently whittled down in pursuit of the original images. Knowing that makes the abstract nature of the music easier to understand: these pieces aren’t necessarily songs representing ideas; they’re attempts to turn visual impressions into audio.

Aenaria is where that method feels particularly natural. There is atmosphere without the usual ambient trap of contrasting Melodys. Sienná understands that space is useful only when something interesting eventually enters it. The orchestral instincts help enormously, giving the electronics scale and preventing the record from shrinking into laptop experimentalism.

369 (Miroku) pushes further into the album’s East-meets-West identity, but thankfully Sienná doesn’t underline the cultural references in fluorescent marker. A pulsing bass line encourages you in, There’s detail everywhere, although this is also where we’d occasionally like a stronger edit. Experimental music doesn’t need to be concise, but removing a few ideas can sometimes make the remaining weirdness hit harder.

Finding Inner Sanctuary offers the breathing space its title suggests. The ambient side of Sienná becomes more prominent, and the restraint is welcome after the density surrounding it. I’ve been to Japan and it reminds me of the little tunes you get at train stations in Tokyo, love it.

Then *The Majestic* expands again. The synth element gives the music genuine size rather than merely making it sound expensive. That’s an important distinction. Cinematic electronic music can very quickly turn into audition-reel soundtrack material, all enormous synths and absolutely nothing underneath. Sienná largely avoids that because strange details keep interrupting the grandeur. The imperfections give it personality.

A Messenger is so different and a nice change. Dance, backstreet neon vibes, it feels like the album beginning to gather its thoughts before departure. Glitch, ambience and electronic pop coexist without one being ordered to behave like the other. It’s impressive.

From Here To Where You Are closes things with an appropriately unresolved feeling. A conventional record might provide the big emotional conclusion here. Sienná isn’t particularly interested in tying the ribbon. Instead, there’s a sense of movement continuing beyond the album, which suits music originally conceived from observations made out in nature. The destination isn’t really the point.

What’s particularly interesting is Sienná’s insistence on human irregularity at a moment when electronically generated perfection is increasingly cheap. In her recent [RGM interview](#) she was openly sceptical about AI-generated music and talked about the increasing difficulty facing independent human creators. *EMA* therefore has an accidental extra layer: digitally constructed music making a virtue of refusing to sound algorithmically obedient.



Sienná Interview – RGM Introducing

Hiya Sienná, thanks for joining us in the virtual RGM lounge today. Grab a brew and take a seat. Thanks for joining us today... Tell us bit about where you are from and how you got into music? Thanks for having me! My name is Sienná, born and raised in Kyoto (Japan) but I’ve been based in Oslo (Norway) for many years now. My journey into music began with the piano around 4 and a family collection of classical vinyl ... [Continue reading](#)

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That’s where the album succeeds. Its strongest moments have fingerprints on them. Things don’t always arrive when expected, transitions aren’t designed around the attention span of a streaming algorithm, and different musical traditions aren’t sanded down until they’re interchangeable.

But you’d rather hear an artist taking too many turns than one driving down the same road as everybody else. **Sienná** isn’t making electronic pop designed to disappear politely behind somebody’s afternoon playlist. *EMA* is restless, occasionally awkward, frequently beautiful and stubbornly uninterested in behaving itself.

Four punctured tyres, then. Somehow the bloody thing is still moving. And you’d probably rather be in this car than the thousand perfectly serviced ones all heading in exactly the same direction.

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Emá

Sienná

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1

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Sienná

04:52

2

Your Facts My Facts

Sienná

03:54

3

Emá

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