

Enter the Unforgettable, Eccentric and Honest Life of ALMA

By **Murjani Rawls** - Mar 13, 2020



Photo Credit: Murjani Rawls

It's about 8:35 PM at New York's Brooklyn Steel and Finnish singer/songwriter **ALMA** is going into the second to last song in her set called 'Loser.' Opening for **Tove Lo's** *Sunshine Kitty* tour, it's one of the high points of her set. Towards the end, the entire audience was moving and chanting the chorus with her. If you picture one of those scenes in a movie where the victor has their moment, this was it. It's a spin on the word loser as well. The beauty of being an artist is making certain words into something different. ALMA adds her own flavor to the world of pop music. She actively champions the people who might get overlooked in a more, appearance-based world.



Photo Credit: Murjani Rawls

'Loser' is one for the underdogs. The scrappy, never-give-up type of people. Alma, born Alma-Sofia Miettinen released her second [three-song bundle](#) previewing her upcoming debut album, *Have U Seen Her* due on May 15th. It includes songs like 'King of the Castle,' where you reach the top of the mountain only to find that it's not all you thought it would be. Not only is Alma's brand of pop infectious and contemplative, but it leads you into her own world of truth.

During her New York stop, I talked to ALMA about her forthcoming album, how she deals with fame, and how she found her center in the things that she loved the most.

'Bad News Baby' is definitely about your alter ego. With female artists that I've gotten a chance to interview, they create that alter ego, you know, in the music industry or even with yourself, like I feel like we need to make that to make them stronger. So like, like talk about robot band invading where that kind of thing.

I definitely feel like when I'm on stage, I'm not afraid of anything. I heard someone put it that way. Anytime, I feel that I'm not good enough, I can just put on this alter ego, get on stage and forget about it, you know?

I know that you've said you've wanted more representation in the music industry. You look at an artist like Lizzo and thankfully, there's been a celebration of all different body types in pop music. When I look at the video for 'Bad News Baby,' I love that you use different types of imagery and people. How far do you feel music has come in showing representation and how far does it need to go.

I feel like most female musicians are shown to be skinny. I feel that's not the reality. Every type of human fills the world. Unfortunately, only a certain amount are given opportunities to become successful. I'm not saying those people don't inspire me. However, I know there's a lot of people where I came from that don't fit that type and don't find success so easily. Kudos to Lizzo! She came and kicked the door down. Every time when I do things, I try to include all different types of people.

When you become a musician, especially starting off, you think that everything is going to be great now when you reach your dream. Sometimes it isn't. You touch on that feeling really well with the song, 'King of The Castle.' "

Yeah, for sure. In my home country, I was nominated for three Emma-gaala awards during my first year. I thought that was going to make me happy, but I didn't have good feelings after winning them. It took me time to go back home to realize, if what I'm doing makes me happy, then it's worth it.

Sometimes, we live a life that we think, "ok, if I get this, then it will make me happy." You keep getting things, and it eventually makes you feel like crap. You could have all the things in the world; the houses and the cars, but if you don't find the happiness within yourself, it's just going to make things worse.



Photo Credit: Murjani Rawls

You talk about that on 'LA Money' as well. Is it hard for you to find a connection? You're a musician who got your name out there and experienced well-deserved success. Do you find that people are less genuine towards you?

I feel that a lot of times people want to be successful so bad that it's like they aren't humans anymore. People are just looking to take from what somebody else can give to them. I feel like what I would love to see more in LA or everywhere is genuine friendship. I can be a friend. I don't care if you're successful or not. If you're a waitress or a singer like me; we can be friends.

I don't know. It's frustrating. Every time when I go to LA and I have my friends with me, we'll go to a club or a house party, the first question someone asks is, "so what do you do?". It's never "how are you?" Or "tell me something about yourself.". I see successful people answer and how uncomfortable they are in their faces. That always makes me very uncomfortable. I've never tried to ask people what they do first.

It's like people have to define you by occupation and not as an actual person.

Even though I'm a singer, that doesn't make me a music nerd. I don't want to talk about music for one hour. Sometimes, I want to talk about something else.

A director may not want to talk about movies.

With 'Mama,' you've said that your mother is your biggest fan. I know you hold her dear to your heart. In this song, you're asking for forgiveness for previous transgressions. It's a very unrelentingly honest song about past struggles that you've had. How has the relationship between you and your mother grown?

Stronger than ever. Everything is great. I recently just got to see her and was able to get my whole family, too. When I started my career a couple of years ago, I felt sad that I wasn't around at all because I didn't have the time. I wrote that song a couple of years ago because I was in a dark place. I haven't seen my friends. I haven't seen my family. I hadn't seen anybody who I felt was actually real and loved me as I am. I love that I can always go back home when I need to. Sometimes, you just get so driven. You just love what you do and want to do it so bad that you forget what is actually important and whatnot. But yeah, right now super dope.

You've written songs for artists like Miley Cyrus and Rudimental. You've released two mixtapes and now you're gearing up to release your first album. You have an aesthetic completely to your own which is refreshing in a pop world that pushes a certain. What do you want to tell the world on this album and what would you like everybody to feel once they've sat with it and listened?

I feel I've tried to be as real and as honest as I can. All the songs, if I'm talking about partying or whatever, I've tried to just be super honest. I'm not writing in a way that is suitable for everybody. Maybe some people are gonna hate some of the songs. but some people are going to love them because this is my life. That's what I want. I feel, sometimes with talking to new people, they might give me a hug because I'm famous. I'm trying to make them understand that it's not about getting famous. It's about love. Think about what you love and do it hard. I hope people get empowered by it.

Murjani Rawls

<http://murjanirawls.com>

Journalist, Self-published author of five books, podcast host of The War Report and The Deadscreen Podcast, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls has been stretching his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed over 200+ artists spanning many genres, written over 700 articles ranging displaying his passionate aspirations to keep evolving as his years in media continue.

