

Bella Alubo's Love Mantra Shines in 'Love Is War'

Bella Alubo has been on the music scene for nearly a decade, steadily building a career defined by love and self belief. Since her breakout project *'Late Night Vibrations'*, she has held on to one conviction: stay true to herself. "The biggest lesson I've learned is to stay true to myself," she says. "Trends come and go, but I have to believe in what I'm creating. If I don't believe in my work, it impacts the art negatively."

That belief has guided her through highs and lows, including a pivotal moment when she signed with Benin City Entertainment. For Bella, the partnership marked a turning point. "Signing with Benin City Entertainment was the game-changer for me this year," she explains. "Working with a team that understands my vision and goals, and refines them into something bigger, made a huge difference. The team provided a clear direction, which is different from my experience as an independent artist."

Love remains at the center of her music, shaping both lyrics and tone. "My music is primarily inspired by love, though other themes also influence me. Love evokes strong emotions, and I channel those feelings into my work," she says. That perspective guided *Lagos 101*, her 2023 project that reflected her transition from a sheltered upbringing in North Central Nigeria to life in Lagos. "Lagos is a unique, intense city, and you need to be mentally prepared for it. As someone who was naive when I arrived, I learned it's a city that demands readiness. *Lagos 101* is about preparing people for that experience."

This year, Bella has been more prolific than ever, releasing two projects back to back. Her EP **'Run It Back'** carried a reflective tone. "'Run It Back' is about reflecting on the past while evolving," she says. "The title track is about circling back to past relationships, questioning whether someone who didn't value you before would see your worth now. It's about not forgetting how you were treated and being cautious about giving your heart again."

Her latest album, **'Love Is War'**, has been met with her strongest reception yet. "The support has been overwhelming, making this my most successful release day ever," she shares. "From editorial support to fans and my team's high spirits, it's been incredible. I hosted a celebration event at a club, which was so much fun. Despite my usual release-day anxiety, the reception has been amazing," she describes. The album began with *'African King'*, a song she describes as deeply personal. "I wrote it during a low point in my love life, imagining my ideal partner, a Nigerian man who embodies certain qualities," she says. "It set the tone for the album, which includes both happy and sad songs, all centered around love and aspiration."

Some tracks stretched her creatively, especially those co-written with Cheyenne Levine. "Working with Cheyenne on songs like *'Oxygen'* and *'Ricochet'* was intense," Bella recalls. "She seemed to understand my experiences, and we connected deeply in the studio. Collaborating with her gave me a fresh perspective, as she tapped into emotions I thought were unique to me. I hope listeners relate to those universal feelings too."

Bella hopes **'Love Is War'** shows audiences the range of Nigerian music today. "I want people to see that Nigerian music is evolving, and I'm part of that journey. My music blends R&B and global influences, reflecting my inspirations since childhood. I hope listeners, Nigerian or not, feel warmth and optimism, like

everything will be alright, as I express in the album's final track." She attributes that versatility to her wide palette of influences. "I'm inspired by artists like Drake, Nicki Minaj, Brenda Fassi, Dua Lipa, and Burna Boy, who show different sides of themselves without losing their core. Growing up, I listened to all kinds of music, so sticking to one genre would feel like abandoning part of myself."

As a woman in the Nigerian music industry, Bella has had to approach challenges with focus. "Early on, I focused on gender inequality, influenced by my dad's NGO work. Now, I prioritize a solution-oriented mindset. Dwelling on challenges can foster a victim mentality, but women are capable of overcoming obstacles. Instead of focusing on barriers like glass ceilings, I encourage women to keep pushing forward with faith and ambition."

Reflecting on her ten-year career, Bella points to moments of discipline and pride. "Balancing music with earning two degrees has been crucial for my mental health, keeping me grounded," she says. Burna Boy's words also stay with her: "He said when dreams are too heavy for the elevator, you take the stairs. It took him 10 years to break through too," she expresses. With **'Love Is War'** still fresh, Bella is already looking ahead. "I'm focused on promoting the album through content creation, interviews, and club appearances. I'm also working on my next EP, which should drop later this year."

A decade into her journey, Bella Alubo continues to chart her own path with conviction, each project adding a new chapter to her story, proving that she is an artist shaping both her sound and the larger landscape of Nigerian music.