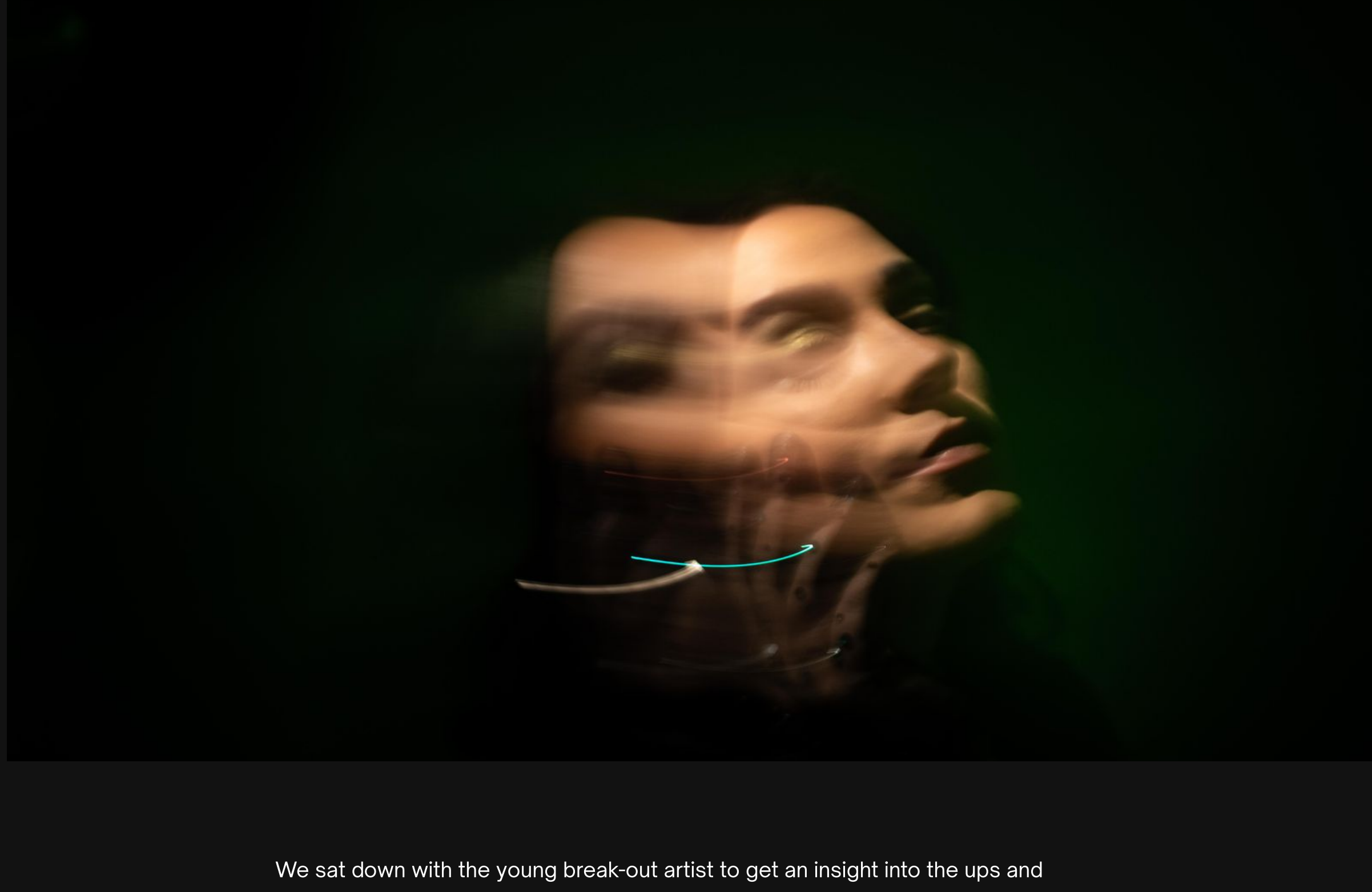


Introducing: Maggie

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Ramy Abou-Setta



We sat down with the young break-out artist to get an insight into the ups and downs of her journey through music, her working process and her plans for the coming year.

Off the back of her successful single release 'Circles', Maggie sat in her bedroom where she records her ethereal music excited and prepared to delve into her life in music. She was in her element.

We start discussing her process of song-writing, which leads me to ask, 'Do you do all the work behind your releases yourself?'

'I write all my music myself, 90% of all productions are done by me, all the mixes that you hear are done by me. However, when it comes to the visual aspect of my releases, I have a team of talented professionals around me. For the majority, I have a hand in everything I do.'

Maggie's answer came as a pleasant surprise due to the nature of her production being of a high-calibre, with her track 'Circles' giving the impression of being produced by a team of various professionals. The crispness of the production, spacey atmosphere and cut-throat vocals combine to create a single that can stand against tracks in the current charts.

This led to an enquiry about the start of her musical journey, 'How did you start your career in music, did you begin with music production and then follow suit into song-writing/singing?' She took a moment to reflect,

'I started as a vocalist from a very early age, starting off with a variety of commercials and I had worked as a feature artist for others, with no credit to begin with. Which I believe is pretty standard for someone who is starting out. Then in 2019, I decided to attend a school called 'LIMPI' (Lillehammer Institute of Music Production and Industries) to push myself and my craft to the next level.

I had been song-writing before that for a variety of Norwegian artists, not fully-fledged in the writing process but rather focused on top-line melodies and arrangements. During my studies the Covid lockdown had hit, and a lot of my fellow producer students had been deeply affected by mental health issues in this period. Nobody wanted to work, everything came to a sudden halt.

It was coming to the end of the semester, and I really couldn't sit there idly so I started producing myself. I met my, now manager, during my time at LIMPI and he really pushed me to start taking the helm and initiative to do things myself.'

As we started to further delve into the industry, discussions of the challenges faced of being a female producer in a male dominated craft unfolded. With a recent study showing that the ratio of male to female producers across 400 popular songs is 41:7. *What are the main challenges you seem to face, and how do you find yourself overcoming them?'*

'When I started back in 2017, I would primarily be working with men which I see as a good thing, as it really develops a tough skin. Personally, I'm very opinionated when it comes to music in general, even more so with my own music. I believe as time went on and I started to develop my own sound and music, had people around me to support me and guide my direction I grew in confidence. This enabled me to push past certain criticisms and strong opinion.

As for many years I had been very insecure about my craft, especially in Norway there are not many women who are doing it all, production, song-writing and engineering.

Going back to what I said earlier, this confidence that was instilled in me through maturing enabled me to become aware and conscious of the way I want things to look/sound, so I see it as an advantage just because I will read and create things differently. That is not to say that there are some incredibly talented men in the industry, as I have worked with countless great guys. I'm just trying to fan my flames, to hunger and strive for my sound to reach the heights I believe it can.'

As we discussed the matter, I mentioned *WondaGurl*, a female producer most notable in the world of US Hip-Hop and Trap for working alongside Travis Scott and Don Toliver. She never quite gets the recognition for her impact on their career and that segment of the industry compared to her male counterparts, which Maggie sympathised with:

'For sure, I mean It has taken me a lot of years and energy to even start convincing people about my craft. It's one of the main reasons I went into producing myself, as I had grown tired of constantly having to explain myself with words.

It was much easier for me to just show you what I meant, being a musician myself, I could just play you some chords or the frame of a sound that I'm looking to create. Rather than explain to another producer who potentially will not understand or grasp the concept that is being brought forward.

There has always been a lot of female heavy-weights in the industry, and I think in the next five to six years we are going to see a shift. I think it needs to be about women stepping-out and being increasingly out-spoken on social media and other platforms. There are currently a lot of healthy conversations going on now which is only going to expand. I mean I'm already seeing several female-producers doing crazy stuff, so it's really great to see.'

Maggie is pioneering a path in a saturated musical space by being unequivocally unique in her independent creative approach to all that she creates. From her tracks to the visualizers, Maggie is setting a benchmark that will not go unnoticed.

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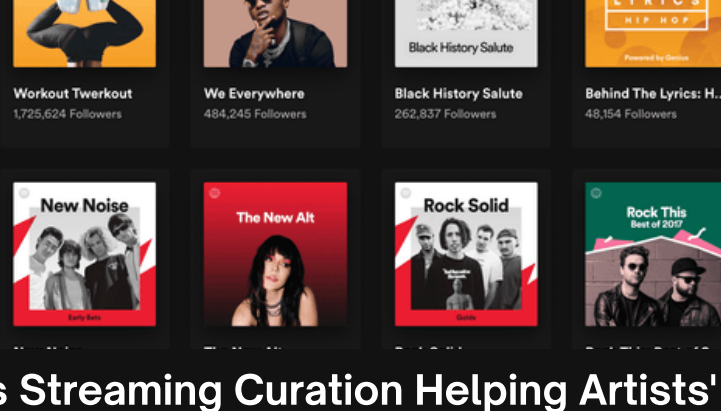
Ramy Abou-Setta

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