

Alliston musician nominated for CMA Ontario's Artist of the Year

Alliston native and country music artist Nicole Rayy has been nominated by the Country Music Association of Ontario for Female Artist of the Year, in nominations announced last week for the eighth annual awards ceremony.

Rayy says she is thrilled to be recognized by the community following a rising star nomination in 2018.

"It feels amazing that I've moved up to this next level of recognition. Just to know that all of my hard work is paying off and I'm being recognized by my peers in the music industry is an honour."

Her latest Extended Play Record (EP), "All Woman," released this past year, showcases a collective fusion of multiple music genres that she loves, such as rock and pop, with country story-telling lyrics.

The message in this EP is drawing inspiration from love and loss.

It is important to Rayy to be honest in her work. As a matter of fact, it is her main objective when writing music.

"That has always been my main goal with my music. It is so important to me. I've always wanted to be as real and as honest as possible when telling my stories so when people listen to them they feel like they are not alone."

Rayy grew up listening to all genres. One of her favourite artists is Detroit's most prolific hip-hop artist, Eminem. She has also loved Kelly Clarkson, Shania Twain and Linkin Park as well.

All of the music she has loved from these four, they all seemingly share one thing in common: their music is written with honesty.

Expanding her music frame of reference and listening to all a broad variety of genres has shaped Rayy into becoming the artist that she is today. When she is asked by others, who she sounds like her answer is quite simple: she sounds like herself.

"I do draw from so many genres, but I think it's been more about finding myself as a person too, just growing up and figuring out who I am. So that has influenced who I am as an artist and the sound that I want to put out there," Rayy said.

Since writing from her teenage years, the first song she ever wrote was entitled, "Only Everything," in high school. It was the first full song she had completed, but she never had the chance to publish it.

After attending Ryerson for one year, Rayy left to pursue a music career. She named her debut EP "Only Everything" in 2012 to commemorate how far she had come. She also has a tattoo of the name to remind herself daily this is what she lives for.

With this nomination, Rayy hopes this opens the door for future concert opportunities.

Being on stage feels natural to her, and she says every artist has to be eager to get back on stage; especially during this time.

Rayy is really looking forward to 2021 for her chance to get back to the big stage.

She is thrilled to have received further recognition in the industry for her continuous hard work and passion for music.

She hopes one day she can sell out a stadium or win a Grammy Award. However, continuing to improve herself as an artist and working hard is the top priority.

Now, during quarantine, Rayy wants her fans to know her love for fitness and nutrition. She graduated from Fit Chicks Academy

with a degree. She wants to highlight it more in her life and teach others of the importance on not just how you look, but how you feel.

Prior to the award ceremony set for October 4, 2020, Rayy will also be releasing a video, requested by fans, of her rapping "Lose Yourself" by Eminem.

The video is already recorded. Stay tuned.

By Robert Belardi