




MUSIC

SCARYPOOLPARTY IS THE RARE VIRTUOSO WHO SHOWED UP TO *AMERICAN IDOL* ALREADY A STAR

THE SONGWRITER BUILT WORLDS OF HIS OWN AND IS BRINGING THEM TO FESTIVAL STAGES. HE TOLD MTV NEWS HOW HE DID IT.



MTV NEWS STAFF 

2h ago

By Lucas Villa

Even though he didn't win the latest season of *American Idol*, nimble-fingered runner-up Alejandro Aranda is already making a splash under his stage name **Scarypoolparty**. Following his time on the show earlier this year, the singer-guitarist-pianist played a string of intimate sold-out concerts this summer, including a coveted slot at Lollapalooza, all leading up to a **theater tour** across the country kicking off October 10. The 25-year-old songwriter is shedding his TV beginnings and inviting fans into the world of Scarypoolparty. But as he told MTV News recently, "Don't let the title fool you."

The name started out as a joke when he was booked for an early gig. "I didn't want to go by my own name because I feel like that's stupid as fuck," Aranda says. "I was like, let me make an even dumber name, so I was at a party and I was like, alright, I'm Scarypoolparty."

For his *American Idol* audition, though, he was just Alejandro, walking out in front of judges Katy Perry, Luke Bryan, and Lionel Richie with a guitar over his shoulder and an unassuming "what's up, homies" greeting. His soaring, complex original song "Out Loud" blew the panel away, and he quickly went viral. That move mirrored Aranda's tenure on the show, where he performed an unprecedented seven original songs alongside singers belting out notable covers. His star power was apparent: People in the crowd sang along to "Out Loud" when Aranda encored it for the finale. "I don't really think I'm special," Aranda told Perry in that audition. "I think I'm just hardworking."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8YZeV9Gttl>

In his audition, Aranda flashed a guitar adeptness that was masterful and somehow not at all showy, and he even played the piano for another original, the alluring "Cholo Love." Though his talent seems like it's been there since birth, Aranda revealed that everything started only a few years ago. "When I turned 20, I was really trying to play music," he says. "I picked up the guitar. I picked up piano, and I was really focusing on playing out in the street, playing at venues, playing at bars, and playing at backyard shows. I was trying to play music for a living."

Prior to *Idol*, Aranda got a real taste of the musician life thanks a chance DM with one of his personal idols. "I reached out to [Twin Shadow](#) online via Instagram with a little video of me playing the piano, and he reached back to me the next day," Aranda says. "Since that day he's helped me with getting my producer's chops. He gave me a computer, a mic interface, and a guitar, and he was like, 'Hey, make music.' Last year he was like, 'Wanna come on the road with me?' And I was like, 'Uh, yeah!' I dropped my jobs, went on the road with him, and all 2018 I was touring with him. I was playing with Twin Shadow, which is insane."

You can hear Twin Shadow's [lush emotionality](#) in Aranda's own music, which spans R&B, electronic, and tender folk ballads. The rest of the inspirations he lists are fittingly across the board in terms of genre. "My musical influences are like Skinny Puppy and Ministry to Nine Inch Nails and Slipknot to Nick Drake and John Lennon," Aranda says. In his *Idol* audition, he jokingly name-dropped Chopin and Bach, but their era of music was very much an influence as well. "I grew up listening to classical music. I think classical music really helped me because it pushes boundaries."

[ALEJANDRO ARANDA'S 'OUT LOUD' IS A PERFECT](#)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B2heiaLBUIE/>

Most of the songs Aranda performed on *Idol* have been released under his Scarypoolparty name, like "Cholo Love" and "Tonight," one of his newest singles co-produced with Twin Shadow. On that stunning cut, his voice hits heavenly highs as he tries to repair a relationship on the rocks. "Baby, I need you to find out where we both went wrong," Aranda sings. He wears his heart on his sleeve in his music.

"I take deeply to relationships, my friends, natural conversations that I have with people, and knowing what current events are," Aranda says. "What I draw inspiration from is like whatever I'm feeling and whatever that energy is — I'm trying to release that. Shit that's current and within me, I just know I got to write it. It's OK to say things. That's my writing process every day: Find out how you're feeling and just say it."

Aranda's songs are usually paired with wild visuals, like the anime clips that were once on his Instagram account and the music videos that highlight his incredible voice while adding more to his mystique. "For any band or any artists, the visuals are something you can portray the lyrics on," he says. "You can paint this canvas out to people for them to really understand what it's about, or you can leave it where you make a music video and it can be a total mystery. I'm heavily involved with the visual stuff."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpckAR5Bxhk>

With a title like "Cholo Love," Aranda acknowledges his brown presence in an indie-pop space that's mostly white. "I don't think there's enough Chicanos and Latinos in the music industry that are in the light of making indie music," he says. "There's so much soul and authenticity in our culture. It's been drowned out by people in the music industry who are pushing out white people. We just need to push it out and be proud of our culture."

One platform Aranda has pushed himself out onto? [The Lollapalooza stage](#). "It was sick," he says. "That's not normal for that many artists to be like, 'Oh yeah, you're debuting at Lollapalooza.'" Aranda recently performed at the Life Is Beautiful Music & Art Festival in Las Vegas, and next month he will appear at the Austin City Limits Music Festival. With all this great exposure, Aranda has also been open about his stage fright and anxiety.

"How I'm kind of like coping with it: I'm trying to stay off social media," Aranda says. "I've been learning to meditate. I've been learning to block out things and thoughts and energies that don't pertain to my soul. I'm fighting my fears every time that I play, so I don't think it will ever go away. Somebody with anxiety knows that you just have to learn how to deal with it better and not let it take over control."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0c4sKpl5omY>

Next month Aranda will kick off his first headlining tour that will feature even more music than the few singles he has out now. "Fans can expect a light show and a complete set of different kinds of music. Really indie, industrial pop," he says. "I'm really leaning toward more of a full-band aesthetic. All the songs you hear are going to be really heavy and really poppy. It's going to be dope."

With the tour and a new EP on the horizon, Aranda has made good on his initial *Idol* appearance in spades. But his drive goes even deeper than that, zeroing in on something you can see right in his face the moment he walked into his audition: "I'm coming from a place of pure, honest love for music."

Filed Under:

POP

R&B

MUSIC

SCARYPOOLPARTY

AMERICAN IDOL

[SHOW MORE STORIES](#)

By using this site, you agree to its [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#).

