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Scarypoolparty's world has blown up since 'American Idol'



Scarypoolparty had only been making music for a few years before he appeared on the latest season of “American Idol,” competing under his real name, Alejandro Aranda.

The singer-songwriter, 25, was one of the only “Idol” finalists to ever perform songs he’d written himself, which may be part of the reason he only came in second, and the judges were fulsome in their praise. “I just feel like I’m in the presence of greatness,” said Luke Bryan. Katy Perry asked if she could roadie for Aranda on his almost-instantly-sold-out first headlining tour, which hits the Vic Theatre Wednesday. Stevie Nicks said he made her cry (she wasn’t actually a judge, but still).

After “Idol,” things started happening quickly. Aranda signed a deal with Hollywood Records, and began work on a debut album that will showcase his emo-y industrial folk. He performed his first full-band show just a few months ago, at Lollapalooza. His hometown of Pomona, California, where Aranda had recently toiled as a dishwasher, threw him a parade. His friend Twin Shadow, who gave him an early break when he recruited Aranda for his touring band, is now opening for him.

In a recent phone interview, Scarypoolparty broke down his almost unrecognizably weird new life. The following is an edited transcript of that conversation:

Q: This feels fast. Does it feel fast to you?

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A: Yeah, it feels extremely fast. It feels kind of like a dream, in a sense.



Q: It must be a hard transition, to be on the show and all these famous judges are telling you how great you are and millions of people are supporting you, and then the show ends, and you're just sort of cast out to figure it out for yourself.

A: For me, it's not really a transition. You're just an artist. It matters how you view your music and how you view your identity. It was a good opportunity for me to showcase my songs, which they allowed me to. I'm still the same coming in and out. I don't think I'll ever change that mentality.

Q: Did "Idol" change how you approach making music in any way?

A: Not really. It kind of put me in this weird state where I wasn't really writing songs, because you're busy recording the show. I was in this weird kind of place. I wasn't really writing, but I was trying to stay true to writing every day, practicing every day. It was actually kind of hard to be on that show and try to write music. Coming out of it was a breath of air.

Q: You didn't really pick up a guitar 'til you were 20, right?

A: Yeah, I picked up everything later in life, because I never really had, not, like, the motivation, but I grew up in a city where you're working in warehouses and you're working jobs to stay afloat. I never thought it would go anywhere if I tried to pursue music.

Q: When did you know you were good?

A: I don't think I am good (laughs).

Q: Even though you know on an intellectual level that contestants who lose tend to do better in their careers, is there a part of you that gets really caught up in it, and just wants to win?

A: For me it was like I was on this weird ride, where I know I love music, and this was just the loops-you're going up on the ride, then you're going down in a free fall. I never came into the show thinking I want to win it. I was legit just experiencing it, and taking everything as it comes.



Q: They were definitely working the angle of you being a dishwasher.

A: Like anybody in any career, you have a lot of jobs, but they definitely worked that angle. ... Even when I was a musician, I was still working jobs, and on that hustle and getting work anywhere I could, so it's not a bad thing. It's just what you need to do, I guess.

Q: You're doing some dates with Twin Shadow. You were recently working for him.

A: I was working for Twin Shadow for all last year. We both have this relationship which is nothing but goodness. ... He helped out at a time that I legit had nothing. I can't stress that enough. I absolutely had nothing. I had no place to stay. I had barely enough food, like, if I was really hungry, I can't even go to Del Taco and get something off their value menu. I was really broke and I was really at a low point, and he came in and helped me out. He definitely took me under his wing.