

## **Lindsay Ellyn - Bio**

“When we get on down to the heart of it, we’re full of good intentions and full of shit,” Lindsay Ellyn sings on the chorus of “Dirty Fingers,” the opening track from her forthcoming self-penned debut album, *Queen of Nothing*.

It’s a strong statement to start out a debut album, but one that leads listeners to admit their humanity, as well as everyone else’s — no one’s perfect, and we’re all trying to make the best of it. That theme runs through much of the album’s 10 tracks as Lindsay works through deep regrets and missed opportunities, her relationships with herself and those around her, and life’s inevitable heartbreaks.

“They say Nashville is a five-year town,” she says. “It took me five years to try lots of different things and then come back to *my* voice and *my* thing. I spent so many years stressing about what I ‘should’ be doing and how my songs ‘should’ be coming together. I finally decided I’m just going to do what I want to do and make the album I want to make.”

The aforementioned “Dirty Fingers” is partly autobiographical, as are several of the other tracks on *Queen of Nothing*, extolling the complex pieces of life and, in a way, reclaiming how messy it can be. It’s okay if the story of a life isn’t always pretty — in fact, maybe it’s a little more interesting if that’s the case.

“There’s destructive alcoholism on one side of my family, and navigating that trauma for most of my life turned me into a realist at a very young age,” she says. “I think if you really get to the heart of someone, there’s a sincere willingness to do the right thing and be a good person, but life is hard and we’re all flawed, so you get what you get. I was thinking about attending Catholic church growing up, and how people bless themselves with Holy Water as they enter and leave the church. You have people coming in every week vowing to do good and do better, but people are human so they continue to make mistakes, or hurt people, or indulge in vices. It’s like *dipping dirty fingers in the holy water*, I thought.”

Lindsay grew up in New Jersey and began playing piano in elementary at the behest of her mother, her love of which deepened later by her discovery of Tori Amos. In high school, she switched to guitar — it seemed easier among her long list of responsibilities, including summer classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she later attended college.

“Hard to Forget” was written about a handful of girls who lived in Lindsay’s apartment complex growing up, the kind of carefree rulebreakers who dot the backs of anyone’s mind when daydreaming about the bold, unapologetic qualities we sometimes still wonder if we might possibly embody ourselves, even years later in life.

“It’s fascinating how certain people in your formative years can be imprinted on your memory forever,” she says. “As an adult, I can look back with some sensitivity and realize that these were girls who were battling a lot of things — absent parents, the allure of drugs, unhealthy attention

from men. But as a young girl, there's nothing more alluring or more dangerous than older teenagers who break all the rules."

After Lindsay moved to New York, she worked in various aspects of the fashion industry, first working on the editorial side of the business as a journalist and editor, then working in-house as a writer for major fashion and media brands.

"Somebody Love Those Girls" is a vulnerable look at both getting older and being a woman who's trying to find her place in life outside of societal expectations. "I wrote this song when I was living in New York, which is a hell of a place to try and find the love of your life," she says. "A lot of this record, of course, is influenced by the female experience. This song is really a cautionary tale about toxic love, and patterns I've observed that end in women putting ridiculous ultimatums on life and end in bad decisions like sticking with bad partners instead of being alone."

Lindsay's relationship with both of her parents is referenced at several different points in *Queen of Nothing*, perhaps most pointedly as she existentially ponders the afterlife in "Glory, Glory," an upbeat number that almost begs for a sing-along — if you don't pay too much attention to the lyrics.

"I was wondering what the hell is going to happen to me and my loved ones when we die," she says, making a sarcastic note that this is the type of existential question that keeps her up at night. "My mom is an incredible person — a single mother and selfless, hardworking teacher who raised two daughters by herself. My father, on the other hand, was an absentee alcoholic who lived a life rife with bad decisions and only recently got sober via his newfound faith. What happens if they're both 'standing at the gates,' so to speak?"

Though Lindsay is happily married now, *Queen of Nothing* also examines past romantic relationships and what she's learned about herself through them. "Helpless" centers around the kind of defeating situations that can, at the same time, still feel difficult to separate from, while "Where You're Going" wishes a partner well after an anticlimactic breakup where things simply didn't work out. "Raising Hell" offers the opposite side of the coin, a revenge song through-and-through.

"I love Miranda Lambert, the queen of revenge songs, so I wanted to write something in that same vein, and made up this story for the sake of the song," she says. "What I didn't know was that at the time I was 'the other woman' in a relationship and didn't know it. Was there something buried deep in my subconscious that inspired this cheating song? Who knows, but it kind of spooked me the way it all played out."

Lindsay didn't start writing songs and performing publicly until her mid-20's and didn't consider pursuing music seriously until a couple of years later. "I'm a bit of a late bloomer in that regard, I guess," she says. "I admire artists like Patty Griffin and Lucinda Williams who didn't hit their stride until a little later in life. I have an entire other career that I'm very passionate about, but the reality is I love music, I love writing songs, and I like dreaming about

one day being able to do it for a living. What even is life if you don't have dreams? Just work week after work week until you die?"

"Mercy Drum" dives into the ways in which things you've done, or seen, or experienced can continue to impact your life long after the event. "I don't think it's healthy to dwell in the past and I'm an advocate for always moving forward in your life, but oftentimes that's easier said than done," she says.

"Pieces of Things" is narrative storytelling at its best, focusing on vignettes that solidify the idea that life is, in fact, more than the sum of its parts.

One of the most affecting threads that runs through *Queen of Nothing* is Lindsay's refusal to be anything but exactly who she is, a fact which is perhaps most notable on the album's title track. It's an anthemic embrace of the parts of life that can be difficult and hard to reconcile, written in a way that finds Lindsay reclaiming some of life's low points, and celebrating them, even.

"It's the antithesis to the proverbial having it all — it's about losing, and wistfully surrendering yourself to that feeling," she says. "There's an inherent freedom in those down moments when you feel like you've got nothing to lose."

*"I know about second chances, and showing back up when it counts the most,"* she sings. And with that, it seems evident Lindsay Ellyn isn't going anywhere anytime soon.