

Lizzy McAlpine

Older



album artwork

Through her intimate folk-pop songs, Lizzy McAlpine captures universal emotions with cinematic specificity. The 24-year-old singer/songwriter/producer established herself as a “dealer of devastation” (*Billboard*) with her masterfully written 2022 album *Five Seconds Flat*, whose breakthrough global hit “Ceilings” cemented her as a generational voice. Now, McAlpine prepares her major label debut, *Older*, due out April 5 via RCA, which sees the artist revealing a mature, stripped-down sound—one that’s grounded in artistic integrity and an assured sense of self.

With its delicately complex palette of melancholic piano, swelling strings, and dreamy lap steel, *Older* shows McAlpine at her most ambitious and honest, as she captures the highs and lows of a period of huge life transitions: She moved to Los Angeles, signed to a label, rose to fame, played sold-out dates across the U.S., U.K. and Europe, and fell in and out of love. Amid the whirlwind of change, McAlpine realized that she didn’t want to be an artist who chases fame, or makes career decisions just because everyone else has done them. “Starting to not think about awards or commercial success, I think that freed me in a lot of ways,” she explains. “With *Older*, I wanted to strip away everything and find what sounded like me.”

So McAlpine embarked on a three-year-long journey of searching for the right instrumentation, constant tinkering, and re-recording, as she crafted *Older* alongside co-producers Mason Stoops and Ryan Lerman. Sticking to her own guns resulted in the album’s sophisticated and timeless production, especially compared to the

more pop-oriented, eclectic direction of *Five Seconds Flat*. Yet her introspective writing on *Older* still possesses the gut-punch impact that makes a Lizzy McAlpine song. “I just want to make art that makes people feel,” she says.

Writing the album’s title track “Older” marked a turning point for McAlpine. She started writing the LP while navigating a long-running, unstable relationship that has since ended. “I’m stuck. I don’t know what to do. I wish I could just let it go.” I was in that headspace for the majority of the songs, and it was so tiresome to be in this cycle,” she explains.

Yet when she started penning “Older,” she found herself turning her focus from this ex-lover to more broader reflections on her relationship to time passing, her growth as a person, and her family. “I was in a completely different place,” she reflects. “I was seeing my lyrics in a different way and with a different meaning.” Suddenly, the meanings of the other songs on the LP started to shift as well, bringing McAlpine to a place of compassion for her younger self.

Elsewhere on *Older*, McAlpine showcases emotive vocal performances and her sharpening songwriting skills, as she relays her experiences through vivid images: a cigarette in an outstretched hand, a piece of broken glass, a carousel ride. Though she cycles through a whirlwind of emotions—from the magical facade when meeting someone new on “Come Down Soon” to imposter syndrome on “Movie Star” and self-blame on “Better Than You”—and ultimately finds the will to keep moving forward.

The intimacy of *Older* also stems from the fact that many of the songs were recorded with a live band in the studio, playing together in one room. The project first started with McAlpine inviting session musicians like Pino Palladino (bass), Jon Brion (piano), Matt Chamberlain (drums), Rob Moose (strings), Aaron Sterling (drums), and CJ Camerieri (french horn/flugelhorn/trumpet). Then, mid-way through, she realized that she wanted one consistent band to foster a more rich and harmonious sound. This band, led by Mason Stoops, was made up of Taylor Mackall (piano/pump organ/mellotron), Tyler Nuffer (guitar/pedal steel), Ryan Richter (lap steel), Michael Libramento (drums/bass/guitar) and Sam KS and Ted Poor (drums).

Even sounds of the piano bench creaking are captured, giving *Older* a truly special and personal aura. “I love those little moments where you can feel the human quality of it,” McAlpine says. “We were all just playing together and seeing what happened, and it felt so emotional that way. It feels like everybody in the room is all connected.”

McAlpine has come a long way since her beginnings in the suburbs of Philadelphia, where she started writing songs on piano at age 12 and soon after picked up guitar. In high school, she honed her voice by recording original tracks and covers and uploading them to SoundCloud and YouTube. “That’s where I found joy,” she says. Soon after enrolling in the Berklee School of Music, she found a burgeoning online audience and then quickly ascended as an independent force with her first album, 2020’s *Give Me a Minute*.

She reached even greater heights with the critically-acclaimed *Five Seconds Flat*, accompanied by a Gus Black-directed short film that McAlpine wrote and starred in. Riding the immense success of “Ceilings,” and with collaborations with Jacob Collier, Dodie, and Finneas already under her belt, she released the singles “Call Your Mom” with Noah Kahan and “You Could Start a Cult” with Niall Horan in 2023.

Although McAlpine has achieved accomplishments that some artists would dream of, her goal isn’t to keep getting bigger just for the sake of it. “I’m not necessarily chasing the accolades or fame anymore,” she says, explaining that the process of making *Older* has helped her local priorities as an artist. Instead, she aims to create works that truly connect with people. She also hopes to expand that mission with future forays into acting and theatrical performances.

“A lot of people come up to me and say, ‘This song got me through a breakup,’ or ‘This song inspired me to write more,’” McAlpine says. “I’ve heard couples say, ‘This was *our* song.’ It’s amazing to hear people have used these songs to help them through their life experiences. I hope that happens with *Older*, too.”

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