**ALANA MARIA**

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West London raised Alana Maria was always destined to be in the limelight of creative arts. Born to Nigerian and Dominican heritage, a young Alana would pursue a spectrum of creative arts, from ballet to street dance and even acting, before finally discovering her true passion for singing and song writing. “I’ve grown up in a musical background, my family's musical, so since young I've always been into music. Acting, singing, dancing or playing an instrument - I juggled all of that when I was younger. I started with ballet, tap dance, and then I went straight to street dance and I wanted to be an actual choreographer for a good few years,” she says with a smile. “I was always singing throughout that time. But it wasn't yet a passion. I was just singing when I wanted to. And then out of nowhere it kind of just surpassed the rest. And just like that, everything else felt boring compared to music.”

Racking up over 500,000 streams in under a year, coveted international features and a rapidly growing fanbase, Alana’s meteoric rise quickens as she continues to cement herself as one of the UK’s rising musical sensations. The now 20-year-old R&B/pop vocalist and songwriter is widely known for her breakout single “Happier”, which debuted in 2020 garnering widespread popularity, critical acclaim and co-signs from industry tastemakers and moguls Pa Salieu, Pink Sweats and even MTV. Trench described it as “an instructional anthem”.

Alana’s sampling and adaption of early 90’s classic “There’s Nothing Like This” by soul singer Omar on “Happier” illustrates her open sonic palette and flawless, honeyed vocals. “I recorded ‘Happier’ months before it was released, like a whole year maybe. I just felt like it was the perfect introduction to me. It’s a song that doesn't say too much about me, but it says enough.”

Distilling a vibrant, self-loving spirit into the single, her follow up release saw Alana collaborate with some of the UK R&B scenes most revered vocalists with her verse on “All Me - Pt 2” featuring Ling Hustle, Rebecca Garton and Tia Carys amassing over 250,000 streams.

“It was crazy because I was in the studio and I just got a call saying, ‘oh, would you like to be on the song?’ It was really short notice, like a few days,” she reflects. “And I said, OK, I'll do a verse on it. When I received the instrumental, there was only Ling Hustle's verse on it that I hadn't heard the chorus. So I was like, oh, I'm just going to put my own sauce on it and just really make my verse my own. When I eventually heard everyone else, it just was really nice because we were so different. But it all came together really well and yet we hadn't met before.”

Alana describes her music as “expressive”, “versatile” and “Urban but still Pop”. Creatively, her sound nods to classic R&B, Soul and Neo-soul influences and she cites the likes of Brandy, SZA, Kehlani, Jhene Aiko, Summer Walker and Kiana Ledé as some of the musicians that have inspired her sound. “Brandy was my number one inspiration. Her music kind of helped me find my base in a way and a lot of people would compare me to her.”

“It starts with the beat, the beat has to touch me. I need to feel like I can put myself in an instrumental and really feel vulnerable. And then I will just start to pour out. Being able to have a beat and just be extremely vulnerable, it turns into art.”

2020 marked the start of a new chapter in Alana’s career, unveiling a standout collaboration with dancehall superstar Kranium on “My Heart” alongside a catalogue of soon-to-be released R&B anthems. The West London songstress hopes to convey a strong sense of authenticity and positivity throughout her music and future releases stating:

“My music stands for being yourself. Understanding that things might not always work out the way that they do, but it's meant to happen that way anyway. It’s about being happy, loving yourself, treating yourself right, being around good people. Just a happy feeling. That's what my music is, that that's what I want it to stand for.”