



FINALLY FREE

Lily Allen's latest album is an ode to living with No Shame.

BY KAYLA A. GREAVES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAT THROWER

When Lily Allen made her musical debut back in 2006 with *Alright, Still*, the world was a much different place. Digital media were not yet at their prime, past mistakes had a way of disappearing from public memory as magazines left the shelf, and “receipts” were nothing more than a proof of purchase. Today, with the Internet, social media, and the staying power of scandals, it can be much more vicious—one reason why the 32-year-old believes many artists tend to hold back in their music these days.

“I think performers like self-preservation,” Allen says. “Just don’t put too much out there and then it won’t come back to hurt you. But that’s really not what [music] was invented for.”

Internet tabloids aside, it’s clear that with her latest album, *No Shame*, out on June 8th, the mother of two is no longer afraid to lay it all out on the table. And she’s hoping listeners can connect. “There is a need for me to speak about my experiences. I think that’s how you work through anything,” she explains. “I guess that’s why some of the subject matter on this album has been kind of hard to listen to—I went through some very deep stuff and I don’t think that’s unique to me.”

Through this 14-track journey, Allen admits that she started the project in quite a dark place, touching not only on her divorce from Sam Cooper, but also some nasty allegations that surrounded her at the time. One of the most hurtful, presumably, was about her parenting, which she speaks on in track one, “Come On Then,” singing, “Yeah, I’m a bad mother, I’m a bad wife / You saw it on the socials, you read it online.”

But despite these cruel claims, it’s obvious motherhood is paramount for Allen, as she shared that putting her children before her career was part of the reason why the record took about four years to complete. “They’re just amazing beings, and they’re happy and they’re stable and they’re doing well in school and they’re growing properly,” she says with an obvious feeling of joy in her voice. “Every time my kids speak, I feel overwhelmed with pride.”

Leaning on a few dancehall beats and artists, the influence of a genre Allen says played a huge part in her West London upbringing, the album ends off on a more optimistic, upbeat tune. Singing about moving forward and being open to love once again, the Brit concludes the record belting out, “I don’t see no reason / You can’t have your cake and eat it.”

When asked how long it took her to get to a place of *No Shame*, Allen’s answer was refreshingly honest. “I guess it’s taken me up until now, really,” she confesses. “I guess I’ve really let those [problems] cripple me. Well, not let them...They began to cripple me, but I was able to confront them.” And her form of therapy? Simply making music.