

WYNWAVES

THE MUSIC INDUSTRY FOR INDEPENDENT ARTISTS



FEATURES
DECEMBER 2023



AN INTERVIEW WITH N4MLOCK PART. 1



Where are you located?

Myself and the rest of our group called RETAP are situated in the heart of Europe, Prague - Czech Republic.

How did your musical journey begin?

So, our journey's got some funny twists to it.

Back in 2020, me and my friend Tomáš Hrubý, who's our producer at the moment, started to show interest in music. Now, before that, we were just Minecraft YouTubers, so we had a basic mic that set us back around 80 euros. One day, Tomáš suggested, "Let's try to do a rap track, just for fun" (we were seriously bored, HAHA). Now, we didn't have a clue about FL Studio or Cubase, so we put together our first track using Sony Vegas, a video editing tool. There were only 2 audio tracks (one for the beat and one for our vocals). We made our first song like that called "Pouliční Opera" (that's "Street Opera" in English). Looking back, it was a bit of a laugh. I was READING rhymes I found online, and the storyline? Well, let's just say it was a work in progress. But to be honest, Tomáš did some really good job. We dropped a few tracks like that on SoundCloud, keeping it low-key for our inner circle.

Fast forward a year and a half – we discovered this cool recording studio owned by the Unbeatable Records crew. These guys were doing really funny rap battles, dressed as Czech celebs, singers, politicians and even fictional characters. They were successful with that! We loved the atmosphere in the studio, setting us back around 40 euros an hour to record there. We made our first album, "RETAP" (named after our crew) there. It turned out pretty damn good.

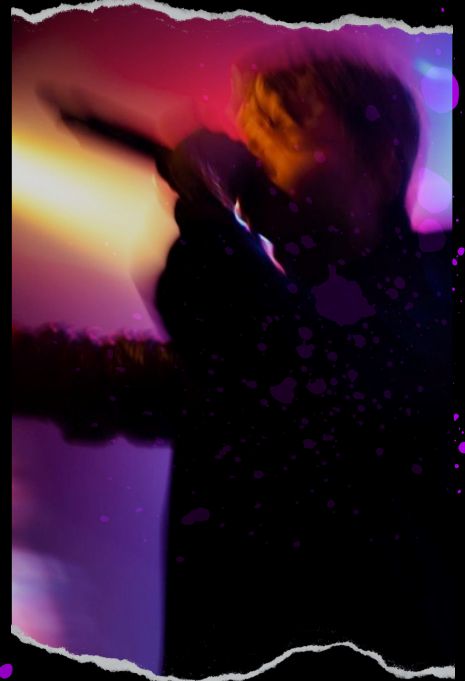
We were hyped! Got that album on Spotify, Apple Music – everywhere. Started doing some gigs, and connected with Sekki and XSuicideX – solid underground rappers who hopped on board later on. The history's a bit of a long rollercoaster, but I'm genuinely thankful for every twist and turn!

What has been your biggest inspiration as an artist?

This question is pretty funny. Apart from my friends, who are one of my biggest inspirations of course, some might assume I had to be a hardcore rap fan to get into it, but that's not my story. Unlike my great friend XSuicideX, a great rapper and a big XXXTENTACION fan, I wasn't really into rap back then, and it's not a big part of my playlist even today.

When I was around 10 years old, my playlist was just three songs deep – "Not Afraid" by Eminem, "Drag Me Down" and "Story Of My Life" by One Direction. Yeah, it might sound a bit unusual.

In 2017, everything changed when I discovered a band called Linkin Park. Their music completely changed my perspective, sparking my interest in music. I loved and still love the same way the heavy guitars, deep lyrics, the mix of screams and rap – everything about them. When Chester Bennington, their frontman, committed suicide the same year I discovered them, it hit me hard. I became even more emotionally attached to the band, diving even more into every detail about their history and music. Thanks to Linkin Park, I started playing the drums and eventually got into rap. While I never dove as deeply into the rap scene as most of my friends and mates, I'm okay with that. I believe the nu-metal music reflects into my tracks and adds a unique soul that sets it apart from the ordinary.



PART. 2

Have you used any form of promotional materials to get your music heard? If so, what did you use and why? Was it successful?

Promotion is a big deal, no doubt. But to be honest, I'm not really into grinding on TikTok and Instagram Reels 24/7. I drop them only when something major's going down – like a show or a new release. And it's not about doing some funny and entertaining stuff... it's more about sharing mostly the important stuff – dates, venue names – not getting into wild stunts like dancing half-naked or taking ice-cold showers like our boy Jay88 (no disrespect, bro, you know I love you). I'm not a big fan of the whole influencer thing. But, my crew? That's a whole different story. Our manager Rostyslav and my guy XSuicideX, are crushing it on those platforms, handling the promo game for me, if you know what I mean, haha.

What is your biggest achievement in your music career to date?

That's a tough one. We've had so many incredible moments – meeting great people, creating awesome tracks, collaborations, and all those studio sessions. The journey's been rich with experiences. But if we're talking about stand-out memories, two unforgettable shows come to mind. First off, we played on Kamina Boat on the Vltava River in Prague, pulling in about 90 fans. The energy was through the roof, and it turned into a great show. Then, there's the iconic Chapeau Rouge, the underground club that's got that authentic feel. Around 130 fans came to see us live, and both shows were absolute bangers! Kamina was a blast, full of energetic fans, but Chapeau brought a different kind of heat.

Three hype men got the crowd pumped, and when I started to sing my favourite track "Čekám Na Ráno" ("Waiting For The Morning"), the entire crowd knew the lyrics and sang them with me – a surreal moment! It even got me doing a reel about it, which is pretty rare for me, haha! In Chapeau, we played the longest track list ever – 45 tracks long. We went for a solid 2.5 hours, and it got so intense that our friend Victor Kal almost lost his voice. Big shoutout to DJ Teep, our main man on the decks – he killed it on both shows! These gigs are at the top of our list, defining moments that are giving us the energy and hype to deliver even more shows!

What are your goals for the future?

I've got a bunch of goals across different aspects of my journey. In terms of physical achievements, sharing the stage with well-known musicians and rappers is a big dream – there's something about performing for a massive audience that every musician dreams of. Also, I'm looking to amp up our live performance game. Four shows a year just isn't enough for me. I need the energy and connection of being on stage more frequently. And, let's be honest, having some decent earnings to share with my crew would be a great reward of the hard work we're putting in together.

Now, let's shift away from the whole "chasing fame" topic. It's not my main focus. One of my most significant dreams goes beyond personal recognition. Mental health is a real struggle for me; I've been diagnosed with clinical depression. However, I'm not looking to centre my music around my struggles. Instead, I aim to open up discussions about mental health, letting people know they're not battling their demons alone. Through my music, I hope to bring a sense of safety and connection, especially for those dealing with similar struggles. I want to reach out to folks who might be feeling lost in their lives. I even include a part about mental health in our shows, talking about it openly. Sure, some people might laugh when a rapper gets real about feeling down, but I know some people need to hear those kind words. So, to sum it up, I want to bring happiness, safety, love, and peace – and I hope to take it to bigger stages over time.

What is the best piece of advice you could give to an artist who's just starting out?

NEVER GIVE UP and YOU DO YOU!

Yeah, it might sound a bit like your grandma's old advice, but believe me, it's the realest truth I can share. I've been in the music grind for three years, and in that time, I've seen some questionable rappers blow up, talking about drugs, killing people and beating women. But here's the real talk – don't let their questionable content mess with your hustle. Staying true to your craft is the only way to longevity. Now, when someone tries to throw shade, telling you to give up or ditch your dreams, that's your sign to grind harder. Let that negativity be the fuel that pushes you forward. Trust me, three years might feel like a long time in the game, but mark my words, 3 years is nothing and one day, if you won't give up, you're gonna see that undeniable progress. The grind doesn't have a set end date, and the blow-up is as legit as it gets. Keep hustling, keep pushing – that's the only way to get to the top. It's a marathon, not a sprint, and your time is coming, no doubt. The journey ain't always easy, but the ones who fight for their stuff, are the ones who rise. Stay true to the hustle. Let your grind speak louder than the doubts.

Is there anything you would do differently in your music career if you could start over?

Thinking about hitting rewind and doing things differently? I've made a lot of mistakes, but you know what? I wouldn't change a damn thing. Every misstep, every stumble, it's like levelling up in the game, part of the journey that shapes who I am. Now, changing my perspective? Yeah, maybe being less naive. But here's the thing – it's not just a look back. It's about preparing for what's next. Learning from the past is cool, but staying prepared for the future? That's the move. So, to sum it up, I wouldn't do anything differently, all the mistakes shaped me into who I am now. I just want to learn from the past, be less naive and be prepared for what's coming.

AN INTERVIEW WITH

FRANK BRAMBLE

Where are you located?

I am located in Birmingham City Centre.

How did your musical journey begin?

Technically it started in 2015, when I originally started studying Music Technology at Ashby School. However, I believe the Journey began around 2018, when I was proactively collaborating with local acts such as Space Toast and Dan Hewitt. We were really good mates, so we would just go around to his house over the summer writing, recording and mixing new songs! That was my first true exposure to the industry.

What has been your biggest inspiration as an artist?

As time passed my inspirations shifted drastically, in the beginning, it was Dan, then I studied in Birmingham at BIMM, and my inspirations became too numerous to count. BIMM was the most diverse environment I'd ever worked within, and to top it all off, everyone was good, really good. That was a turning point for me, the realisation that if I wanted to carry this on professionally, my standards would need to take a dramatic leap, fortunately, we were all in the same boat pretty much.

Have you used any form of promotional materials to get your music heard? If so, what did you use and why? Was it successful?

I released my first single in 2019, The 4AM Song, and since then every year has been spent experimenting with different promotional strategies. I've used Facebook/Instagram ads, which tend to be successful if you can narrow down your audience. My main focus more recently has been blogs and playlists, using sites like Musosoup and SubmitHub. Additionally, this year I've been livestreaming on Twitch.tv/Frank0Producer weekly. With streams restarting in the new year!

What is your biggest achievement in your music career to date?

I would have to say my contract with Slip Stream! I got the opportunity through Syncr.com, and it gave me the chance to release an electronic album called "Electricity", making 2023 my best performing year as an artist, so far.

What are your goals for the future?

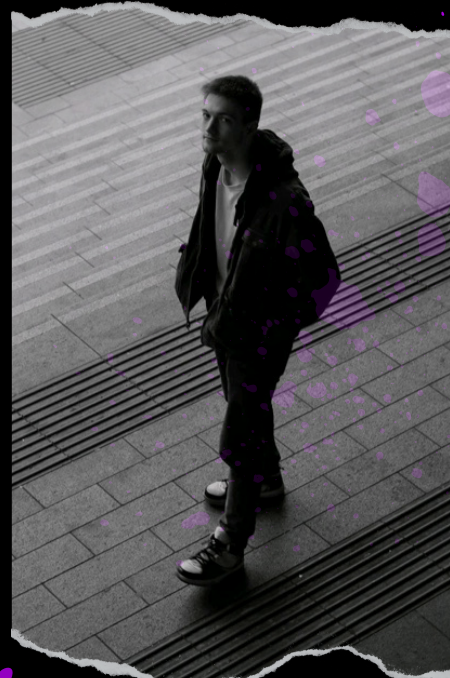
I think in the next year I'm going to slow down my releases with maybe a couple of songs coming out, and shift focus over to more sync work with my electronic tracks, nothing is set in stone so I might even end up going the opposite way.

What is the best piece of advice you could give to an artist who's just starting out?

Take your time.

Is there anything you would do differently in your music career if you could start over?

With my first couple of releases, I'd have created more content and been more prepared for the releases. However, these releases are how I've bettered my knowledge, so the lessons learnt weren't ignored.



AN INTERVIEW WITH **LILAC** PART. 1



Where are you located?

We're from Pittsburgh, PA (USA).

How did your musical journey begin?

The two of us, Sami and Jamie, actually met in college - freshman year we ended up in the same dorm hallway. Jamie went to high school with Sami's roommate, so that was how we were first introduced. As the year went on, our friendship blossomed, and we decided to be roommates until we graduated. Both of us were huge music fans and constantly used it as a motivator and medicine for our mental health. We would go to concerts (still do) and stay up late talking about our inspirations and dreams. Finally, one day we asked ourselves if making music was something that WE could do. The idea was so exciting, but also completely terrifying for two somewhat shy people. For a while (years, actually) we were afraid to jump in. Imposter syndrome is something we both struggle with, and it holds us back from taking the step towards our dream. Finally, after graduating, we decided to take a songwriting class together, which kind of kick-started what we are doing now! Sami learned how to produce music and Jamie started learning how to play drums. While we are still new, we are trying to figure out our path as independent artists. However, we have finally reached the tipping point from being paralyzed by fear, to being energized by it. It is a vulnerable experience to write music, especially from the perspective of people who struggle with mental health at times, but we are finally doing it. And we want to keep doing it!

What has been your biggest inspiration as an artist?

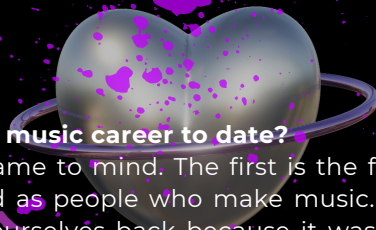
Mental health is key to our mission. As we mentioned before, we've relied on music to help us personally as we navigate our lives. One of our favourite artists, and one who has no doubt inspired us and brought us closer together over the years, is Twenty One Pilots. They are a two-man show from Ohio (not too far from our hometown in PA) who have written songs that depict a very honest story of their mental health journeys. We've seen them in concert so many times that we've both lost count and have even slept on the sidewalk just to get a good spot in the General Admission pit. Every time we go to a show, we realize that we are surrounded by people who have experienced the same type of pain/insecurities as we have. Our music isn't like Twenty One Pilots, and we don't try to make it that way, but we do hope to inspire people similarly. We make music for us because it feels right, but we hope other people will get something out of it too. Our biggest dream is to build a supportive community of people who feel understood when they listen to our music.

Have you used any form of promotional materials to get your music heard? If so, what did you use and why? Was it successful?

We have released only a couple of songs so far, but over the last year and a half, our biggest source of promotion has been through social media but growing it has been an interesting experience. Neither of us is a social media savant, so that has been something we continue to learn about and grow, but we're pretty proud of how far we've come! We also have a blog that supports our music and has been another way to interact with people through articles that coincide with our different releases. Recently, we've been trying to grow our audience with playlist placements, so we've experimented with using SubmitHub and so far, we think it's great! Aside from those avenues, we've also made other connections via social media by DMing accounts that we believe share the same values as us, which has helped increase our exposure a little more than when we first started. Not only that, but we've also made some cool friends along the way!



PART. 2



What is your biggest achievement in your music career to date?

This is kind of a tricky one. Two answers came to mind. The first is the fact that we finally did it. We finally put ourselves out there to be judged/perceived as people who make music. We talked so much about it and were constantly dreaming of doing it but held ourselves back because it was scary. However, we finally reached the realization that we would never genuinely be "ready" because as long as there is fear, we will always want to protect ourselves and stay in our comfort zones, but the only way to grow and truly achieve our goals is to just do it. The second answer that came to mind was reaching over 1,000 streams for our song "Hello, Friend." For newbies, we are stoked! That was before we even got into learning about playlist placements and had little idea of how to promote a song on social media, so that was a huge motivator for us.

What are your goals for the future?

We have so many ideas for music, but our main goal is to keep releasing. We hope that as our journey continues, our audience will grow and so will that sense of community. A short-term goal, though, is that we want to push ourselves to play live shows in 2024. Kind of a scary thing for two introverts, but we know that we can do it!

What is the best piece of advice you could give to an artist who's just starting out?

One thing that we have been fortunate enough to experience in our short run as artists, has been connecting with other creatives through social media. When you first start out, you have your friends and family to support you, but it's also important to build relationships with other artists and creatives who can give you advice and relate to your journey. There are certainly pitfalls to avoid when you are trying to grow as an independent artist, so having a reliable and trustworthy guide on that journey is key. So, look for those people. Foster those relationships. You will not regret it.

Is there anything you would do differently in your music career if you could start over?

We talk about this all the time - that if we could go back, we would start earlier. In hindsight, that is easy to say. We love making music and wish that we had been doing it all along. But, to cut ourselves some slack, the people we are today are not necessarily the people that we were when we first had the dream to pursue music. We have gone through a lot - good and bad. We've grown into our personalities more and have become more confident in who we are. Not the case for college-era Sami and Jamie! Sometimes there's this looming stigma that you have to achieve certain goals by a certain age, so it weighs on us that we've only just begun releasing our music. But everyone's journeys are different and while some may be confident enough to start pursuing their dreams at a younger age, others may find it more difficult until they experience more of life. So, that is why we try to encourage other people to follow their dreams, while also taking it easy on yourself and protecting your mental health.

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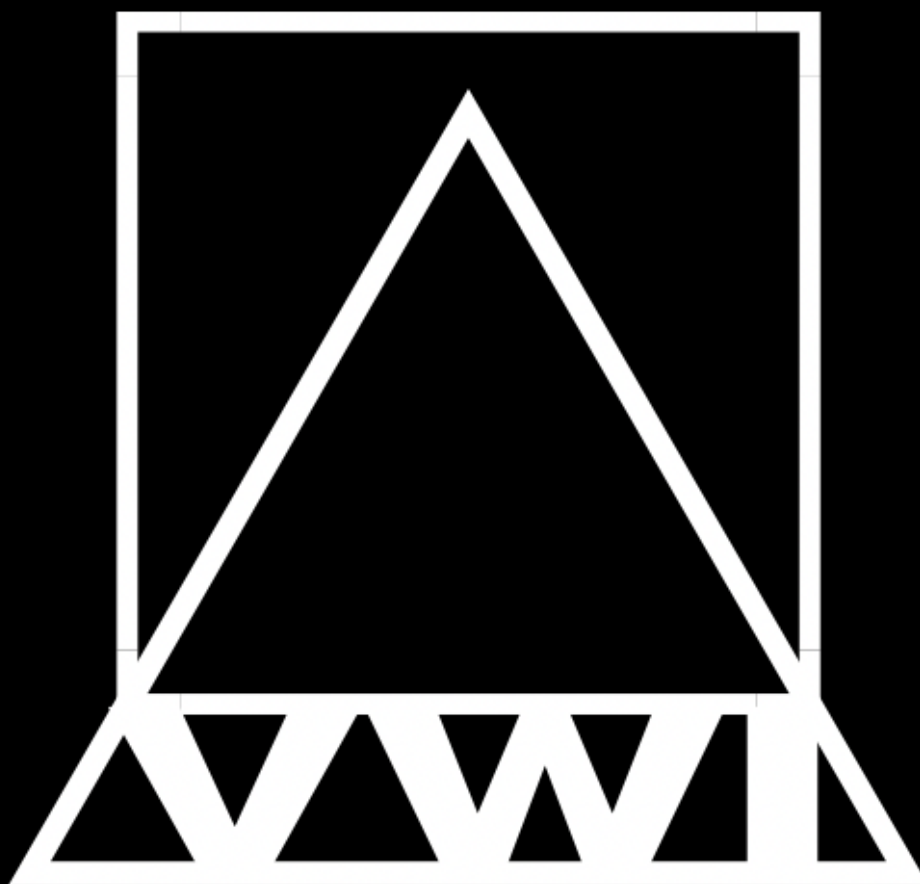
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GRATUITIES

Thank you to all artists who have participated in features with us! Creating a community is what we strive to achieve through this project!



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