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AN INTERVIEW WITH STORM FORD



by [Kleo Sincere](#)

As I sit in the recording studio of New Urban Arts a cacophony fills the small room filled with about five people all playing different instruments, all different tempos, humming to themselves songs that don't exist yet. Among these people sits Storm Ford. She sits in the middle of the room, stringing her guitar, singing; quietly, at first, but gradually growing louder. Soon her voice fills the room, overpowering every other sound. Everyone shifts and plays in harmony to the song she's singing. I sit in awe, never before seeing someone command a room the way she does. Prior to this, I had heard and been introduced to her talents, but seeing it in person was something different, something special.

On February 14, 18-year-old Storm Ford released her long-awaited debut project, *Highest Mountain*. In this 10-track, neo-soul/R&B EP, she tackles subjects of family, intimacy, relationships and self discovery, but most importantly: personal growth. I recently had the privilege of sitting down to talk with Storm about her music and how *Highest Mountain* came to be.

Kleo Sincere (Motif): How long have you been writing music?

Storm Ford: I've been writing music since I was 14. I started playing guitar when I was 12, and I've written poetry since I was in fourth grade. When I started taking lessons, I kind of started putting my words into songs, but I didn't write my first song until I moved back to Rhode Island for my sophomore year in 2015.

When I was 14, I actually had something to say. The only reason why I ever wrote was because I couldn't keep it to myself anymore, and I didn't really know how else to say it. Like when you just talk to people they don't really care, but when you put it to a some dope ass chords and a nice beat they'll be like, "Oh shit, let me take the time to listen to this!"

KS: What made you continue? You started playing guitar and was you like, "This is dope" and that's it? What made you stick to it?

SF: I always been really into the arts, whether it was like painting with watercolor or dancing on the step team, even like writing short novels. I've always been into that. I never was like, "Oh, I want to be a famous singer," or anything, but when *Dream Girls* came out in 2006, my grandma, who was raising me at the time, wouldn't let me see it because it was PG13 or something. So my aunt got me the soundtrack and I listened to it everyday, and I kind of just took certain textures, or different riffs and stylistic things from Jennifer Hudson's voice or Beyonce's voice until I created my own style. And I'm still sort of doing that along the way, you know?

I didn't sing in front of anyone, though. I didn't sing in front of a crowd until I was 14, I sung the national anthem. That was like 600 people. And then I sang "All I Want For Christmas." The response that I got from the crowd when I was hitting certain notes, I liked the way it felt. I was like, "Maybe I should focus on this for a little bit."

KS: Do you write all your music? Do you produce it?

SF: Yeah I wrote all of them. They all started out as poems. If you hear my music, if you're really into music, you'll know that some of the chords I use are not popular in today's music. I produced it, but Tom at New Urban Arts (NUA) mastered it, but I was there through every second of that. "Notes need to sound like this." "That needs to go here." "This needs to be stacked on top of this." Except for "Stormy Day;" I wrote those lyrics in 10 minutes, and I came to NUA and Isaiah; he was playing this funky chord progression, and then Tom came in and Daniel was there and they were just going off! I started singing the song, and I was like, "Oh shit! This shit bangs!" So we started to record live.

KS: What significance do the interludes/skits hold to you? Do you feel as though your EP would be the same without them? Would you have released the project without them?

SF: I honestly believe that they're necessary; this whole album is my diary. I felt like those three tracks. They wouldn't have meant as much if they had chords distracting you from them. All of those poems are about growth. You can hear it throughout all of them. And I feel like they tell their own story and they're all milestones in the whole process of writing this album.

KS: So if you didn't have those you don't think that it would be complete?

SF: No. You wouldn't have known the whole story.

KS: I see that the theme throughout the EP is that you start out with a dilemma and by then end you're like, "I'm this bitch." In "Notes to Noi," you start off with "Do I matter?" and you end the song with, "I matter." Was this intended? Or is that just how it planned out by the end of you making the EP.

SF: The whole album tells a story. It's not in order, but I think once you listen to it you know what I've gone through. Or I hope you realize, whoever the listener is, what you felt. Even if you can't put your tongue on it. For *Notes to Noi*, originally the first round of the chorus was, "Do I matter?" These songs have evolved so much that, by the time I started recording it I was like, "Oh shit! I do matter! Like, 'No sis, I'm good. I don't need to know! Cause I matter.'" You know? "Notes to Noi" is about my mother. I wrote that when I moved back to Rhode Island just because it didn't mean anything to her that I was back. So I feel like I was like, at first, I'd call it melancholy and then I realized that those feelings were coming from her neglect. So I wrote that for her. It [the growth] just came.

KS: You said you started this project when you were 14, right? Which song is the oldest?

SF: "Highest Mountain." It's the second song I ever wrote.

KS: So what's the meaning of "Highest Mountain?"

SF: "Highest Mountain" is a movement, and it's a metaphor for any misfortune or obstacle or heartbreak, heartache or anything that's your mountain and it makes it seem more likely that you will get over it. In the album, you hear me get over my mountains, whether it's an ex, or my mother, or my father or even myself. But a mountain can be, being unemployed for four months but you want to save up for this big thing.

You know? Whatever you're dealing with at the time. In my upcoming documentary *To The Summit*, I'm asking a bunch of artists and peers and mentors and friends and family what their mountains are and how they get over them and I just hope that I can convey how music is really important and just as important as perseverance as it manifests in my life.

KS: When will the documentary come out?

SF: In the beginning of June, right before my next album release! My next release is on [my] graduation day. It's going to be four trapsoul songs. We don't have the title yet, but we have the cover and we have the music! I feel like there's a lot of pressure. I want to prove to people I can take over more than one genre. I feel like this album [*Highest Mountain*] is really sad. You have to be in your feelings with your headphones in to listen to it, but I want to make something people can bop to!

KS: How did you feel after you finished *Highest Mountain*?

SF: At first, I was like, "I don't wanna hear these songs," because I've heard these songs over and over again over the last five months. Or the last four years, I guess you could say. I think it hit four days after. I was just sitting home and I put my headphones in and I listened to it from beginning to finish and I cried because. Like "Notes to Noi." My question never got answered. Do I matter? Yes I know I matter, but I don't know if I ever cross her mind from time to time. You know? I was at the summit once I finished the album, but I was just wondering if I was going to make my way down. It's like pouring a full glass of water into another full glass of water. Just feeling overwhelmed and I felt really vulnerable because the things that I held back for four years were finally out there after four years whether people received them or not.

This will definitely not be the last you see of Storm Ford. *Highest Mountain* is a captivating body of work that forces you to confront the depths of emotion. You can find it on all streaming services. Be on the lookout for Storm's follow-up documentary, *To The Summit*, and her next body of work, both of which will be coming out in June!