

Interview: Low Leaf, spreading her artistic wings with her biggest show yet with 13 piece ensemble

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by Tom Nguyen

Low Leaf is having her [album release show](#), her most ambitious show yet, this Friday, December 16, at [Center for the Arts Eagle Rock](#) and amid rehearsals with a 13 piece ensemble, was gracious enough to speak with us [Interview has been edited and condensed for brevity and clarity].

EnClave LA: I first saw you play solo at [The Mayan](#) in 2014 and this year, I saw you play an amazing set with a band at [Eagle Rock Music Festival \(ERMF\)](#). From starting solo to now playing with 13 people, how did this all come about?

Low Leaf: I've always wanted to play with a band. It was just always hard for me to find the right musicians so I figured I would just continue to grow as an individual artist and that eventually I would find the right people to play with. This year, I started playing with the people I'm playing with now and I can't believe it's December already, because we started playing together in January and we've grown together a whole lot.

The drummer [Tom Kendall] came to my first sound bath in 2015...he kept coming to the sound baths...we became friends because he jammed with my boyfriend [[Zeroh](#)] and he mentioned that I was looking to start a band. He was super excited at the idea and actually is the person who found all the musicians for me because he really understood my music so he's a big part of why I have the band.

EnClave LA: Your set at ERMF was amazing! I think even for someone their first time listening to your music, there's such a spiritual, healing dimension to it. And especially this latest album, *Palm Psalms*...what is the journey and story of this album?

Low Leaf: I feel like these songs started to be written in late 2014. I did quite a bit of touring so whenever I was home, I would record these sketches. The raw idea at the time was to make some songs that were in the singer/songwriter format that all had the same unifying thread about love within and seeking truths with divine guidance and just songs I felt could be a seed of light for people that were searching for answers.



There's a lot of people that have been starting to wake up and realize that they are consciousness and I feel like it's easy to lose your way with all the....it's almost like a trend to be spiritual. I feel like having discernment is really important and these were the kind of ideas that were floating in my head when I wrote this music. I figured that it's one of those records that maybe someone will find...it's not full of a bunch of radio pop hits but it's like a little gem that can help people. There's at least one song that can resonate with someone in there.

EnClave LA: I love reading your [blog](#) too about self love and relationships. I feel like your music is also a personal reflection of your own spirituality and healing. You grew up in the valley and your parents are Filipino immigrants. How was that journey for you, growing up in the valley and in this diverse place? Have you always felt like you fit in here or had to find your own way to fit in?

Low Leaf: In my immediate family, I'm the only artist and even in my extended family, I'm the only artist. I guess it's cool but it's also kind of lonely growing up so I was often times just doing things to fit it. But I think that there's been so many cycles as I began to grow into my true self.

Ultimately, it was a blessing that I was born into a situation like that...because those were all the lessons that I needed to eventually realize I had to embrace who I truly was and learn to let myself be free. That's something I'm actually am still learning about...what it is to be truly, truly free mentally, spiritually, in harmony with people.

I also grew up kind of sheltered so I spent a lot of time in my room, reading books, drawing pictures, kinda in my own world playing in my back yard, keeping to myself mostly and it's funny because that's how I kinda am to this day also.

EnClave LA: How excited are you for this show? 13 piece ensemble...this is your most ambitious show yet right?

Low Leaf: I'm hoping I didn't bite off more than I can chew but I'm super determined and I feel like most of it is just me stepping up to the plate and being able to hold space for all of them and oversee things and have confidence so they could just do what they do.

I think it's going to be really great because I see it as something a little uncomfortable, but when you do things that are uncomfortable, that means you're growing. I also want to be able to play with as many musicians, so this is a really big step for me, especially because I've never ever thrown anything like a release party for my music to celebrate my music ever! So this is a big step for me...like I'm worth it, I've worked really hard all these past years, self releasing my music so I'm hoping there'll be a good turnout. I'm very excited and just going to prepare the best I can.

EnClave LA: I try to cover artists and events, focused on people of color, immigrants, children of immigrants...I feel like we are still underrepresented and so much beauty and diversity of LA still goes unnoticed. And it's not just covering entertainment but also issues of importance and for many people of color, it's been a really tough and scary year and there's a lot of darkness right now. How are you dealing with it, going into an uncertain year, and are there words of wisdom or advice you want to put out there?

Low Leaf: ...At first, with the election, I was really upset and cried because of what it represents and what's going on but then I started to notice that there were people who were passionate about talking about all the negative things that were happening and then there were also other people who were starting to talk about empowerment and taking accountability for our choices and our actions, people who suddenly wanted to be more organized and artists who just wanted to speak with purpose, create with purpose.

I started to feel that people were starting to look inward and realize that we can change things and we actually have that power and are more powerful than we know and believe. So I resonate with that. I feel that in this time, it's so important to pay attention to what you tune into because what you tune into is the reality that you're going to experience and create more of.

So for me, I choose to subscribe to people who like to discuss solutions, discuss new ideas, and moving towards the kind of sustainable society that is so possible to have in our own cities. People are doing it all around the world, like solar panels, clean energy, new approaches to how to continue living how we do but in harmony with nature....I've been looking at 2017 as a beautiful year of opportunity and growth. I know it's a bit uncertain but I just believe that whatever we choose to focus on is what we will create more of.

EnClave LA: Ending on that note, after this release party which is going to be amazing, what's next for you and your band?

Low Leaf: I'm going to a quick show in Russia 3 days later, I think there is a European/UK tour in the works sometime around May, and I'm going to Guatemala by myself to perform in a women's retreat by the Mayan pyramids which is going to be really amazing. Me and my band actually are writing songs together as a band which is something that's never happened so we're actually going to play some of those new songs this Friday!

Low Leaf and the Ascension Orchestra: Palm Psalm Release Show is Friday, December 16, 8pm-11pm, at [Center for the Arts Eagle Rock](#), featuring her 13 piece ensemble, including a live string quartet, ambient DJ sets by local underground favorites [Ras G & Zeroh](#), and live projections by [Travis Flournoy](#). Tickets for the all ages show can be purchased [here](#) or at the door.

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