

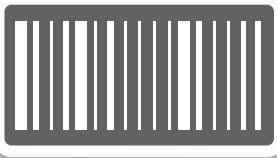
UNCOVERED GEMS

JUNE 2024



EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

*Delfina
Cortes*



EMBRACING CREATIVITY

BY ZOE KAY FERMANIAN

Meet the Artist:

DELFINA CORTES



"Listen to your impulses, it's a calling to create"

Delfina Cortes

TALLAHASSEE, FL—A fresh Bachelor's Degree now encased in a frame, cap and gown sealed in plastic to be stored away, and praise for educational achievement has come and gone. Pride turns into anxiety in the months after graduation, the realization that you're no longer a student sets in and worries about the future flood the mind, all leading to a monumental question with no singular correct answer:

"What is my purpose in life?"

This is the question that tormented Delfina Cortes after receiving her bachelor's degree in philosophy and political science at her 2023 graduation from Florida State University. Without the monotony of classes to take up her time, Delfina found herself lying in her room searching for an answer to her purpose. She could continue her studies like most other graduate students and apply to a master's degree program, but for some reason that didn't feel like the right choice to her.

As Delfina thought about it more and more, she realized that her purpose in life wasn't philosophy or political science. Even though she had spent the last four years of her life working towards a degree in the subject, it wasn't her passion and it didn't fulfill her.

Working towards the degree had taken over Delfina's life for years. But now that she had achieved it, all she felt was that there was a puzzle piece missing from the jigsaw of her life. With this realization came major frustration, leading Delfina to think she was never going to find her purpose. Delfina searched inside herself only to discover the missing piece in her life was working in the arts, and more specifically **the art of making music.**

This complete change in her life's direction was no easy decision for Delfina. If anything **it scared her**. Delfina is an immigrant from Uruguay and was raised by parents who both have traditional professions, her mother is a doctor and her father is a pilot, retired Air Force. They brought her up in an environment where having a profession in the arts was not something people did for a real living. Growing up Delfina was taught "that creativity and a life in the arts is just the fluff around real life." What she understood this to mean was that any work in the arts should be a hobby, at most, in her life. Delfina listened to her parents and treated her passion for making music as such, pushing it aside so she could focus on paving a more 'professional' path in life. Adhering to her parents advice aided in Delfina's academic success at FSU, but it also led to an unexpected consequence.



Delfina explained:

*"I started noticing how whenever I stopped making music or writing poetry or making art, I started feeling physically bad. I started having a lot of anxiety and I didn't know why it was happening. And every time that I did more and more music, more writing or more expression, I felt better and I felt that things were right, so I said, wait a minute, **this is my purpose!**"*



This dismissive opinion towards the arts prevented Delfina from expressing herself through any artistic medium and held her back from doing what she truly loved to do in life. Delfina realized that the suppression of her own creativity was directly linked to the increasing feelings of anxiety and depression she was experiencing. Embracing creativity not only brought joy to Delfina's life, it provided her with an avenue to express and decipher her inner-most-thoughts, solidifying its importance to her life. Delfina found that as she expressed herself more through music, she not only felt better but she also began to understand herself and the world around her on a deeper level.



CREATIVE PROCESS:



Recording Debut Album

With the realization that music is her purpose in life, Delfina threw herself into writing and recording her very first album. She has converted her Tallahassee home into her own private recording studio. Sitting in Delfina's personal studio for this interview, I noticed that there were instruments strewn about the entire home. Looking around the room, we are surrounded by two electric guitars, a ukulele, a giant amp, an electric keyboard piano, and a mic stand. Delfina believes that having a set space to create, where she can work free of time constraints and judgment, is crucial to her creative process.

The most important thing to Delfina is to not deny her own creative flow. In the past, Delfina was held back by her own negative self-criticism. A very common occurrence for nearly every type of artist, and as the saying goes:

You are your own worst critic.

To overcome this, Delfina has made the rule for herself to not judge whatever comes out, to just let the music flow out of her without overthinking every note.

"Appreciate whatever's coming out as something that's a product of ourselves and embrace it."

Delfina Cortes

New Song Alert

During our interview, Delfina played a demo recording of her newest song entitled: ***Play Pretend***. She shared that her inspiration for this song sprung from her encounters with people at her "more professional" day job as a government operations consultant. The song revolves around how people wear masks everyday, both literal and metaphorical, to conceal who they truly are and to create a facade that fits into what is considered socially acceptable.

When asked about her creative process, Delfina revealed that she doesn't plan out her songs, rather she sings aloud any thoughts that pop into her head during a recording session. Her process to create this song was: sit in her room, grab her ukulele, come up with some cords, and then sing freestyle. Delfina shared, "I feel that the best songs that I've written have been me just saying whatever comes to mind."



WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?



In the past, Delfina had thought, “success was being financially independent or having money and obviously those things add to what I think success is...”

As of this interview however, Delfina’s definition of success has changed and been readjusted by the realization of her life’s purpose in music:

“For me success comes with knowing that I tried, knowing that I did my best to follow my dreams... I think success is **perseverance no matter what the odds are** and no matter what happens. I think success comes from finding content and **fulfillment in what you do**, regardless of being acknowledged for it or not, you know, because I'm trying and I think that is what counts right now the most. You know, maybe in another time, I would have said, a Grammy is success. But the truth is that **I am doing my best and that is success.**”

Discovering what one’s purpose in life is not a simple task, but Delfina has come a long way since her 2023 graduation from FSU. She was raised to think success came from earning a high wage in a well respected professional position. This is the definition of success for most people in the current capitalist 21st century, however Delfina realized this idea of success was not meant for her. In searching for her life’s purpose Delfina found that true success meant a sense of fulfillment, which for her came from expressing herself through song. By embracing her passion for music, Delfina understood that success wasn’t about money or status, but about doing what she loves, and for her, that is creating and performing music.

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