



# LAUV

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Having no social life at school isn't necessarily a bad thing. Or at least, that's what Lauv says. The 23-year-old musician [real name Ari Leff] -whose moniker, meaning 'lion', is a nod to his Latvian roots - used his school years to develop his songwriting and producing abilities. Now with 16.5 million monthly listeners on Spotify to his name, the 'I Like Me Better' hitmaker is known for his falsetto, catchy electronic beats and penchant for love songs. Plus, not only can he play the piano and guitar, but the viola too. With such musical talent, it was only natural that Lauv went on to study Music Technology at New York University's prestigious Steinhardt School.

Having talent doesn't guarantee an easy ride though, and Lauv recalls years of grafting in his youth, "booking my own tours with my best friends in high school and playing to like five people over and over again." The hard work didn't stop there, and shortly after moving to New York, Lauv began interning at a studio, where his job was to clean and get food for the people who passed through its doors. Between classes, he would sit in his dorm room, "making song after song," to pitch to other artists, managers, and publishers, rather than releasing them himself. Despite always dreaming of singing his own songs since he was a child, Lauv says that "after years of grinding and feeling like things weren't happening as quickly as I'd hoped, I think I lost some confidence."

A turning point came in 2015, however, when Lauv posted his first song, 'The Other', on his friend's blog and it went viral on HypeMachine. "It just felt different...like something I had to do," he recounts, "It was just really personal to me. So I decided to put it out with zero expectations just to reconnect with that avenue of true self-expression."

Hot on the heels of his newfound success, Lauv began releasing a string of songs inspired by his personal experiences and adding them to the ongoing playlist, 'I Met You When I Was 18', something that he still contributes to now. "I wanted to put it together as a living, breathing piece of work that reflected the way I've been figuring the whole story out," he explains. "So I've been adding songs and filling in spaces as I figure it out myself. But it won't be open-ended forever."

In the following two years since the success of his

debut single, Lauv released an EP titled *Lost in the Light*, moved to L.A., signed with Prescription Songs and co-wrote and co-produced the Cheat Codes and Demi Lovato record, 'No Promises'. He also ended up collaborating with Charli XCX on her hit single, 'Boys'. After his even more popular release, 'I Like Me Better', in 2017, Lauv started touring, even opening for Ed Sheeran in Manila that Fall. His recently released single 'Chasing Fire' is already in heavy rotation on American radiowaves, while the accompanying lyric video has already amassed 6 million streams its first month.

"Honestly, my mind moves so quickly that sometimes I have trouble truly realizing how crazy all of this is and how much 14-year-old Ari would've killed to be here," he says, reflecting on his success.

Despite his growing recognition in the music industry, Lauv affirms that it's not really about fame for him. "I've found where the real happiness in my life is coming from - the literal creation process and from playing shows.

"I see all the tangible goals of things like playing MSG [Madison Square Garden] and getting Grammys as a sign of something bigger and more important. I never want anything to be forced in life, so for me that level of success really means creating something much bigger than yourself that can reach and connect a lot of people. So I stay focused on creating music as true to me and the moment as possible."

The singer-songwriter has so far been predominantly drawn to creating songs about love, longing and loss, which, as well as being relatable, are catchy as hell. "I love sad songs. Period," Lauv says matter-of-factly. "I don't quite know why, otherwise I think I'd find some psychological technique to erase that tendency. I just love things that feel beautifully tragic..I think a lot of the time there's more truth in sad music. It's the stuff that is harder to say, you know? So when done right, it just feels amazing."

So what's next? "I just released my new single called 'Chasing Fire' and announced some Fall tour dates," Lauv says. "I'm finishing some new music, playing some festivals this summer, and announcing more shows to come. I feel truly grateful and I also feel like there's a lot more to be done, to be explored."