



## What others are saying

Like some crazed Hendrix / Nirvana lovechild Wills pulled not a single punch on the (non) stage in Unit 51 (...) The stand out set of the weekend. Absolutely stunning.

**Peter Goodbody, Get Into This**

# RAY WILLS

It all started with the innocuous “nan can you get me a guitar?” After learning bass and finding out younger kids had already mastered guitar (“I can’t have that”), Ray Wills channelled his childhood hyperactivity into what would become the mainstay of his music career— experimentation.

Couldn’t afford lessons? Ray taught himself. Heard a song he liked? Ray would remember it and teach himself how to play. Feelings to vent? Write a song and show a room of people how he feels.

Year 10 and 11 saw him hanging out in music rooms at lunch breaks playing drums, making friends with the popular and the not so popular and teaching them football, remembering how “awesome” it was when they ended up better than him.

Going through notable phases involving Slipknot and Linkin Park (“RIP Chester”), Readipop helped Ray ‘find himself’. Attending band academy age 14-15 was his first chance to perform. Cue an ill bass player and Ray stepping in to sing and play bass last minute. In what could be a make or break situation, Ray was in his element. “You can be anyone the hell you wanna be with your music (...) it’s become my life”. Maybe it’s genetic. Ray’s mum, who introduced him to the likes of soul and West Indian music, performed freestyle at Reading’s Jazz Café while pregnant.

Currently studying at ACM, Ray continues to shapeshift from instrument and job role around a tight group of likeminded multi-instrumentalists (“humans are better when you’re creating positive culture in a small community”). From production in his room after a night out (see 50 plus Soundcloud discography of “ideas”), scoring films, collaborating on a soundscape electronica session at Surrey Uni with a “modular synth connected to 20 individual pedals”, and writing new material.

Upcoming main platform release ‘In My Bones’ (featuring lyrics completely improvised in studio) is a socially aware ode to “lowkey realising how crappy society is and the constant awareness of it”. Citing the eclectic influence of A\$AP Rocky, Jeff Buckley, Nirvana, Radiohead and Matt Corby, Ray Wills is unafraid to do craft his own path.

That doesn’t mean he isn’t conscious of the industry’s expectations. His transition from afro hair to grown out braids has seen him get more likes on social media. But Ray isn’t in it simply for buzz status: “I want Grammy’s mate (...) what’s the point of holding back?”

And with his DIY approach and earnest focus on “intellectual (...) spiritual shit”, Ray is set to cause some strong vibrations. “We are powerful (...) life is mad man, life is mad”.

## Social media

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