

*New York singer/songwriter Kimberly Townsend describes the connection between living this life and composing and writing songs, answering questions on what inspires her to create music.*

*Townsend attracted the attention of Serbia when she covered songs by EKV and Bajaga as part of her 52 WEEKS || 52 COVERS project, alongside legendary musicians like The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, Simon & Garfunkel, Nina Simone, and Billie Holiday.*

**You blend folk, soul, and indie pop, and your music is very emotional and sincere. How do you compose and what do you write about in your songs?**

Thank you so much. My songs almost always start with lyrics. I've never sat down and planned to write a song - they always just sort of come to me. It's hard to explain. All of a sudden I'll hear lyrics and usually a melody in my mind. I have to run to pen and paper and write as quickly as I can before I forget it. Sometimes I write a full song in just a few minutes. Sometimes I keep circling back to it over the course of a few weeks until it feels complete.

I write about the ever evolving journey of reaching towards our highest versions of self, and the messiness of being human. We as humans so often settle, and avoid. It's easy for us all to watch life pass us by on the sidelines instead of breaking out of our comfort zones and really, truly living. Being present isn't easy, but it's always worth it. My music is about how it feels to live this life - the ups and downs and everything in between.

**What inspires you to create music and lyrics?**

Such a great question. I think the best way I can describe it is I am inspired to create because of its ability to help me process my feelings, help me heal and grow, and help me come back home to myself. Writing music and lyrics is a really cathartic experience for me. It's therapeutic and deeply satisfying.

**Tell us about your 52 WEEKS || 52 COVERS project.**

After spending a few months on tour, I wanted to create a project based at home after traveling weekly for so long. And I had never shared cover songs before on YouTube, so it was a neat new challenge for myself creatively. So towards the end of 2019, I planned out a yearlong project of filming one cover every week for the entire 2020 year. I've been inspired by many musicians over the course of my life, and it was neat to get to share my own interpretations of these songs I love so much.

**Your cover of Bajaga and EKV songs are beautiful, how did you find out about Serbian music?**

Thank you so much! My husband is Serbian, so the Serbian culture is a big part of our life together: the amazing music, traditions, people, and food.

**What do you think of Serbian music and how did you decide to make your versions of these songs?**

Serbian music is beautiful, there is rich emotion in its lyrics and instrumentation. My Bajaga cover is a cover of Divna Ljubojević's cover. I saw a video of her singing it in a live performance and it almost brought me to tears. For these two Serbian covers, and for any cover I do, I create my version based around how the lyrics make me feel. I'm never trying to intentionally change a song when I cover it, more just share the interpretation I hear in my mind and heart, somehow. I knew I was taking a chance with EKV's Srce. This was nothing like how it was originally performed, it's just another way of expressing the feelings Milan Mladenović was singing about.

**Unfortunately, the Corona virus had an impact on the whole world, and the music industry was forced to stop working; there are no concerts and no festivals. How do you as a musician feel about it?**

It's been a scary year. Hopefully there is a light at the end of the tunnel with vaccines slowly making their way to all of us. It's purely coincidental that I created this yearlong 52 WEEKS || 52 COVERS project right before quarantine began. I had no idea we would all need to stay at home, I simply wanted to create a project based at home after traveling on tour for so long. So I personally wasn't affected by the lockdowns creatively. But to see the entire music industry come to a halt in so many ways has been hard.

**Despite that, music is what keeps us going through these bad times; in your opinion, how important is music to people?**

That's so true. I personally feel music is deeply therapeutic for us all. It helps us feel our feelings and

process all we experience. It gives voice to our pain. It helps us to feel understood and seen. It's healing for our souls.

**Lots of people in Serbia loved your covers of Bajaga and EKV, do you plan on having a concert here in our country, when the pandemic ends?**

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for all the love and support I've been receiving for these two covers! I'm truly in shock, and want to respond to every email and each comment and DM on YouTube and Instagram, though I'm having a little trouble keeping up! The feedback has been amazing. I would be honored to have a concert in Serbia once the pandemic ends.

**Can we expect more covers like these two?**

Yes! I have my next few Serbian covers already planned out, and will slowly be working on them. I'll be sharing more details soon via my Instagram - @kimblyy. And anytime someone requests a song, I add it to a request list, and I listen to every single one. It's been a really neat way for me to hear new artists!