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New Hozier Album, “Unreal, Unearth,” Stuns the World by Uprooting Deep Emotions [REVIEW]

Madi Oswalt, Arts & Entertainment Editor

Hozier’s newest album, “Unreal, Unearth,” was released Aug. 18 and does not disappoint the impressive reputation the Irish singer has. Born in Bray, County Wicklow, the 33-year-old singer-songwriter made his debut with his first EP, featuring the hit single, “Take Me to Church” in 2013. Following his claim to fame, Hozier released his sophomore EP, “From Eden,” and his debut studio album, “Hozier,” quickly followed. Jump to 2023, and his talent continues to stun the world as his new album takes to the light.



Kay McHugh

While taking inspiration from real-life experiences and ideas, Hozier wanted to abstractly bring “Dante’s Inferno” to life as well. Using his new album “Unreal, Unearth,” the Irish singer-songwriter explains the poem about a man’s journey into hell and back beautifully.

Hozier started the album process by attempting to use Dante’s original rhyming scheme, terza rima. Finding it near impossible to write in English, Hozier realized the album had less room for openness and relatability when he referenced “Dante’s Inferno” too strictly. Writing a universal album that portrayed feelings of betrayal, disillusionment, loneliness and love was something Hozier knew he wanted to accomplish from the beginning.

“It’s important to me that these songs just feel good. That they exist on their own terms in a way that I felt was worthwhile and beautiful enough to exist on their own too,” Hozier said in an interview for Grammy Awards.

Referencing Dante's poem is not the only trick Hozier had up his sleeve. As explained in the interview Hozier did with Grammy Awards, he has kept the Irish language that he spent 12 years learning dormant, until now.

In his new album, there are plenty of Irish words and sayings that helped shape the complex meanings of each song. One example of this is explored in the song "To Someone From a Warm Climate." Uiscefhuaraithe is an Irish word for the action of cooling water. This alternative title for the song fits perfectly as the lyrics are describing mundane, intimate actions people from cold climates take that people from warm climates would not need to do.

"It just seemed right. It's like why not use these tools? It's like all these paints that I just never painted with," Hozier said during the Grammy Awards interview.

Like so many other artists, the lockdown had several inspiring moments for their songwriting; however, Hozier did not want this album to only touch on those feelings.

"It felt wrong not to acknowledge in some way the reality that certainly I had in the time period that these songs were born in," Hozier said in an interview with Rolling Stones Australia.

The Irish singer also shared how piecing his songs together in his preferred fashion began to feel too isolating during an already lonely period of lockdown. The ability to meet with other producers and collaborate seemed more enticing than ever as lockdown came to an end for Hozier.

"I was experiencing spontaneous collective creation of music for the first time and that was really, really fun," Hozier said to the Rolling Stones Australia interviewer.

If you listen closely to his new album, you might hear the array of instruments used to create the beautiful, melodic songs. Hozier knew from the start that he wanted to experiment with acoustic and organic sounds, adding character with orchestral elements and vintage analog synthesizers. He knows the importance of using different instruments that are unfamiliar as a way to bring new ideas forward.

"If you were on something that you are very familiar with, you go back to places that you know; but you find instruments that are strange to you, you will pull out new and wonderful, strange things to you," Hozier said during the Rolling Stones Australia interview.

The album, as a whole, is intricately woven together to make a piece of art that tells a brutally beautiful story, but each song can stand on its own as well. Here are just a few that are perfect in their storytelling.

"Son of Nyx" is a beautiful instrumental piece placed right in the middle of the album, acting as a palette cleanser. On the surface, it is an emotionally driven melody made up of piano, orchestral compositions, and other synthetic sounds. But, in an interview with Amazon Music, Hozier shares how much deeper this track is.

"In that ['Son of Nyx'] you'll hear little refrains from other songs. So you'll hear these kinds of distorted sounds; they're actually the themes from other songs on the album," Hozier said.

"Unknown/Nth" takes the listener back to Hozier's first album, just him and a guitar. The simplicity of the song is a perfect pair to the complex lyrics and deep emotions being portrayed.

"The title comes from the unknown number, or for the nth time. The song sort of reflects upon having your heart broken by somebody you trusted," Hozier said during a "Behind the Song" video posted to his YouTube channel.

"Who We Are" is perhaps the most universally relatable song as it emotionally tells the struggles of being human. Featuring Hozier's gut-wrenching vocals, the song erupts with power.

"It's a song that starts in childhood in this cold and dark hour, being lost and then just scraping and carving your way through the dark," Hozier said in an interview for Apple Music

Whether you like fairy tale music filled with whimsy or gut-wrenchingly dark music, Hozier's new album, "Unreal, Unearth" has a song for you. This impressively honest and vulnerable masterpiece pairs excellently with fall weather, so get cozy, and listen on your favorite streaming platform.