

JEREMY HARRY HARRIS



Don't try talking to Jeremy Harry Harris about COVID fatigue. Fatigue is not an energy and that's not the way he feels about it *at all*. For the Australian singer/songwriter the pandemic era kicked off with the cancellation of a three-month South American tour that had been eight months in planning... then there was the rest of it.

"I got COVID angry," he says. "I got frustrated with the circumstances and the helplessness. And I got sad about thinking about all those people who lost loved ones, and then I delved a little deeper again and went, *'well, it's not just that loss of loved ones. Have a look at society.*"

Have a look at the world... have we lost our humanity? Have we lost our social connection? Have we lost our empathy? Have we lost our ability to look at somebody from a completely non-judgmental non-jaded, non-aggressive point of view? Can we not find compassion in this world?"

By the time the Russia/Ukraine conflict kicked off in early 2021, Harry was in the midst of writing for a new album and fit to pop. I was like, *'Oh my God, have we learned nothing from history in the past?'* So all of that kind of bundled up, and it just kept going."

It just kept going into the lyric-writing for instrumental tracks sent to Harry by his creative partner, Cuban born-and-based musician, Reinier Martin Rodriguez. He was feeling it, too.

"He has this really unique style about him. We just gel, even though he lives on the other side of the world, he seems to have this mental telepathy where he can just write music and go, *'that's gonna fit for Harry, he can make something work with that'*.

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Reinier, as it goes, tends to lean towards the heavier and darker side of things and the LP they were writing together evolved into a concept album. "The music was a lot darker," Harry explains. "And it just allowed me to really embrace that darkness and write about it. Coming out of a pandemic as well... I think we were *all* a little bit dark (*laughs*)."

As for the concept, the title says it all. *Walking With My Darkness* features 11 songs that take an inward look at darkness from a metaphorical point of view.

"We all have shades of light and darkness," Harry ponders. "We all have shades of white, black and grey. And I think there's a dark side in every single person, it's just whether it's released or not and if it is released how is it released?"

For Harry, the writing process saw him coming to terms with grief and loss and exploring how that resulted in him feeling so jaded and angry. Unsurprisingly, it's a world he's not been alone in.

"It's about how life experiences can do that to people," he says. "I'm not just writing about grief. I'm writing about loss - loss of jobs, loss of income, loss of family, loss of friends, loss of relationships, loss of life. And on a global side of things as well, because obviously all that media coming through for two years with regular updates on how many people died. It took such a terrible toll on everyone."

Harry, however, maintains that while *Walking With My Darkness* reflects on the doom and gloom of (pandemic) existence, it is underlined by a sense of resilience and survival.

"There is an element of acceptance that this is the life that has been given to you," he says. "You can choose to accept it and make the best of it, or you can choose not to and live a miserable, horrible aching existence until you die."



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"And I guess the older I get – because I'm now 46 - I'm just at that point where I'm like, '*Fuck that. I don't want to exist. I want to actually experience. I want to survive! I want to go out I want to achieve things*'. And the way to do that is to remain standing and to keep going."

The first glimpse of *Walking With My Darkness* is the single, *Flatline D.O.A.*, which was also the first track written for the album.

"For me it was the starting point," Harris says of the single. "It was that whole '*wow so much death, so much destruction, so much anger and grief and loss around all this*'."

What happens when that happens to somebody, to an individual? What happens to you, when you have to confront that, when you don't get a choice about having to confront that?"

Flatline D.O.A. is accompanied by a music video that sees Harry team once again with WA music/film producer Pete Renzullo. The new work follows on from their global award-winning video for *Shout Down The Silence*, from Harry's 2020 single, *Shout Down The Silence*, which also features on *Walking With My Darkness*.

While he was pleased with his 2019 debut solo album, *Kings Of Time*, Harry feels that it dipped its hat to his previous band, Stone Circle, whereas *Walking With My Darkness* represents a new era and a clean slate.

"I think it's definitely taken a turn away from my past, which was Stone Circle and my debut album," Harry reflects. "*Walking With My Darkness* is very much about putting that to rest."

Recorded at RMR Studios Cuba and Scudley Studios in Perth, *Flatline D.O.A* will be released through Epictronic Records and The Orchard/Sony 25th August 2023. Two more single releases will follow before the release of *Walking With My Darkness* in February 2024. A band line-up has been formed to tour in support of the album and Harry can't wait.

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"I just feel like I've hit my straps." Harry says. "I still know how to deliver onstage. I'm comfortable writing about the things I know and feel and I'm not ashamed or frightened about how that might be received. That gives you a really awesome freedom."

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