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Mad Hawkes Speaks About First EP, “Undone,” Evolving, and Their Journey

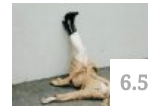
By M.J. Rawls [@viewtifulj21](#) · On May 11, 2018

Releasing your first complete project can be both an exciting and anxious time. With **Mad Hawkes'** first EP, *Undone*, which contains a rock-like spirit mixed with a groove-oriented sound, there's a confidence built by the four-year journey that led up to this release. We recently spoke with the band about *Undone* and the evolution of the band and the songs up to this point.

Just as a starting point, can you give a little background about Mad Hawkes and how everything came to be?

Sure! My name is Maddie Hawkes. That's how the band name came to be. No brainer there. I've been working on this project for a while, maybe four years. It recently transformed into this synth-driven sound that's been really fun. A couple of guys in the band are boys I grew up with in South Bay, Los Angeles. We're pretty excited to release our new EP *Undone*. We're just trying to get all our ducks in a row for that. It's a pretty exciting time right now.

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You mentioned that it took you about four years to get to this EP. Can you elaborate on how the music morphed up until this point? There are some parts on *Undone* that have a rock element while some have a dance-synth feel to it.

For myself, I started out playing acoustic guitar and writing the songs. So, they all come from that raw and organic place. I think that's why you still get that rock feel because that's where the roots lay. When I starting working with my band mates (Joe, Alec, and our producer Jimmy Messer), that's when we started throwing in the cooler beats, the synths, and coming up with these unique sounds. Just to elevate it and make it more unique and fun. Also, keeping it true to what we listen to and like to play live.

How did you feel about releasing "Fantasy" as the first single from the EP? There's definitely that dancible element to that song – especially within the chorus

"Fantasy" was the first song that we did with this new synth-driven sound. It's the first one we finished and then it set the tone for the other songs. It took a lot of time to get to where it's at, but once we dialed it in, it became this big, fun song that I don't think any of us were really expecting when we started out with it. It's been really cool to put that out and get people's responses so far. It seems like everyone really likes it and it's a very fun song to play live. To be able to translate all the sounds into a live show really brings it to life. "Fantasy" is one of those songs that's a great recording, but as you play it live, it's still full of life.

When you talk about the live aspect, I immediately think of "Fantasy" and the last track of the EP, "Used To Be Mine." Did you all consider the live aspect in recording these songs?

For "Used To Be Mine" we didn't have a drummer at the time. So Jimmy came up with the beat and built the song around that. That was a song that was written on the piano, initially. I wasn't expecting it to turn into a dance track when I wrote it at first, but it turned into this super funky song. Live, you still get the rawness, but having that beat makes that movin-and-a-groovin sound. At least for myself, I wasn't in the studio thinking "how are we going to pull this off live?" It was, "how awesome could we make this song sound and figure out how to play it after?"

Originating songs from the acoustic guitar tends to make them a more personal experience. How did it feel making very personal songs like "Bleeding Out" and "Mistress"??

I think when you are writing something that stripped down, your only option is to make it a vulnerable, emotional song. When I used to perform by myself, I didn't have all these other instruments and all these other aspects of the song to elevate it. You just rely on songwriting, melody, and lyrics to draw people in. "Bleeding Out" was one of the songs that I wrote a long time ago and just played a lot acoustically, so it wasn't asking for much when it came to the recording. It's definitely more of a vulnerable, open-up-the-heart type of song. When you strip them down, they all have a story and a lot of emotion. That's where the songs come from. That's the place where they all come from.

"Mistress" as well. It was an acoustic song originally. It definitely tells a story. All these songs come from situations or an emotion that obviously had enough of an impact where it needed to be written about. Those two are pretty personal. A little diary.

Circling back to the first track from the EP, "Face Punch" is definitely a statement. I read that some of the artists you look up to are *Amy Winehouse* and *Karen O*. These are strong women who have made a lasting impression. Did you look at "Face Punch" as the way to set the tone?

The first lyrics are "I love myself, say it everyday. I hate myself. Punch me in the face." It's funny. So, when I wrote those lyrics, I was just jamming out to this track. Spitting out lyrics that I wasn't thinking too hard about or holding on too

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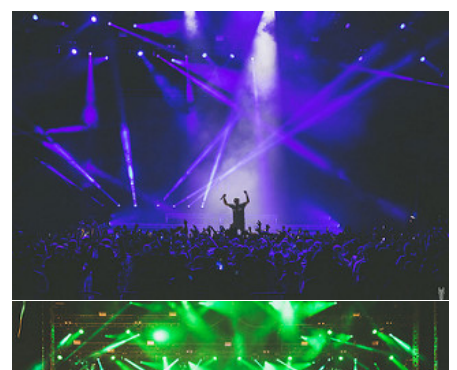
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tightly to. I wrote that lyric and was kind of laughing at it. Then I was like “wait, that actually might work.”

As a writer, myself, I feel that anytime you tell those stories, it feels like you’re healing a wound when you release them into the world. In releasing these songs soon, do you feel that these songs are not only going to heal you, but heal someone else that’s been through similar situations?

That’s the point to me with music in general. It’s a way to relate to one another and have a place to find solace in your own emotions. When I find songs that resonate with me, I think, “oh cool! I’m not the only one.” It just brings humanity back to each of us. I think that the EP will definitely be closing a chapter of my life, but opening another one. When I first wrote these songs, I was feeling the pain. As you share them more and more, you start to heal the wounds. I think having them officially out there will be very liberating and healing. From there, I’ll just wait for the next adventure.

Stream the EP over on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#). Check out Mad Hawkes on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Photo Credit: Mad Hawkes Facebook



Mad Hawkes - Fantasy (Official)

A rectangular placeholder for a YouTube video. It features a large, dark play button icon centered within a white frame. The text above the frame reads "Mad Hawkes - Fantasy (Official)".

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M.J. RAWLS

Journalist, Self-published author, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls is always looking to stretch his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the

New York area, Rawls has photographed artists spanning many genres from Slipknot, Kendrick Lamar, Marc Anthony, Zac Brown Band to name a few.

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