

Scott James

For singer/songwriter **Scott James** making music has always been about getting people to think, feel, and connect. As a famous unknown author once said, "Music is what feelings sound like," and that is exactly what the 19-year-old California-bred, New York-based artist does on his new EP, *Rosaline*.

"I take my music and songwriting very seriously and I never want to hide behind anything," says James, who wrote all of the songs and plays guitar, lap steel, and piano on the EP. "This is who I am and I write about what I'm going through. My mind is always pondering things, so songwriting is a good way to release some of that energy. It's therapeutic, but I also hope others who are going through similar situations will connect with it too."

That sentiment shines through on all five songs of *Rosaline*, starting with the stripped-down vocal and lap-steel guitar song "River," which is about the very real worry over a suicidal friend. Likewise, "How Was I?" digs deep into the personal struggles of another close friend, while *Rosaline* tells the tale of unrequited love. "Some of these songs might sound like love songs, but they really aren't. Overall, it's more about finding the truth, finding the meaning in life, and figuring out your own way, especially in 'When My Eyes' and 'Rosary,'" says James. And, as he sings on "Rosary"- "I'm not settled in or out/So I'll accept that I'll be lost until I'm found" - the artist is enjoying his life's journey instead of focusing on the destination.

The EP was produced and mixed by Warren Huart (The Fray, James Blunt) at the famed Sunset Sound in Hollywood and Spitfire Studio in Los Angeles, and features some notable guests. The album's title track features Sean Hurley (John Mayer, Melissa Etheridge) on bass, Tim Pierce (Jason Mraz, Dave Matthews) on guitar, Greg Leisz (Beck, Sheryl Crow) on pedal steel guitar, and Blair Sinta (Melissa Etheridge, James Blunt) on drums. Famed cellist Oliver Kraus (Sia, Beth Orton) appears on "When My Eyes" (as does Leisz), and "Rosary" features the pedal steel works of Skip Edwards (Johnny Rivers, Dave Alvin).

Rosaline follows the young artist's debut EP, 2013's critically acclaimed *Destinesia*, which was recorded at age 17 with GRAMMY®-nominated producer/composer/multi-instrumentalist Joe DiBlasi, who said, "I don't think I've heard another 17-year-old that has near the same amount of passion in his playing." **Scott** has a fan in yet another music industry heavyweight, superstar vocal coach Roger Love who said, "His vocals sing with a uniqueness and passion that touches all age audiences."

The admiration didn't stop there as *American Songwriter* said the artist "brings to mind the sweeping, bare-boned folk of Jeff Buckley," and *San Jose Mercury News* praised him for displaying "a gift for crafting eloquent lyrics and memorable melodies." Those emotive vocals and moving melodies made their way onto SiriusXM Radio's "The Coffee House" channel, which played *Destinesia*'s "My Road" for six months. The video for another track on the EP, "Garden," quickly hit a quarter million views shortly after its release.

James has also logged in some miles on the road, performing at Los Angeles' Hotel Café, the Whisky a Go Go, and Zoey's Café, while also performing abroad and opening for Paul McCartney's son, James McCartney at the SOhO Music Club. Meanwhile, between writing and recording, he plays in his new stomping ground of New York City at veteran venues like Webster Hall, Bowery Electric, and The Bitter End.

Of his musical evolution from *Destinesia* to ***Rosaline***, James says it's all about the lyrics. "My lyrics are much more personal than before. I try to write something based off of what I am truly feeling, and I feel that those types of songs are what make others feel the most...when it's real. I've fallen in love with words more than I had before. I've been reading and writing poetry. Folk music is all about the lyrics and stories, and that's what drives me," says James, who is currently a student at the Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music (ReMu) at NYU.

James' love of music started in the 4th grade when he took piano lessons before moving over to guitar on the tongue-in-cheek recommendation from Richie Sambora of Bon Jovi. "He advised me when I was really young that guitarists got all the girls," laughs **Scott**. "At that age I thought that was pretty cool coming from a rock star. But I fell in love with the guitar instantly and it was all I could do - all I still do." His first guitar teacher was none other than Jeramy "Beardo" Gritter, who is now in Julian Casablancas (of the Strokes') new band, Julian Casablancas + The Voidz. The first song learned Beardo taught him was Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog."

His first musical love, though, was the blues guitar, as well as artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Stevie Ray Vaughn. The fledgling artist performed at blues clubs in middle school and soon discovered artists like Bob Dylan, Nick Drake, Leonard Cohen, Tom Waits, Jeff Buckley, and John Mayer, who had a knack for poetic musings. "A lot of my inspiration comes from those guys and folk artists and how they fuse music with words," he says.

Those musical roots did not go unnoticed by Huart. "Scott James has that incredibly rare combination of youth but with a real sense of maturity in not only his voice but his songwriting. Scott's sensibility is rooted in classic songwriting, channeling Dylan, Neil Young and elements of Jeff Buckley's beautiful melodies. He is just at the beginning of an incredible musical journey that can only end with him talked about in the same breath as these world-beating songwriters," says the producer.

In just seven years since writing his first song, the prolific artist has penned more than 100 songs and never stops writing. "A lot of times I go to a park and write. Or I write in my room. Or while walking to class, I'll record something on my phone. I definitely hold the guitar an unhealthy amount. I'm always working on new material. I probably need to find another hobby or something," he jokes. But then he remembers a piece of advice given to him by chart-topper Ray Parker Jr.: "Never have a back-up plan." By the look of **Scott James'** bright musical future, he won't need that new hobby or back-up plan anytime soon!

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