

E R I K H A S S L E

INNOCENCE LOST

With a voice steeped in simmering sultry soul, a funk-ed-up sense of international swagger, and unbridled lyrical honesty, **Erik Hassle** immediately makes an impression. That's most likely why the Swedish-born singer and songwriter felt right at home upon arriving in Los Angeles during late 2012.

"I had been to L.A. before, but I had never lived there," he explains. "It made a big difference. Everything was new for me. I had a car, and I was listening to Kendrick Lamar, The Weeknd, Drake, Kanye West, and Frank Ocean on the radio while driving around the city. That was inspiring. I had only worked in Stockholm before. It profoundly influenced where I went musically."

Signing to RCA Records in the United States and releasing the 2014 EP *Somebody's Party*, he spent two years quietly perfecting what would become his fourth full-length album and second stateside offering, **INNOCENCE LOST** (Record Company TEN/RCA Records). His diligence paid off. Reaching the Top 10 of the Global and U.S. Spotify Viral Chart, "No Words" amassed over 15.7 million Spotify streams, achieved a Gold certification in Sweden and Denmark, and landed on Taylor Swift's "Favorite Summer Tunes" playlist in 2015. As the follow-up "If Your Man Only Knew" carried this buzz a year later, he garnered praise from *Entertainment Weekly*, *New York Magazine*, *Spin*, and many more. Along the way, he supported Tove Lo on a high-profile North American tour. Now, *Innocence Lost* introduces every facet of this dynamic and diverse vocal dynamo. Co-writing with Daniel Ledinsky [Shakira, Rihanna, Tove Lo], he opened up like never before.

"As funny as it is to say, this feels like a debut album," he admits. "It's all of these short stories of my first meeting with Los Angeles. Stockholm is pretty small comparatively. Most of the songs were written quickly, because I was just so in the zone. It was therapeutic and emotional."

The 2017 single and final track "Missing You" illuminates that sensibility. With its lush production, lithe guitar, and warm embrace, he weaves together a poignant and palpable tale of loss that's as hypnotic as it is heartbreaking. "It comes from a real story of losing somebody way too early," he sighs. "I sang it one-and-a-half times, because I broke down on the second take. The lyrics speak for themselves."

Elsewhere on the album, his seductive vocal interplay with Tinashe immediately transfixes throughout the title track, while Vic Mensa delivers a stunning cameo on "Talk About It." Produced by TV on the Radio's Dave Sitek [Santigold, Wale, Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs], "Silver & Gold" struts between a funky bass line, nineties-style harmony, and a

heavenly plea. "Most of this album was written when I was between relationships," he goes on. "One relationship had ended, and the next one began, so there were all of these crazy feelings I tried to capture."

In the end, Hassle honestly delivers pure and powerful pop music that instantly connects. "I hope people can feel these songs were made in the moment when everything was the most acute and real," he leaves off. "This is really me. I hope that comes through and it can mean something to someone else."