**BEN ABRAHAM BIO**

Soon after delivering his acclaimed debut album *Sirens*, Australian singer/songwriter Ben Abraham experienced the most tumultuous period of his life, a time equally defined by crushing heartbreak and tremendous success. “I’d ended the longest relationship I’d ever had, with someone I’d expected to marry, and it set me off into a dark place where I was really questioning what I believe in,” says the L.A.-based artist. As he weathered the aftermath of that breakup and the ensuing crisis of faith, Abraham saw his career take off exponentially, a turn of events that included co-writing tracks like Kesha’s double-platinum, Grammy Award-winning smash hit “Praying.” In the thick of all that upheaval, Abraham created his sophomore album *–* due out later this year—that is composed of a selection of songs that speak to the undeniable possibility for rebirth after incredible loss and pain.

“Growing up in a very spiritual home, I’ve always been fascinated by the idea of transfiguration: going from one state to another, more beautiful state,” says Abraham, whose parents are both pastors. “I feel like I went through my own transfiguration in the last few years, and these songs came from feeling like I was being set on fire—not to die, but to be reborn.”

His forthcoming full-length debut for Atlantic Records, spotlights the cinematic yet emotionally raw sensibilities that Abraham has previously shown in penning songs for artists like Demi Lovato, Macklemore, and The Chicks. In bringing the album to life, Abraham worked with producer James Flannigan (Dua Lipa, MARINA, Matt Maeson) engineer/producer Jason Agel (Bjork, John Legend), and mixer Michael Brauer (Coldplay, John Mayer) recording solely at Barefoot Studios (an iconic L.A. spot where artists like Stevie Wonder worked in the ’70s). “From the start I knew I wanted to make this album the same way that classic records were made—with just one production team, in only one space,” says Abraham. “It might sound like an obvious thing, but it’s really not how most people make albums these days.”

Despite that throwback approach, the album encompasses an entirely forward-thinking sound, fusing folk and soul and elegantly detailed art-pop with endless imagination. Abraham’s most ambitious work to date, the album also builds a powerful tension from its two-part structure: the first half presents a series of self-contained narratives conveying universal truths about life and love, while the second half finds Abraham looking inward to document his transformation over the last half-decade. Naming Kate Bush’s *Hounds of Love* as a major inspiration for that framework, Abraham embraced an unbridled freedom in creating the album’s back half, introducing an element of chaos into his eloquent songwriting and nuanced sound design. The result is a thrillingly unpredictable body of work, embedded with moments of kinetic frenzy and otherworldly beauty.

The heavy-hearted lead single,“War in Your Arms” wholly embodies the album’s spellbinding intensity and immense sonic depth, encompassing everything from stark piano melodies to gracefully sculpted beats to massive gospel harmonies. “It’s about that point when the relationship is done and you’re trying so hard to hold onto love, it almost becomes like an act of violence,” says Abraham, who co-wrote “War in Your Arms” with Helen Croome (an Australian singer/songwriter also known under the moniker of Gossling). “All you’re really doing is hurting yourself and hurting the other person, until you can gather the strength to say, ‘Enough. I’m done.’”

Elsewhere on the first segment of the album, Abraham offers up “Another Falling Star,” a delicate piece of storytelling that slowly unfolds as a glorious epic. “I wrote that with Cara Salimando; we had a free afternoon and decided to sit at the piano and write for no real purpose,” Abraham recalls, referring to the singer/songwriter who’s worked with Dua Lipa and MØ. “It came from talking about all the people we know—ourselves included—who moved to Los Angeles to chase their dreams, and how hard that can end up being.” And for the finale to the A-side, Abraham selected “I Am Here,” a wide-eyed folk reverie whose lyrics serve as something of a mission statement for the upcoming album: “Let me be angry and wrong in my youth/Let me find fire in searching for truth.”

The album*’*s latter half commences with “Boy in the Bubble,” a dreamlike yet urgent track Abraham describes as “the story of someone who felt safe and secure in the world, then suddenly broke free and got thrown into the wilderness.” From there, Abraham intimately narrates his journey through shame and confusion and the search for salvation, soon arriving at the wild grandeur of “California Drifting.” “That’s a song about losing faith and not knowing what to believe anymore, so I decided to get a bunch of my friends to sing these spiritual songs over the ending,” says Abraham, who enlisted such vocalists as Sara Bareilles and Madi Diaz. “Because so much of this album wrestles with faith, it made sense to me to actually include the language of faith within the songs.”

By the time the album closes out with the tender benediction of “Too Old Too Young” (“Keep your heart slightly worn on sleeve/That longing in your heart won’t leave”), Abraham has acquired a profound sense of clarity. “I’m sort of taking a different perspective on that song, where I’m singing as a person who’s gone through hell and back and now they’re stopping to say, ‘Here’s what I’ve learned from all that,’” Abraham notes. But while the albumcaptures a period of intensely painful change, often experienced in solitude, the making of the album was fueled by the joy of collaboration. “This whole record was about gathering people who were really excited to work together, and creating something special out of that,” says Abraham. To that end, he purposely relinquished control over certain aspects of the recording process. “I can definitely play guitar, but there’s something incredible about getting someone who’s spent their whole life learning how to speak guitar, and who maybe got over their own breakup by playing guitar as well,” Abraham says. “You inevitably end up with a guitar part that’s got a lot more soul to it.”

Throughout the album, Abraham reveals the extraordinary gift for songwriting that he’s honed for much of his life. The child of musicians who performed together in an Indonesian pop group, he self-released *Sirens* in 2014 and soon earned widespread critical praise, which led to the album’s 2016 reissue via indie label Secretly Canadian. Featuring appearances by Sara Bareilles and Gotye, *Sirens* was promptly hailed by the New York Times as “a debut of remarkable depth,” catalyzing his career as an in-demand co-writer. With his earlier live experience including touring with country legend Emmylou Harris, Abraham also recently supported Grammy-, Tony-, and Emmy Award-winner Ben Platt on his 2019 headline tour—a North American run that followed Abraham’s co-writing several songs on Platt’s debut solo album, *Sing to Me Instead*.

In looking back on the past six years, Abraham observes a subtle but significant form of artistic growth he underwent from *Sirens* tohis forthcoming debut album for Atlantic. “My first album feels very personal, but if you really listen I’m partly keeping things at arm’s length,” he says. “With this album I fought hard to dig much deeper and tell this particular story the way it needed to be told: sensitivity and properly, with nothing getting in the way of that. I let the art do what it’s supposed to do, and now when people listen I hope they feel the same sort of catharsis I got from making the album. I hope they can hear the passion and love we put into every single moment.”