

People & Places

Music

Reevaluating friendships

James Blake's album finds clarity in chaos

NEW YORK, Oct. 9, (AP) — In a year where every interaction came with a risk, people across the world were forced to reassess relationships. Grammy-winning recording artist and producer **James Blake** was no different.

"I could see around me that it wasn't only me who was reevaluating friendships," said Blake. "Having to reevaluate, 'How many people do we need in our lives? Do I need this thought process anymore? What's my purpose outside of this rat race?'"

These reflections steadily gave him inspiration as he created music that strayed from traditional love songs: tracks that touch on heartbreak, complacency, comparison and hope.



Blake

"The subject matter of the songs about heartbreak were usually about friendship," said Blake.

His fifth studio album, "Friends That Break Your Heart," was born.

Blake released singles from the album, starting with "Say What You Will" in July 2021. The song was accompanied by a music video featuring producer Finneas. In the video, Blake constantly finds himself in the shadow of Billie Eilish's brother, starting at the Grammys, where Blake holds his single trophy while Finneas descends the stairs with his arms full of them.

Though Blake has worked with artists from Frank Ocean and Kendrick Lamar to Beyoncé, he believes this feeling of comparison is universal.

"Everyone, regardless of how successful you are, has someone like that, and we all are vulnerable to that feeling of comparison and am I good enough?" said Blake. "We're constantly being reminded via Instagram of everybody's success, so you almost have to filter your environment and shield yourself from the constant FOMO."

The comedic tone of the music video is something Blake says was his girlfriend, "The Good Place" actor Jameela Jamil's idea.

"She's very comedic," said Blake. "But traditionally my videos aren't funny - they're sort of heavy and emotional or abstract and I wasn't sure if I could pull it off."

Pandemic

The pandemic not only changed the way Blake was thinking, but in a more practical sense, the way he created the album.

"The kind of team I had around me was very small and tight-knit and just close to me, close friends - not ones that broke my heart," he said.

Blake does a mixture of studio and at-home production, admitting that staying home is often the cheaper option for musicians.

"I feel like I give enough of my royalties away and enough of my money goes back into the music I make," said Blake. "I guess, a lot of us (musicians) just feel like, 'Well, let's invest in ourselves if we can't get better record deals and we can't get better streaming royalties... let's just try and at least make the (expletive) record for free.'"

Blake feels lucky that he's already toured for 10 years, unlike some who were hit hard by the pandemic's halt of touring. All the musicians he knows are struggling.

"They might have been lucky enough to get on the property ladder and then the pandemic happened and they can't pay for it," said Blake. "A lot of people in the touring business as well were left with no purpose or income."

This contrasts to a conversation he had at a record label, where he was told they were doing "better than ever."

"We know that there's a big imbalance in kind of who's making the money, and live touring, it does slightly address that balance," said Blake. "So I hope that some of those musicians, some of those people in the industry, they get back on their feet and understand I'm just rooting for them."

Blake himself is excited to get back on the road. And even though the pace of society is beginning to pick back up, he hopes people will slow down enough to spend time with the 12 tracks on his album, featuring artists like SZA, JID and SwaVay.

"I think the way I would like people to hear it is that they at least cut out a section of time in the day to give it the attention that any album deserves," said Blake. "We live in a fairly online world, so it's like, 'OK, unless I actually create an hour in my life to sit down and listen to this thing and only do that, it's going to be difficult to actually take it in.'"

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Bruce Springsteen's most memorable artifacts including his favorite Fender guitar and stage outfits are on display in a traveling interactive exhibit.

The Grammy Museum announced recently that Bruce Springsteen Live! opened at the Grammy Museum Experience in the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, on Oct. 1. The exhibit features Springsteen and the E Street Band's live performance footage, instruments, stage costumes and exclusive interviews.

The exhibit in New Jersey will run until March 20, 2022. It will travel to the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles in the fall next year.

"As we reopen the doors to our museum and so many of us return to the workplace, it only seemed fitting that we would look to 'The Boss' to lead the way," said **Mark Conklin**, director of artist relations and programming at the Grammy Museum Experience Prudential Center, in a statement. "No musical artist has captured the spirit and resiliency of New Jerseyans in song better than Bruce Springsteen, so we couldn't imagine a more appropriate exhibit at this moment."

Springsteen's modified Fender guitar that was featured on several of his album covers such as "Human Torch" and "Born to Run" will be displayed. Other items will include stage clothing from Springsteen and members of E Street along with a signed itinerary from his Human Rights Tour, a six-week benefit tour in 1988. A ticket booth stage prop from the Tunnel of Love tour will also be highlighted at the exhibit.

A saxophone played by the late **Clarence Clemons** — who performed alongside Springsteen for 40 years — will be on display. The saxophone was passed on to Clemons' nephew, **Jack Clemons**, who continues to use the instrument as the newest member of the E Street Band since 2012.

Through an interactive kiosk, visitors will be able to view Springsteen's handwritten set lists and create their own encores to compare against the legendary performer's original.



Rappler CEO and Executive Editor Maria Ressa gestures during an interview at a restaurant in Taguig city, Philippines on Saturday, Oct. 9. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to journalists Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia for their fight for freedom of expression. (AP)

Nobel

Nobel honors 2 courageous free speech campaigners

Ressa, 1st Filipino to win peace prize

MOSCOW, Oct. 9, (AP) — Journalists Maria Ressa of the Philippines and Dmitry Muratov of Russia won the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for their fight for freedom of expression in countries where reporters have faced persistent attacks, harassment and even murder.

Ressa and Muratov were honored for their "courageous" work but also were considered "representatives of all journalists who stand up for this ideal in a world in which democracy and freedom of the press face increasingly adverse conditions," said Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Ressa in 2012 co-founded Rappler, a news website that the committee noted had focused critical attention on President Rodrigo Duterte's "controversial, murderous anti-drug campaign" in the Philippines.

She and Rappler "have also documented how social media is being used to spread fake news, harass opponents and manipulate public discourse," it said.

Muratov was one of the founders in 1993 of the independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta, which the Nobel committee called "the most independent newspaper in Russia today, with a fundamentally critical attitude towards power."

"The newspaper's fact-based journalism and professional integrity have made it an important source of information on censurable aspects of Russian society rarely mentioned by other media," it added, noting that six of its journalists were killed since its founding.

Ressa, the first Filipino to win the peace prize and the first woman to be honored this year with an award by the Nobel committee, was convicted last year of libel and sentenced to jail in a decision seen as a major blow to press global freedom.

Currently out on bail but facing seven active legal cases, Ressa, 58, said she hopes the award will bolster investigative journalism "that will hold power to account."

"This relentless campaign of harassment and intimidation against me and my fellow journalists in the Philippines is a stark example of a global trend," she told The Associated Press.

She also pointed to social media giants like Facebook as a serious threat to democracy, saying "they actually prioritized the spread of lies laced with anger and hate over facts."

"I didn't think that what we are going through would get that attention. But the fact that it did also shows you how important the battles we face are, right?" she said. "This is going to be what our elections are going to be like next year. It is a battle for facts. When you're in a battle for facts, journalism is activism."

Muratov, 59, said he sees the prize as an award to Novaya Gazeta jour-

nalists and contributors who were killed, including Anna Politkovskaya, who covered Russia's bloody conflict in Chechnya.

"It's a recognition of the memory of our fallen colleagues," he said.

"Since the Nobel Peace Prize isn't awarded posthumously, they came up with this so that Anya could take it, but through other, second hands," Muratov said, referring to Politkovskaya.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 17 media workers were killed in the Philippines in the last decade and 23 in Russia.

Muratov said he would use part of his share of the \$1.14 million Swedish kronor (over \$1.14 million) prize money to help independent media as well as a Moscow hospice and children with spinal muscular problems. He said he wouldn't keep any of the money himself.

Former Soviet leader and 1990 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mikhail Gorbachev used some of his award to help fund what would become Novaya Gazeta. He congratulated Muratov, calling him "a wonderful, brave and honest journalist and my friend."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also praised Muratov as a "talented and brave" person who "has consistently worked in accordance with his ideals."

Freedom

But Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's envoy to international organizations in Vienna, tweeted that Novaya Gazeta's editorial policy "has nothing to do with strengthening peace" and that "such controversial decisions diminish the value of the Prize."

Moscow-based political analyst Abbas Gallyamov said the award marked "a painful strike to the Russian authorities ... because the freedom of speech and the principles of independent journalism are an evil in the eyes of Russian authorities."

As part of a new crackdown on independent journalists in Russia under President Vladimir Putin, the government has designated some of them "foreign agents," saying they received funding from abroad and engaged in undescribed "political activities." Muratov said he asked government officials who congratulated him if he would now also receive that designation, but received no reply.

The state RIA Novosti news agency quoted lawmaker Alexander Bashkin as saying the Nobel wouldn't fall under the definition of foreign funding under the bill on foreign agents. Hours after the prize announcement, the Russian Justice Ministry added nine more journalists to its list of foreign agents.

Muratov on Friday denounced the foreign agent bill as a "shameless" attempt to muzzle independent voices.

Referring to the hopes by many in Russia that the prize should go to

imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Muratov said he would have voted for him if he were on the committee, saying that he admires Navalny's courage and adding that "everything is still ahead for him."

Some critics have questioned if honoring journalists respected the will of Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel and its original purpose to prevent war, but Reiss-Andersen said freedom of expression was essential to peace.

"Free, independent and fact-based journalism serves to protect against abuse of power, lies and war propaganda," she said. "Without freedom of expression and freedom of the press, it will be difficult to successfully promote fraternity between nations, disarmament and a better world order to succeed in our time."

She also cited the danger of misinformation and attacks on journalists by leaders denouncing them as purveyors of "fake news."

"Conveying fake news and information that is propaganda and untrue is also a violation of freedom of expression, and all freedom of expression has its limitations. That is also a very important factor in this debate," she said.

Media rights group Reporters Without Borders celebrated the announcement, expressing "joy and urgency."

Director Christophe Deloire called it "an extraordinary tribute to journalism, an excellent tribute to all journalists who take risks everywhere around the world to defend the right to information."

"Journalism is in danger, journalism is weakened, journalism is threatened. Democracies are weakened by disinformation, by rumors, by hate speech," said Deloire, whose group has worked with Ressa and Muratov to defend journalism in their countries and comes under regular criticism from authoritarian governments.

US President Joe Biden congratulated Ressa and Muratov for the "much-deserved honor."

"Ressa, Muratov, and journalists like them all around the world are on the front lines of a global battle for the very idea of the truth, and I, along with people everywhere, am grateful for their groundbreaking work to 'hold the line,' as Ressa so often says," Biden said in a statement.

After the announcement, the Nobel committee itself was put on the spot when a reporter asked about its decision to award the 2019 peace prize to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has since become entangled in a domestic conflict with the powerful Tigray region.

"Today, I will not comment on other Nobel laureates and other issues than we have on the table today, but I can mention that the situation for freedom of press in Ethiopia is very far from ideal and is facing severe restrictions," Reiss-Andersen said.



Actor Penelope Cruz, (left), writer-director Pedro Almodovar and actor Milena Smit pose together at the 59th New York Film Festival closing night premiere of 'Parallel Mothers' at Alice Tully Hall on Friday, Oct. 8, in New York. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: At the Tony Awards, **John Legend** played live with cast members from the Broadway musical "Ain't Too Proud - The Life and Times of the Temptations." Now he's going further and joining the show's producing team.

Legend and his partners **Mike Jackson** and **Ty Stiklorious** from Get Lifted Film Co are backing the musical about The Temptations, which is preparing to return to Broadway on Oct. 16.

"This is a musical I love and a story I want to help share. In this pivotal time, it's so important that we support and maintain Broadway, an essential part of the soul of New York and the entire nation. I'm honored to be a part of the 'Ain't Too Proud' team and the return of Broadway," Legend said in a statement.

"Ain't Too Proud" traces the rise of R&B group The Temptations, who sang such hits as "Just My Imagination," "My Girl" and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone." This year marks the 60th anniversary of the group's founding and a new album is due next year, kicked off by the single "Is It Gonna Be Yes or No" written by **Smokey Robinson**.

Get Lifted's recent releases include documentaries "Giving Voice" and "40 Years a Prisoner," the HBO docuseries "Atlanta's Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children," the IFC and AMC comedy series "Sherman's Showcase" and Netflix rap competition "Rhythm + Flow."

Legend and his team also helped produce a 2017 Broadway production of **August Wilson's** "Jitney," for which they won the Tony for best play revival. (AP)

TUSCALOOSA, Ala: **Fuller Goldsmith** knew his life's arc well before he even began school. During hours waiting out chemotherapy treatments at Children's of Alabama hospital, the Tuscaloosa native grew bored watching Disney Channel and cartoons, and turned instead to Food Network shows, thus setting his path.

The young chef won the "Chopped Junior" competition, competed on "Top Chef Jr.," and got to meet hero **Guy Fieri** and other celebrities. He was written about in People, Entertainment Weekly and other publications. Still, Fuller was most fully at home in a kitchen.

"I knew I wanted to cook for the rest of my life before I went (to TV)," he said, in a 2017 interview with The Tuscaloosa News, during his run on the show "Top Chef Jr."

"I just like to cook. Simple as that." Though he'd fought back acute lymphoblastic leukemia three times since the age of 3, Fuller succumbed to the disease Tuesday, days short of his 18th birthday.

Fuller was found to be suffering another tumor late last winter, and had been undergoing radiation and chemotherapy treatments, but wasn't responding as he had in the past.

"We knew what the outcome was going to be, but we definitely didn't think it was going to be yesterday," his father, Scott Goldsmith, said.

Family friend **Cal Holt** posted about Fuller's passing. His son **Justin Holt** owns and operates Southern Ale House, where Goldsmith worked as an assistant to executive chef **Brett Garner**.

The post read in part: "We will miss his presence, his smile, his laugh, his banter back and forth with Brett, and his grit as he fought the aches and pains of a terrible disease. He will be missed but forever remembered. His spirit will remain in SAH for the remainder of time. To his family our



Goldsmith



Legend

love and compassion with a huge thank you for sharing Fuller with all of us. He made all of us better people."

A Tuscaloosa Academy student when health allowed, Fuller continued to watch a myriad of cooking shows, as well as diving into books, and picking brains, digging into his life's chief passion. Fuller cooked as grandmothers used to do, **Scott Goldsmith** said, never writing things down, just sipping and trying and measuring to suit himself, his own taste. (AP)