
COVER FEATURE

HERMITAGE GREEN



Hermitage Green are back with their new single Lion's Share and an EP on the way. The Limerick band released the song in early September along with UK and Irish tour dates for mid-October through to December.

The new single details what lead singer Dan Murphy describes as an expression of certain aspects of human behaviour. "Indulgence, greed, selfishness, the innate need to consume, and lastly a complete sense of apathy for all of the above. When you care for nothing - that is the moment when you can reap the full rewards," he explains in a recent interview with Hot Press magazine.

The song details a caustic relationship where the singer is caught in the lion's den and torn to pieces in the end. Despite the dark and bleak theme of the song, musically it remains catchy and up-beat.



Darragh Griffin tells TLM Lion's Share is about the human condition. Although the song was written by Dan Murphy and fellow musician Gary Keane, Darragh's interpretation of the song is that "it's about wanting, desire; having desire for different things that are fundamentally bad for you." The 'lion's share' is what's left in the end, he explains. However, the musician said that he doesn't want to completely give the game away. When it comes to interpreting what the lyrics of songs mean he said that: "We like to leave people make their own impression of it."

The folk-rockers signature sound is captured throughout Lion's Share, with a more refined and polished feel to it when compared to previous work.

Their unique use of traditional Irish instruments such as the bodhrán, as well as others such as the djembe and banjo is largely what distinguishes the band from others in the same genre. Lion's Share is no exception as their signature instrumentation is heard throughout single. Darragh points out the use of the digeridoo, synthesisers, and the harmonica in the single as the band was trying to return to their roots of using unique instrumentation in their music. True to its name, overall Lion's Share has a big, arena feel to it, which should catapult the band and EP into the charts.

With such a devotion to finding their sound, Hermitage Green fans can be assured that the new EP coming out in October will be jam-packed with the best of what the band has to offer.

The EP will be a reflection of the past 18 months for the band, from the release of their debut album *Save Your Soul*, extensive touring, to highlights such as playing the mainstage at Electric Picnic. The band had wrote almost 20 new songs by early 2017 but choose the best 6 to feature on the EP, which was produced by Matt Lawrence. The producer is renowned and highly regarded, having worked with musicians such as Adele, Amy Winehouse, and Van Morrison.

Darragh says that the EP contains 6 quite different songs, but that it's the record that the band is happiest with so far. He describes it as the "purest Hermitage Green record" to date. In terms of each person having input into the writing and recording process, it is the one that all the members band was the most involved in. He explains that the band really came together during the process of creating the new EP and that it reflects the sound that Hermitage Green wants to have.

For fans wondering whether an album will be following soon after the new EP, Darragh says that they're not thinking about that at the moment. "We're just out of the whole process of doing the EP and all that goes with it." For the time being the band would like to get the EP out for people to hear it, and to get a feel for what people think of their direction at the moment, but they acknowledge that eventually the writing and recording process of producing new music will begin again.

Speaking about how the band has developed since the release of their previous album *Save Your Soul* in 2016, Darragh says that they have added a couple of instruments and new elements to their songs. "We tried to return to a more roots-y sound," he emphasises, though he acknowledges the rock component of their music remains, which makes it hard to put the band solely into one genre. As for the response the band wants to get from the EP, Darragh says "hopefully people recognise that our sound has developed."

The band's career and popularity has been growing steadily since its formation in 2010. Having shared the stage with the likes of *Walking on Cars*, *Gavin James*, and *The Pogues*, they are becoming household names both at home and on the international stage.

While signed to Sony Music Ireland they released their debut studio album *Save your Soul*. The band described the album as a "mixed bag" with pop tracks, acoustics, ballads, and rock songs. "A lot of the songs have been written by individuals in the band. That usually calls for a couple of different styles", Dan explained.

Prior to *Save your Soul*, and being signed, the band released a live album titled *Live at Whelans* in 2013. Dan recalls that at the time people wouldn't know their songs at gigs. The only songs people knew were the few that had uploaded on YouTube. "We had hardly been in a studio.

We had all these songs that we wanted to get out to people and we didn't have the money or the resources at that time to record a full studio album independently without a label so we said we would do a live album."

Live at Whelans served its purpose according to Dan as the band got a tour from it. "Live at Whelans was kind of a snapshot of where we were at that time. All we used to do were gigs. We just gigged non-stop. We were still sort of teenagers as a band when that came out."

Since *Live at Whelans* the band has developed their sound and grown from playing in bars to recording in studios and playing at festivals. When the live-album was released the singer explained that they were "juggling a couple of genres" and were unsure of what the band was. Since *Save your Soul* was released, the band feels more like adults. After hearing *Lion's Share*, it's clear that Hermitage Green have finally established their own unique voice as a band.

The lads played *Live at the Big Top* in Limerick in 2014 and again 2016. The gigs can be said to have been key moments in the bands career. When comparing the progression of the band between the first and the second gig Dan said that: "We've sort of graduated now" He explained that Hermitage Green "finally got our live sound together."

"We were very much a bar band transitioning to the big stage at that point." With the new EP due to be released, it's clear that Hermitage Green is on to creating bigger and better things, and have come far from their humble beginnings as a jam session between friends.

As for how 2017 has been for Hermitage Green so far, Darragh says that it's been "extremely busy but brilliant so far." In fact, each year seems to be better than the last for the band, who have taken a different direction since signing with Sony Records and are now releasing music independently.

The production of the EP began last November and December and the band started writing songs for it at the start of the year. They began recording new material in May in a studio in Wales. Once recording was finished, Darragh explained that from the middle of June until the end of August they began their summer schedule of playing gigs. "Every weekend we were in another corner of the country."

Hermitage Green also played in America in February and again in August. Still to come this year for the band this year are gigs in Dubai, Singapore, and Australia, as well as their Ireland and UK tour starting in October.

Hermitage Green will be playing at the Wexford Spiegeltent Festival on the 14th of October and the Cork Opera House on the 19th October before embarking on the UK leg of the tour in December. The *Lions Share* single is out now.

Article by: Aisling O'Connor

Photography by: Tarmo Tulit

