

In a world which celebrates uniformity and mediocrity it is refreshing to find someone actively striving to create something interesting and new. In art, moulds are meant to be broken and stereotypes cast to the ground. One artist who understands this is Berlin resident **Emika**. Born **Ema Jolly**, and raised in Milton Keynes, **Emika** has utilized her classical training in piano and composition to form the foundation for a body of work which has taken in pop, classical, electronica, ambient and more. Never one to settle for the status quo, her music could resemble the gothic pop of **Fever Ray** one minute, the futuristic electro of **Drexciya** the next.
By **JOHN BITTLES**



I first came across **Emika's** music back in 2011 with her wonderful self-titled debut LP which evoked a post-everything world of noir pop and fractured R&B. Since then the artist has gone on to furrow her own singular, yet eclectic path. Amongst a succession of stirring releases, we have had the hazy techno pop brilliance of *DVA*, gorgeous piano ballads (*Klavirmi*), 80s style synth pop (*Drei*), orchestra led melancholy (*Melanfonie*) and lots more. Late last year saw the release of *Falling In Love With Sadness*, an honest, revelatory record which spoke as much to the brain as the heart. Released on *World Mental Health Day* the album was full of moments of sonic wonder and was one of 2018's overlooked gems.



Last month **Emika** led a project to revisit the songs from *Falling In Love With Sadness* with a thoughtful and accomplished remixes EP. *Falling In Love With Sadness Remixes* features artists such as **Pinch**, **Julia Gover**, **Rebekah** and **Headless Horseman** re-interpreting tracks from said LP. First up, **Pinch** takes the cool electro groove of *Eternity* and lures it ever further towards the dancefloor, adding hi-hats and a touch of acid house darkness to make the track the perfect fit for grungy basements and underground clubs. Next, **Julia Gover** slips into full on techno mode on her take on *Run*, a sense of celestial beauty just rising above the relentless beats. Flip over for **Rebekah's** 100mph take on the album's title track and **Headless Horseman's** atmospheric, dub-infused refit of *Wash It All Away*. Dense and emotional, the latter may just be the highlight of the whole EP.

With **Emika** also in the middle of a World Tour which sees her return to the UK this December I thought it was about time to discover more about this musical tour de force. In the following interview we discuss the *Falling In Love With Sadness* album and remix EP, the tour, the changing role of art in today's troubled times, playing *Berlin's Zeiss Major Planetarium*, and lots more.

So, have a listen to *Falling In Love With Sadness* [here](#), and let us begin...

By way of introduction can you tell us a little about who you are and what you do?

I am a composer, musician, performer, producer and singer from England living in Berlin. I make electronic and classical music and run my own record label *Emika Records*.

Your album *Falling In Love With Sadness* which came out last year is still a firm favourite of mine. Looking back on the record now, what are you most proud of and why?

I composed my first symphony *Melanfonie* and crowd funded the project, my fans gave me 25,000 Euros in 3 months to record with **The Prague Metropolitan Orchestra**. This became such a huge project with a lot of media interest. It was a wild time in my life. In the background behind the scenes I was slowly working on the *Falling In Love With Sadness* album. I would come home and step into this beautiful smooth electronic world, a private exploration into where sadness comes from. I wanted to try to work out, if we are born with sadness, or

if it is something we learn from history, our families, and our experiences in life. The thing I love the most about this album is that I wrote it just for myself, without trying to impress people or think what other people would be interested in. It is a simple record, just me and my feelings to share.

[What was the intention behind releasing it on World Mental Health Day?](#)

I wanted to offer my listeners something deep and meaningful. Something which connects to real life. Something separate from the commercial music business.

[If someone only had time to listen to one song from the album which should it be and why?](#)

Escape, because this song is quietly confident, honest and brave. I hope it gives people strength to be themselves and be independent.

[The LP's lead single Run came with a very striking video. How important is the visual aesthetic to what you create?](#)

I am still not really sure how important music videos are these days. A lot of the ones I see today are quite fancy and sometimes funny... how hard people try to be cool and sell music. But I made this video with my friend Julia and we collaborate a lot with music and film. This video is us sharing our love for making cool stuff happen independently in our favourite city Berlin.

[The Falling In Love With Sadness Remixes package came out on the 11th October. Can you talk us through the idea behind this project?](#)

I asked the artists on the EP to create something they would like to perform or play in a club. All the artists have such strong sounds, and each is very well known in their corner of the electronic music world. I wanted to keep it sounding deep and dark, real and edgy.

[How well do you think the four remixes on the EP complement the songs from the original album?](#)

The remixes transform the original material and make it relevant to the different worlds of electronic music, especially the sounds coming from the UK and Europe today. They're fresh and interesting. A lot more badass and less pop than my original songs.

[Are you working on any new material at the moment? If so, can we expect to hear it anytime soon?](#)

Since becoming a mother my creativity has gone wild! I have something like 85 recordings of beautiful music in different folders and I don't know exactly yet how to put it all together and finish it. I am inspired by **Jeremy Rifkin** and I am searching for a new type of album or a new type of music and structure which will hopefully excite people and offer them something new. The world is changing so fast, we face many challenges in this century. The role of art is changing, and I don't think we need any more pop stars - it's just I haven't worked out exactly how to express all the visions and ideas I have about our new world yet moving forwards.

[You are currently involved in the Falling In Love With Sadness world tour with upcoming dates in Mexico and the UK. What can fans expect?](#)

I am so happy to be back on tour, traveling and making new friends, performing live, improvising, creating in the moment with the audience watching. I am totally free now as a performer to really perform live and jam in the moment. Each show is different, and each show depends on the audience. I can feel what they feel, we connect through the music and experience. In Mexico I will bring my symphony *Melanfonie*, and also perform my electronic music live. It is going to be a very special event and I can't wait to come back.

[You recently played at Berlin's Zeiss Major Planetarium. What was it like? And how did it compare with your](#)

[other gigs?](#)

The planetarium show is a very special one because it has 360 dome visuals which move all around the audience. People sit down in the chairs in a circle and can also lie back in the chairs to look up at the dome. We also have surround sound and the bass is very deep. It is an experience away from the loud festivals, drinking, talking. It's more like a deep meditation or a real live film. It is very special and hard to explain... you have to experience it to really know.

[If people could learn one thing from your music, what would it be?](#)

To trust your feelings, they are your personal guide to life.



[Finally, with the year coming to an end what do you hope to see more, or less of in 2020?](#)

More love, more compassion, more empathy. Less judgement, less hate and more action towards a better collective future on this wonderful planet Earth.

Falling In Love With Sadness, Remixes and more of **Emika's** music are available to buy on digital, CD and vinyl from **Emika's** [Bandcamp](#) page. You can also find more information about tickets and live shows for those wanting to give their senses a treat.

Do yourself a favour and check it out today.

| [JOHN BITTLES](#)