

Wyatt Flores

Scared of Heights



photo credit: Matt Paskert

After releasing his acclaimed 2024 debut album, *Welcome to the Plains*, singer-songwriter Wyatt Flores took a much-needed break to reset. Once he got back to making music, things were different: “I finally feel like I know who I’m supposed to be, right here in this moment. I’m not second guessing myself anymore on what the music’s supposed to be, what I’m supposed to be chasing, or who I’ve become. This is who I am now in 2026, still figuring out my struggles and mental health, but finally getting the confidence to step back into this and to believe in myself again.”

Flores offers an unflinching look into this chapter on his new album *Scared of Heights*, his first since partnering with MCA Nashville. Produced by Charlie Handsome (Post Malone, Morgan Wallen), Gian Stone (Ariana Grande, Maroon 5), and Jacob Kasher Hindlin (Dua Lipa, Charlie Puth), the 13-track project is an unfiltered examination at what it’s like to face darkness head on and asking tough questions to find a little peace.

“There’s a question I ask myself really often,” Flores says. “‘Are you scared of heights? Are you scared of falling? It’s about my fears of letting someone down.’”

Writing for *Scared of Heights* began organically: Flores was on tour with Post Malone and struck up a friendship with Handsome and Hindlin (also known as JKash). Flores and Hindlin penned “Not Good Enough” and partnered with Handsome, Stone, and Nick Long to write the album’s propulsive first single “Running on E.” Those songs set the stage for *Scared of Heights*, depicting Flores amid his doubts.

“I had a girlfriend who didn’t work out and I took it really hard,” Flores explains. “I kept thinking that it was my fault and that I deserved it because of the life that I live. I would get off tour and show up to the bar — all my friends are married and having children and it was like, ‘What the hell am I doing wrong? When am I going to allow myself to know that I’m deserving of love and the good things in this life besides success and fame?’”

With each release, Flores has continued to refine his signature mix of personal songwriting and musical exploration. Making the intentional choice to work with the state-of-the-art trio of Handsome, Hindlin, and Stone, Flores pushes his sound in some bold new directions. His story-driven, emotive songwriting is still the focus, but there’s a decidedly brooding, electric guitar-driven sharpness this time around.

“I wanted to give it like this pissed-off teenager vibe,” Flores says, noting that he was inspired by the angsty rock of early 2000s rock heroes like Green Day, All American Rejects, the Fray, and Nickelback. “Everyone’s going to put it as country because that’s who I am, but I’ve tried since the beginning to never have two songs sound the same. Life’s too short to be boxed in. At the end of a day, a great song is a great song.”

There’s a pronounced edge to songs like “Hate Myself,” in which Flores snarls about regrets, and “Drive All Night,” with its smoldering, frustrated atmosphere. “Tulsa and Eleanor” is a swirling ballad about loss in which Flores curses his poor decisions. In “God Forgives,” he unsparingly highlights his worst tendencies. “That is the storyline of how this album came to be with the breakup,” Flores says. “It’s bringing out the more toxic side and pettiness of my behavior back in the day.”

Flores expands his questioning to relationships with his family and friends on *Scared of Heights*. In “Half the Man,” he returns home and marvels at the positive examples his parents set for him. “I didn’t know how to turn off who I was on stage,” Flores says. “You end up realizing that you aren’t there for the people back home. Not too long ago I had a buddy say, ‘Hey, you can’t just act like we’re friends. You haven’t been around for three years.’ And that really hurt.”

The album also ventures deeper into Flores’s thought processes and anxiety on the eerie “Sleepless Lullaby.” With a vocal performance that ranges from whisper-quiet to white-knuckle intense, it describes the period after the stage lights have gone down and a flood of thoughts comes pouring in. “I didn’t want to deal with those quiet, lonely hours,” Flores says. “I couldn’t deal with being silent. And now I’m at a point in my life where I love it more than anything. The silence is where I finally found peace in it all.”

There are traces of his newfound peace on *Scared of Heights*. In the bright, jangling “South Dakota,” Flores describes taking a chance on love, even though it means doing something uncharacteristic. “It’s a happier ending to the album,” he says. “It kind of closes off this chapter of struggling through it. It’s a little something to go, ‘Hey, I think it’s going to work out.’”

In a similar vein, “The Way I Do” describes a younger Flores and offers understanding that he denied to himself. “I was always being my worst critic and telling myself I’m not good enough,” Flores says. “My drummer Jake would come up to me and say, ‘I wish you’d quit being so mean to you because you’re hurting someone I love.’ That dropped me to my damn knees.”

Today, Flores is thankfully in a much better headspace. *Scared of Heights* artfully shows his difficult path to the present and some of the daily struggles that remain. Ultimately, he lands in a place of hope and clarity. “I really wanted to touch on this idea of not being enough and then have something at the end that says, ‘Remember to love yourself,’” he says. “When I’m able to love myself, I’m also able to give more of myself to the people I love.”

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