



ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS

The Independent and Underground Music e-Zine
Issue 98, Sunday 26th March 2023
"Tomorrow's Music Today"

FEATURING THE SOUNDS OF...

Limitless Horizon, Blackcat Elliot, Gavin McMaster, Merylyn Steele, Le Fondateur de Son, The Triptamynds, Jester Society, Banjo Jen, Christy Merry, and Hypnotic Eye.

Compiled and written by Tom Hilton

Contents

Limitless Horizon, Birmingham, England (pg. 3)

Blackcat Elliot, New York, USA (pg. 6)

Gavin McMaster, Shrewsbury, England (pg. 9)

Merilyn Steele, Sydney, Australia (pg. 11)

Le Fondeur de Son, Paris, France (pg. 14)

The Triptamynds, England (pg. 18)

Jester Society, Brescia, Italy (pg. 22)

Banjo Jen, Sheffield, England (pg. 25)

Christy Merry, Minnesota, USA (pg. 30)

Hypnotic Eye, England (pg. 34)



“We all deserve a chance to join in the dance...”

Jacob Tucker, Grey Star Ghost

Highlight of The Day

This week's 'best of', the 'greatest hits' package. Our featured artists discuss origin stories, their influences, the sounds of tomorrow, and much more.



Giovanni Oscurita, Limitless Horizon: *"I got really into things like Tangerine Dream, Tomita, Jean-Michel Jarre, and especially Kraftwerk. My dad had the Autobahn album, but it was The Man-Machine that really turned me on to what synthesizers could do."*

Kostas Gus Hais, Blackcat Elliot: *"If you look carefully on the back of The Beatles' Let It Be album, there's a great photograph. A view of the Fab Four and a bunch of others from an above perspective. You can see everything ... When I saw that photo, that was the moment I knew I was very, very interested in being in a band."*

Gavin McMaster, solo artist: *"I know a lot of bands and artists are rejecting the mainstream ways, and I want to be a part of that."*

Merilyn Steele, solo artist: *"My mother was a big fan of The Seekers and Barbara Streisand, and my dad loved Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash. So, I guess that folk country sort of influence was planted in my brain!"*

Yoram Rosilio, Le Fondeur de Son: *"Improvisation isn't just a decorative addition, it's almost what my music is about and the artistic purpose of it ... it allows the musicians to express themselves personally as they are in the present moment, the compositions are then just the framework."*

Gaz Hunter, The Triptamynds: *"A lyrical theme from my original demos came to light after I shortlisted eighteen to twenty songs ... Two of my favourite concept albums are The Who's Tommy and The Pretty Things' S.F. Sorrow, so I slowly assembled and created a narrative around them."*

Marco Belotti, Jester Society: *"We always wanted to do something new, trying to create a sound that merges pop with electronica and hip hop, with everything surrounded by a dark glam aura."*

Banjo Jen, solo artist: *"I wanted it to sound like a tune or song that had been around for years and could be sung around the campfire ... I guess I was picturing an older woman reminiscing."*

Christy Merry, solo artist: *"I have written a lot about relationships, loss, biblical characters, God, etcetera. Hopefully coming at these widely touched upon topics using fresh language ... I know I have a tendency to go deep."*

Josef Boronski, Hypnotic Eye: *"We had great musical chemistry, almost telepathy, as a result of learning our respective instruments together. So, I wanted to see how that would work in a two-piece rock and roll band."*



Silence Is All There Is

LIMITLESS HORIZON is a musical entity shrouded in mystery and myth. Led by the elusive figure Giovanni Oscurita, the project has delved into spaces of progressive electronic music with an infectious reckless abandon. Utilising his natural talent as a keyboard maestro and multi-instrumentalist, Giovanni unleashed a glorious opening trio of singles in October 2022. These came in the form of 'I Want You', 'Silence Is All There Is', and 'Co-Existence'. Since this outpouring of material and energy, Limitless Horizon has gone quiet, pondering and conjuring magic far away from prying eyes. Two further cuts came from this period, 'Face This' and 'Close My Eyes', further snapshots of the brilliant sonic universe that Limitless Horizon inhabits. Following these releases, *Aldora Britain Records* tracked Giovanni down to his current hometown of Birmingham, the location of his experimental musical endeavours. We chatted about his musical upbringing, what led him to Limitless Horizon, and what the future holds for this off-the-grid project.

Limitless Horizon have previously contributed their track 'Silence Is All There Is' to our 'Pogue Mahone!' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hello Giovanni, how are you? It is really cool to be chatting to the mystical artist behind Limitless Horizon. Let's chat about the beginning of your journey! You are from Birmingham, but with Italian ancestry. Could you tell me about your early years and what led you down this musical path?

Giovanni Oscurita: I was raised in east Birmingham in a very traditional Italian way. My father, Eligio, was a chef in a local restaurant and he would bring home all manner of tasty leftovers. We didn't have much money and lived in a council house. I went to the local Catholic primary school, which seemed to be full of Irish, Italian and Polish families. It was a wonderful melting pot of cultures and everyone mixed happily. From an early age, I was identified at school as having a bit of musical ability and I sang in the choir. I was also the only boy to be chosen to learn the recorder, a bit sexist in those days! Then one Christmas, my dad bought me a Bontempi organ from a catalogue and my chosen instrument was born! I was exposed to all manner of music. My dad was always singing around the house and there was always music playing. I became a great lover of Europop.



“I got really into things like Tangerine Dream, Tomita, Jean-Michel Jarre, and especially Kraftwerk. My dad had the Autobahn album, but it was The Man-Machine that really turned me on to what synthesisers could do.”

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let’s talk about the beginnings of Limitless Horizon. This is such an innovative and quirky project, offering something extra compared to most contemporary output. How did it come to be? What was the initial spark behind the project? It has certainly led to some brilliant output since!

Giovanni Oscurita: I had been playing keyboards in bands for years and then the pandemic and lockdown came and put a stop to that. I had found, as a keyboard player, most of the bands I had played in didn’t really give me many opportunities to develop creatively. So, all alone in lockdown, I started exploring different possibilities and Limitless Horizon was born.

Aldora Britain Records: My introduction to your music was through the spectacular ‘Silence Is All There Is’. I love this track and it is still one that I often have on my playlists. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing this composition? Is there anything that you would edit or change about it in hindsight?

Giovanni Oscurita: I had been experimenting with different sounds, trying to create something different from the sort of cover songs that I had been playing in bands. I then realised, probably for the first time, that everything I needed to record, I already had! I had a MacBook, I had my keyboard, and I had my microphone. So, I set about committing my ideas to hard drive! The song ‘Silence Is All There Is’ was very much describing my relationship with my wonderful wife. You know that security and comfort in each other’s company, to the extent that you don’t need to fill the silence with inane talk. You can just be!

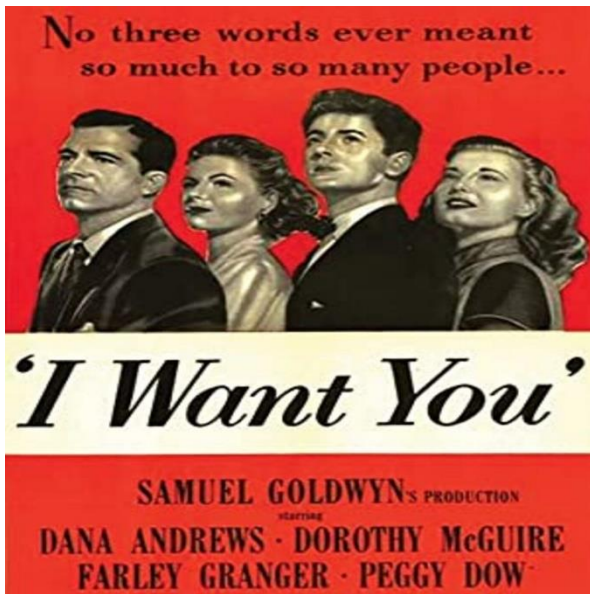
Aldora Britain Records: Let’s talk about your influences. It is quite a broad melting pot. I can hear electronic sounds like Kraftwerk, but also heavier things like Nine Inch Nails. How would you say your style came about, what goes into it for you, and who are your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist?

Giovanni Oscurita: Thanks, Tom. You’ve identified some of my influences. In my teenage years, I got really into things like Tangerine Dream, Tomita, Jean-Michel Jarre, and especially Kraftwerk. My dad had the *Autobahn* album, but it was *The Man-Machine* that really turned me on to what synthesisers could do. I absolutely loved Tubeway Army’s *Replicas* when it came out and played it to death! I’ve also always been a bit of a closet rocker, so inevitably I evolved into being a huge fan of Nine Inch Nails from my twenties onwards, especially *Pretty Hate Machine* and *The Downward Spiral*. It’s this influence that gave me the idea to team up with X-Citer for my two most recent recordings to create a very Nine Inch Nails vibe, with a hint of The Prodigy in there too.



Aldora Britain Records: You have released a few more superb and innovative singles since. ‘I Want You’, ‘Co-Existence’, ‘Face This’, and ‘Close My Eyes’. For each, what is the story behind the track and can you remember the moment they came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them or trigger their writing?

Giovanni Oscurita: My first three singles were sort of linked. They describe the phases of a relationship. The early phase of desire where all you can think is ‘I Want You’. Then, the second phase of being happy and secure with each other, ‘Silence Is All There Is’. Then finally, the third phase that some people get to – not me, I hasten to add! – where two people live together, sharing a life, but it’s almost like they’re in parallel universes, but in the same space, ‘Co-



Existence'. All three songs are sort of designed as a loop, so you can hit repeat on any one of them, and sort of zone out and slip into the vibe.

My fourth single, 'Face This', is actually me writing a song to a rather angry set of lyrics that my wife Liz wrote. She had just lost her mom and was really raging against modern life and the thing that society seems to be becoming. So, it's the subject matter that encouraged me to include heavy guitars. 'Close My Eyes' is very much back to my 'phases of life' cycle. It's actually someone singing on their own deathbed. Sounds depressing, I know, but it's not meant to be. It's meant to recreate that feeling in old age of exhaustion and 'wanting to go'. It's inspired by my mom, who had been suffering from cancer and regularly said, 'I just want to go, I want to rest'. As devout Catholics, we know the next life is waiting for us and shouldn't be feared. My mom has since passed, and I

can dedicate this song to her memory. I composed 'Close My Eyes' with that exhausted vibe at the forefront of my mind. Having said that, I'm really pleased that people seem to be liking the 'Hyper Mix', which is more up-tempo.

Aldora Britain Records: Limitless Horizon seems to be a project with so many possibilities. I would love to see you explore them more. I truly believe you could take it in so many different and exciting directions. What does the future look like for Limitless Horizon? What is up next for you? I am certainly looking forward to it.

Giovanni Oscurita: Thanks Tom, I really appreciate your support. They say composing music is really cathartic and I'm definitely finding that to be the case. With my mother's passing just a few weeks ago, and my wife losing her dad just the week before that, we're having an emotional time right now. But we also look forward to a new chapter in our lives and hopefully 'Limitless Horizon' will be just that, having no limits and just seeing what's out there as we head towards the horizon. As an Italian, I firmly believe life is a gift from God and it is there to be enjoyed and cherished.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Giovanni:** Kraftwerk or Nine Inch Nails.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Giovanni:** *The Man-Machine* or *Pretty Hate Machine*.

AB Records: First gig? **Giovanni:** Japan, Birmingham Odeon, 1983.

AB Records: Loudest gig? **Giovanni:** Nine Inch Nails, Birmingham O2, 2006, I think.

AB Records: Style icon? **Giovanni:** Trent Reznor.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Giovanni:** *Subway*.

AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Giovanni:** Currently *Godfather of Harlem*.

AB Records: Favourite underground artist? **Giovanni:** Karl Bartos, Decibus, Igor.

Turn over for the sounds of Blackcat Elliot...

Sucker in The Front Seat

New York is historically home to some of the best garage rock and roll that has ever been produced. This legacy is still alive and very much thriving through bands such as Albany's **BLACKCAT ELLIOT**, a trio of likeminded musicians who bring together the best elements of classic rock, punk rock, and hard rock. It is a big and brash sound and one that audiences would struggle to ignore. Full-throttle and in-your-face, Blackcat Elliot secured their reputation in 2019 with the release of the exceptionally raw *There is No Good in Us*, a ten-track atomic bomb of guitar-based greatness. Since then, the band has kept busy with releases including the 'Spider Garden' single, an acoustic version of 'In Place of You', and a live recording entitled *Alive*. Now is certainly the right time to come on board this rock and roll train. Back in February 2022, *Aldora Britain Records* sat down with Blackcat Elliot frontman Kostas Gus Hais to discuss the band's evolution so far. That conversation is published here for the first time.

Blackcat Elliot have previously contributed their track 'Get It on Tonight' to our 'Hummingbird Hum' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Gus, how are you doing? It is a real pleasure to be talking to one of the kingpins of Albany garage rock. I am a big fan of Blackcat Elliot! I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Kostas Gus Hais: First off, I'd like to say thank you for appreciating Blackcat Elliot. We are excited and looking forward to keeping on working with you and your team. To the question, at a young age, I remember putting headphones on for days and listening to my brother and sister's record collection. I mean, I listened to everything, even my father's Greek vinyl came into play. I pretty much listened to everything that everyone around me was listening to. My brother



“If you look carefully on the back of The Beatles’ Let It Be album, there’s a great photograph. A view of the Fab Four and a bunch of others from an above perspective. You can see everything ... When I saw that photo, that was the moment I knew I was very, very interested in being in a band.”

Nick was a huge Beatles fan. My sister Mary was into the Top 40 scene, pop music like ABBA, Phil Collins, Michael Jackson, the Bee Gees, and more. If you look carefully on the back of The Beatles’ *Let It Be* album, there’s a great photograph. A view of the Fab Four and a bunch of others from an above perspective. You can see everything! There are wires, cameras, amps, percussion instruments, guitars, mic stands, cigarettes, lights, drinks. When I saw that photo, that was the moment I knew I was very, very interested in being in a band.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let’s fast forward to the unstoppable Blackcat Elliot. How did the band come to be? How did you meet the other guys and what was the initial spark behind it all?

Kostas Gus Hais: I’ve known Marky Balboa since 1989. We went to the same high school, Colonie High. We’ve been in a few bands together, but he went his way and I went mine for a bit in the late 90s. In 2001, we got back together and started Blackcat Elliot. We’ve had three bassists in our twenty years together, but Fast Eddie has been with us the longest. He ended up joining around 2008, I think. It’s all becoming a blur, there’s so much history in this band!

Aldora Britain Records: I discovered your music through the bombastic *There is No Good in Us*. I still love this record! What are your memories from writing and recording it, and how do you reflect on it now?

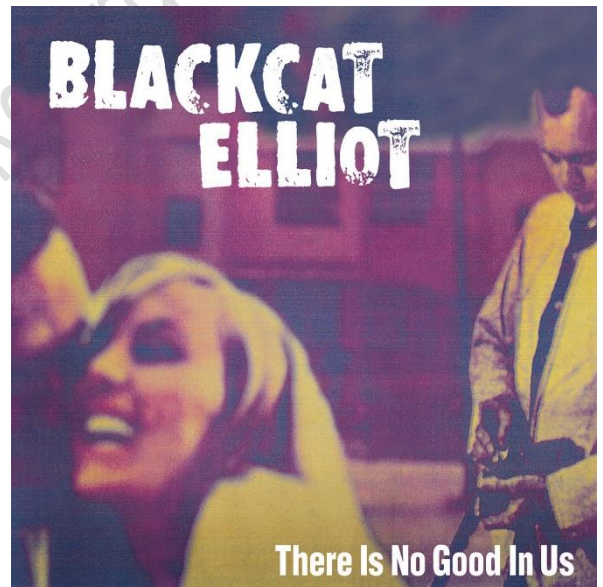
Kostas Gus Hais: We wrote and worked on the songs for *There is No Good in Us* for a long, long time. Life just got in the way of this album. But at the same time, we’ve matured during that whole process. Since the songs have been tested on the road for years, we did the album pretty quickly with John Chiara in the studio.

Aldora Britain Records: It highlights your upfront sound perfectly. There is so much going on. CBGBs punk, 90s grunge, and classic hard rock. How would you describe it, what goes into it, and who are your biggest influences as a band?

Kostas Gus Hais: We pretty much rehearse once a week in Marky’s basement. If someone comes with a riff, we work on it, structure it together, and a song magically comes out of it. Other times, an idea would hit me, and I would record it on my phone and then make a demo at home with GarageBand. I’d send it to the boys and they would come up with stuff and then a song is born. Our influences would be a bunch to name, but here’s a few... the Ramones, The Clash, the New York Dolls, Led Zeppelin, the Pixies, The Beatles, Nirvana, etcetera. Another influence is film. Fast Eddie and myself are big movie buffs and recently a few of our songs have been inspired by movies. For example, ‘Dark Side’ was inspired by the movie *The Witch* and ‘Tomorrow Doesn’t Come Today’ was written after I watched *Urban Cowboy*.

Aldora Britain Records: I would like to focus on a trio of tracks now. ‘Sucker in The Front Seat’, ‘Let Yourself Go!’, and ‘Get It on Tonight’. What are the stories behind these songs and what inspired them?

Kostas Gus Hais: ‘Sucker in The Front Seat’ was written while I was watching a horror movie from the 70s titled *Carrie*. There was a scene with Travolta and this blonde girl in the passenger seat of a red sports car. They were both drinking beer while driving, it was a Saturday night, and they were heading to a house party. ‘Let Yourself Go!’ is another silly love song about a bad breakup. ‘Get It on Tonight’ is a snippet of what Blackcat Elliot’s nightlife was like back in the day. Let’s leave it at that, I won’t go into details!





Aldora Britain Records: I imagine that Blackcat Elliot put on a breath-taking rock and roll show. It has seen you open for The Fleshtones and The Supersuckers after all! What do you aim to bring to the stage and what can a fan expect from their very first Blackcat Elliot gig?

Kostas Gus Hais: For anyone that comes to see Blackcat Elliot, we want them to leave all their responsibilities and realities at the club's door. While we perform, our goal is to see them smiling, having a good time, having a few drinks, dancing, and we want to see them leave with fists in the air and a story to talk about the next day.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Gus:** Nirvana, The Beatles, and U2.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Gus:** The Beatles, *The White Album*. Nirvana, *Nevermind*. U2, *Achtung Baby*. The Cult, *Electric*. Tom Petty, *Full Moon Fever*.

AB Records: First gig? **Gus:** Men at Work on the *Business as Usual* tour at the Saratoga Performing Arts Centre.

AB Records: Style icon? **Gus:** The Ramones, The Clash, and anyone from the 90s Seattle scene.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Gus:** *Scarface*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Gus:** The Stockades, my stepdaughter Mady's band. Check them out!

Turn over for the sounds of Gavin McMaster...

Draw Me Like One of Your French Fries

Experimental music provides the foundation stones for a broad spectrum of underground releases. This is a fact. Now, imagine a weird and wonderful world where avant garde punk meets indie art rock in a head-on collision. In Shrewsbury, England, **GAVIN MCMASTER** is rising to the challenge. After coming to the attention of *Aldora Britain Records* through his woodshedding covers EP, *An Incredible State of Affairs*, Gavin has branched out and evolved as an artist. Following this outing, he unleashed his COVID era musings in the form of *Some Words After the First Word*, a self-proclaimed 'okay' album entitled *Goodnight to All but One*, and a pre-holiday freakout called *Taught by A Hot Head*. This blossoming discography is in tune with Gavin's genre-bending adoration, referencing idols such as Frank Zappa and Captain Beefheart, but in a house party with Morningwood and The Antlers. A glorious sonic cocktail! In April 2022, *ABR* tracked Gavin down to discuss his musical journey so far. That conversation is published here for the first time.

Gavin McMaster has previously contributed his track 'Verbatim' to our 'We All Deserve a Chance (To Join in The Dance)' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!



Aldora Britain Records: Hi Gavin, how are you? It is a real pleasure to be talking to you. Thank you for your time. I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Gavin McMaster: My first few musical memories were probably the same as everyone else's, music class in school and talent shows at holiday parks. There was one occasion, back in 2018 or thereabouts, where it felt right that I wanted to become a musician. It was in this music hub that a few of us from college were invited to. Most of us were the creative ones who did drama and music for our A-Levels, where I played piano as part of this impromptu band. We had a jam session for about ten minutes, completely unrehearsed beforehand, and I thought that

was pretty sweet. There was only about twenty of us, but twenty smiling faces are a bigger support than one thousand neutral faces. It was a fun day as well.

Aldora Britain Records: I love the DIY and fiercely indie style that you have. What appeals to you about this approach and what do you think it brings to your music?

Gavin McMaster The music we hear on the radio and the TV and everywhere else is over-manufactured. There's no heart in it anymore. I know a lot of bands and artists are rejecting the mainstream ways, and I want to be a part of that. When I'm making music, I want to do everything myself. Or if I'm working as part of a band like PSCM, we'll work together, and everything will be from our minds and our hands. I want to make sure everyone knows that you'll hear a raw tone and demeanour in everything the moment that you hit the play button. In short, music today sucks and I'm here to save it.

Aldora Britain Records: I first discovered your music through a raucous covers EP, *An Incredible State of Affairs*. How did this come about, how did you pick out the songs, and how did you go about putting your own spin on the tunes?

"I know a lot of bands and artists are rejecting the mainstream ways, and I want to be a part of that."

Gavin McMaster: Picking songs for this EP was actually easier than I thought it would be. I know at least two of them are popular amongst the LGBT+ community and I picked them for that reason, because the EP is a homage to my androgyny. I'm not necessarily stuck in this gender tornado. I know I'm male, but it's nice to experiment with yourself. This EP was brought out with pride more than anything, a celebration of identity. A lot of people didn't know this about me, which is why it is an incredible state of affairs. Alongside the sound from past records, I think it was quite the smorgasbord of meaning and that's the coolest thing.

Aldora Britain Records: It captures your raw sound perfectly. Noisy, punk-driven, experimental. What would you say goes into your style and who are your biggest influences as an artist?

Gavin McMaster: The only thing that goes into my sound is me. I have the raw power of creativity and it will be exercised accordingly. I think experimental is the best word to describe it, because with every new record, I go into it with an openmind. I enter with a generally vague premise, and leave with a hot pile of otherworldly mess. With all that said, I don't really like naming influences. I have musicins that I like, whose qualites I will apply to my own sound. I like a lot of avant garde stuff, like Frank Zappa and John Zorn, and then rock artists like Mike Patton and Chantal Claret's earlier sound, and everying in between too, but I wouldn't say they directly influence me.



Aldora Britain Records: Your pre-holiday album, *Taught by A Hot Head*, is another superb Gavin McMaster DIY statement. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it? How do you reflect on it now?

Gavin McMaster: I remember telling myself that I'd spend an hour everyday over a period of two weeks writing lyrics, and I then ended up going on an all-day bender where I wrote every song's lyrics, bar two of them. Those two were 'The Citizen' and 'Collect Call', which are two of my favourites to date. I also remember trying my best to keep it a surprise since there was virtually no time at all between *Taught by A Hot Head* and *Goodnight to All but One*. I got very excited because it was my best album so far, and I still think that now.

Aldora Britain Records: The last twenty-four months have been immensely difficult for musicians, although many have used this period to be more prolific than usual. How did the COVID lockdowns impact you and your music making?

Gavin McMaster: If anything, COVID was the defining point for me. It was where it all started. I spiralled into a pit of boredom, and I was sick of going out for walks every day. I wanted something new and exciting. I had also recently gotten out of a relationship with my now ex-girlfriend, which you'd think would have been a sad occasion, but because that emotional attachment was gone, I could spur myself on to do what I really loved. My current girlfriend has been very supportive since during the lockdown, when we got together, until now. I'm not saying COVID was a godsend, or even that good, but it did mean I had more time to myself and more time to get creative. And my God, I don't regret getting into this one single bit. I'm enjoying myself.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Gavin:** Death Grips.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Gavin:** *In the Attic of The Universe*, The Antlers.

AB Records: First gig? **Gavin:** Gorillaz, Birmingham, 2nd December 2017.

AB Records: Style icon? **Gavin:** Longhaired Mike Patton.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Gavin:** *When Marnie Was There*

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Gavin:** Gum Disease, a cool queer punk band.

I Want You to Know

Intelligent lyrics, killer hooks, memorable melodies. These are the strong foundations on which **MERILYN STEELE** creates her unique and fresh take on Americana music. A natural born performer, this Sydneysider singer-songwriter has been impressing audiences for many years, culminating in some fantastic studio offerings including the mesmerising *Extraordinary Daze* and the stellar *Bring It Back*. These records provide a glimmering snapshot of Marilyn's songcraft, bringing relatable lyrics into a brilliant melting pot with melodies inspired by the worlds of country twang and folk shuffle. On top of this, Marilyn also unleashed a festive single in 2022, entitled 'Merry Christmas Anyway!', further highlighting her depth as a creative, artistic mind. Back in April of last year, *Aldora Britain Records* had a chat with this incredible songwriter about her musical journey so far. That conversation is published here for the very first time.

Merilyn Steele has previously contributed her track 'Whirlwind' to our '2021: The Second Coming' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Merilyn, how are you? It is a real pleasure to be chatting to such a talented songwriter. Thank you for your time. I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours? I hear you wrote your first song at the age of just fourteen.

Merilyn Steele: Thanks so much, Tom, for your interest and compliments on my music. It helps spur me on to continue. I started my interest in music and wanted to play the guitar at the age of twelve. My father bought me a guitar and started taking me to lessons. I loved it! I just naturally started singing while I played too. And yes, I wrote my first song at fourteen.

Aldora Britain Records: I love your sound. I hear it was greatly influenced by your parents' record collection growing up. How would you describe your style, what would you say goes into it, and who are your biggest influences as an artist?



“My mother was a big fan of The Seekers and Barbara Streisand, and my dad loved Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash. So, I guess that folky country sort of influence was planted in my brain!”

Merilyn Steele: Thank you, that’s good to know. Yes, correct. My mother was a big fan of The Seekers and Barbara Streisand, and my dad loved Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash. So, I guess that folky country sort of influence was planted in my brain! These days, my influences tend to change with time. But the ones that seem to stick are artists like Alanis Morissette, the now defunct Powderfinger, and their frontman Bernard Fanning. Of late, I have been really loving George Ezra, Vance Jay, and Australia’s Amy Shark. For artists more in the country field, it’s always been Kasey Chambers, Lee Kernaghan, Beccy Cole, Mary Chapin Carpenter.



Aldora Britain Records: My introduction to your music was through your masterful 2020 album, *Bring It Back*. It has left a strong impression! What are some of your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how do you reflect on it as a whole? Is there anything that you would edit or change?

Merilyn Steele: I thank you again sincerely, Tom! This CD means so much to me, and I do believe it is my best body of work to date. My experimentation with bluegrass and rockabilly on this album led to some great things including nominations for awards and publishing deals. ‘Millionaire’ received an award for the ‘Best Rockabilly Song of The Year’ at the *Canberra Blues and Roots Festival*. I also had songwriting nominations for ‘Bring It Back’ and ‘Whirlwind’, amongst others. I love all the songs on this CD, and it is dedicated to my late father, so it is really special. And yes, all the childhood pics are of me! There is nothing at all I would change

about this CD, I am still very happy with it and always will be.

Aldora Britain Records: I would like to focus on ‘Whirlwind’. I love that tune! What is the story behind the track, did anything in particular inspire it, and what does it mean to you?

Merilyn Steele: ‘Whirlwind’ was listed for APRA / AMCOS’s ‘Song of The Year’, was semi-finalist for TSA Songwriters Contest’s ‘Best Alt Country Blues / Bluegrass Song’, and was named as the official song for the New South Wales Clogging Championships. I was also signed to US publisher Eddie Sea on the strength of this song and others on the CD. What a song! It is the one that I thought would be so corny, but it is the one that everyone loves. I co-wrote this with my music duo partner and it was just about life at its pace at the time. Trying to fit everything in and not having much time to spend with friends, etcetera. I hope I have settled down a bit more now and try to make more time for family and friends. It is a fun song though, so it is not negative in any way. Just important to not let too many things bog you down in life!

Aldora Britain Records: You wrote several brilliant tracks during the lockdown period. For example, ‘I Deserve This’ and ‘Things Ain’t Always What They Seem’, both are great and meaningful examples of your songwriting. Can you tell me about them?

Merilyn Steele: ‘Things Ain’t Always What They Seem’ is a song about mental health, urging us all to check in on our friends and family and colleagues to ask if they are doing okay. But also, to really look out for signs they are not okay when they say they are. Many of us, myself included, are good at presenting the smiling mask to the world when we are really crumbling inside. It is a poignant tribute to my colleague Glen Hannah, who did all the artwork and typesetting on the *Bring It Back* album. He sadly lost that battle and took his own life a couple of years ago. I really wish I could bring him back. His death affected me greatly for some time, and still does. The producer of my work

also knew Glen quite closely, and the morning after we laid down the track and listened again, we both cried. I knew my job was done.

'I Deserve This' was written during lockdown and is a melting pot of emotions, whilst also being a little abstract. It is mainly about self-empowerment and allowing yourself to deserve love because we all need to. We deserve to be loved no matter how bad we are treated. It is probably the most poignant and personal song I've ever recorded, but it's also thankful and optimistic in the end. It's for anyone whose ever given their heart away to someone only to have it ripped out and trashed. I was also experiencing some physical pain during lockdown too, hence references to sickness and pain, which didn't help my situation! Thankfully, I am in a much better place now.

Aldora Britain Records: You have performed at many festivals during your time in music and you have a real passion for performing. What would you say you aim to bring to the stage?

Merilyn Steele: Yes! And I'm about to hit another festival for five days with twelve shows! Every time I perform, I aim to connect with the audience, no matter if it's two hundred people or two. I try to find some way to move them, either physically with dancing or emotionally which could be laughter or tears... or both! I also like to try and make them think through some of my more poignant songs like the last two we mentioned. What can

a fan expect from a Merilyn Steele show? They can expect a varied repertoire of songs, moods, and tempos. But above all, they can expect to be entertained, moved, and hopefully made happier than when they walked in. They can also expect some interaction as I have many songs where they can sing along in a chorus or an echo repeat, or even clap along!



Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Merilyn:** Bernard Fanning, ex Powderfinger.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Merilyn:** *Bring It Back*, ha!

AB Records: First gig? **Merilyn:** Andy Williams, ha, which my parents took me to as a kid.

AB Records: Style icon? **Merilyn:** Shania Twain.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Merilyn:** *Arthur* is one of them.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Merilyn:** Right now, it's Aussie singer-songwriter Amy Shark.

Turn over for the sounds of Le Fondateur de Son...

Dawn Ceremony for Dreadful Days

LE FONDEUR DE SON is a Parisian epicentre for jazz experimentation and free-flowing avant garde music, and Yoram Rosilio has been one of the main movers in bringing together this gloriously diverse and eclectic collective of likeminded musicians and artists. His vision and determination are truly admirable in the current musical climate and has led to a fantastic array of releases. This includes Tikkun's free jazz outing *Dawn Ceremony for Dreadful Days*, Anti Rubber Brain Factory's roaming improvisational offering *Ensuenos Burlescos, Peligrosos Y Misticos De Tierras Meixcanas*, and Otok's endlessly inventive *Cabrioles Cerebrales Et Accidents Psychotiques*. This trio of LPs only scratches the surface, Le Fondeur de Son's prolific back-catalogue is packed to the rafters with underground gems. It is rare to find a label or collective with such an intense desire to produce such thought-provoking music in 2023. Back in March of last year, *Aldora Britain Records* sat down with Yoram, just back from a residency in the 'deep wild' of North Finland, and discussed the trials and tribulations of Le Fondeur de Son. That conversation is published here for the first time.

Tikkun have previously contributed their track 'Shema (Faith)' to our 'Unknown Resonators' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!



Aldora Britain Records: Hi Yoram, how are you? It is a true pleasure to be talking to such a talented and versatile musician. Thank you for your time! I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Yoram Rosilio: Hi Tom, I am quite good! First of all, thank you for your time and for everything you organise in order to facilitate the circulation of underground artistic works. I think your method is good and unique, especially since it is eclectic, which is increasingly rare, and allows us to confront many different styles and audiences in a random way. The question of my first musical memory is very delicate for me. I don't know which one to choose, there are so many of them. What can I say? I guess the voice of my mother singing me a lullaby, or my father who chirped around me, or

maybe some birds at the window. By this, I mean that I don't notice a big difference between music and the sounds of the environment in general. This is important in my emotional understanding of the world too. A meowing cat, the cars whirring in the street, the wind in the trees, the sirens of the cops.

As for the intentional organisation of these sounds by humans into what we call 'music', after my pre-adolescent wanderings through reggae, rap, bad international commercial music, revolutionary Russian songs, Michael Jackson, Moroccan environments, Jewish liturgy, and lots of other things, I think my first slap in the face that really blew me away, something that I needed to listen to on repeat for hours, was surely Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. This is when I was twelve. Then there was lots of other 'slaps'. John Coltrane's *Live at Birdland* and Mendelssohn's 'Violin Concerto No. 2' are two very important examples. But then came gypsy music, Yiddish music, North African music, Malagasy music, traditional music as a whole, edgy jazz, Rachmaninoff. So many things blew me away and nourished me in a sense. I also have some very precise memories of my first punches in the face when I listened to Duke Ellington, B.B. King, and Sun Ra for the first time. I remember that sometimes it was hard to comprehend, that feeling when you

“The little we had, we wanted to pool it, so that we could produce and promote our aesthetic and philosophical visions of music.”

hear something for the first time. How could Sun Ra arrange sounds in such a free and original way? How could Duke Ellington be so delicate and classy? How could B.B. King be so powerful and desperate?

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's fast forward to the present day. I would like to talk about your collective of amazing jazz musicians, Le Fondateur de Son. How did this all begin and what was the initial spark? There are so many impressive projects going on under this banner.

Yoram Rosilio: Well, we've been around for exactly ten years now. It started with the need to come together to help each other, to share our means of production and the know-how, the knowledge of how to face the big machine of mass culture, and to try to exist despite our music meaning so little commercially. The work was meant to be as a collective, free and common. The little we had, we wanted to pool it, so that we could produce and promote our aesthetic and philosophical visions of music. Naturally, at some point, the idea came to produce our own discs and create a label, LFDS Records, which we want without boundaries. It is in the image of our music, which draws on traditional music, contemporary writing techniques, and jazz and improvisation.

Aldora Britain Records: I would like to pick out the Tikkun record now. This was the very first project of yours that I stumbled upon. It definitely has a special place in my collection these days, purely because it introduced me to your mesmerising playing. Could you tell me about the *Dawn Ceremony for Dreadful Days* album? It is quite an odyssey! What are some of the themes that run through it?



Yoram Rosilio: That disc is indeed a long suite. That is to say that the nine tracks on the album actually form a single symphony. This was also the case with the first disc of the group, *The 24 Doors*, and it is the case during our concerts. There is no interruption between the pieces, they follow each other naturally, and the music slips from one theme to another via improvisations. It must be said that the team of blowers are really united. Andrew Cocker, Jean-Michel Couhet, Florient Dupuit, and Benoit Guenoun have known each other for a very long time and that has helped to build a common and instant discourse together. On the other hand, the drummer Rafael Koerner and I have been playing together since 1999. We then combine this playing with the particularities of Tikkun's music. It is based on the association of North African Jewish liturgical music and free jazz. I did invent the appellation 'Sephardic free bop' for it! Overall, it could be summed up as a kind of fervent and transcendent North African gospel played by an overheated and crazy New Orleans jazz band!

Aldora Britain Records: Most of your work has quite a free-flowing edge to it. There is definitely some improvisation in your playing. How do you approach arranging a new song and how would you describe your style? Who are some of your biggest influences?

Yoram Rosilio: It's hard for me to describe my style. For sure, it is made up of all the sound experiences that I have gone through since my birth, and this relates to jazz, classical music that I have listened to a lot, traditional music, Jewish music, North African music, Mexican music, Greek music, Turkish music, and Scottish music. I also have to mention urban sound environments, noise, and film music. Yeah, and what is sure is that improvisation isn't just a decorative addition, it's almost what my music is about and the artistic purpose of it, in that it allows the musicians to express themselves personally as they are in the present moment, the compositions are then just the framework, the subject or the theme of the conversations that are born between all of us. Each piece mixes up the possibilities of composition and improvisation. There is always a part of the orchestra that follows the score, another that improvises,

“Improvisation isn’t just a decorative addition, it’s almost what my music is about and the artistic purpose of it ... it allows the musicians to express themselves personally as they are in the present moment, the compositions are then just the framework.”

and everything then merges. In this sense, the master who influences me in the search for this intricacy of writing and improvisation is without doubt the great Charles Mingus, and also in his way of upsetting traditional content by treating it a contemporary way.



Aldora Britain Records: My favourite record from you has to be with the Anti Rubber Brain Factory. *Ensuenos Burlescos...* What are your memories from creating this piece? There are so many players on it, and I hear that the album took three separate sessions to complete.

Yoram Rosilio: I am very glad that you like it! I am also very attached to this record. From my modest point of view, we did achieve the development of some quite strange and strong configurations and material here. My memories of this recording are very good. It’s no longer about Tikkun, but about the Anti Rubber Brain Factory, another project in which I strive to develop the same problematic approaches described above. This time it was as a big band with far more instrumental possibilities. Electric guitars, percussion, pianos and vibraphones, saxophones, electronic effects, and all kinds of small toys, gadgets, etcetera.

This orchestra is constantly changing. I call my comrades who are ready, and we play the pieces directly, try things, and then record. It’s a spontaneous approach. Once again, not too many repetitions. The fragility of the present moment is precious to us. In comparison, Tikkun’s music took many, many more rehearsal. But it works differently with the Anti Rubber Brain Factory. Since we’ve been playing together for thirteen years now, I’ve always approached the music of this orchestra in this way. It’s kind of a big party where anything can happen, around specific themes.

The album you are referring to is based on compositions made during several trips to Mexico, where I experimented lots with natural psychotropic trips. Some musicians played these songs for the first time during the recording sessions. I explain what I want, I give images, often cinematographic, I say why I wrote things this way and what the issues are and the tensions that could emerge, and it works. It is all a question of understanding the intention and giving an interpretation. It is like an acting game. There is a solid core of very involved musicians. In addition to the ones of Tikkun listed above, we have Jerome Fouquet, Nicolas Souchal, Francois Mellan. They are members of the collective of Le Fondateur de Son and have been experimenting with the orchestra for years. Within the Anti Rubber Brain Factory, we have developed over the years ‘OCCI’, spontaneous collective compositional tools. These are technical tools invented by us which make it possible to set up directly, without preparation, collective sound interventions of any kind. This can come from any one of us at any moment, allowing musicians to make decisions and participate in directly orchestrating and impulsively directing the music. Some other very talented musicians who are regularly invited on this adventure are Karsten Hochapfel, Jean-Brice Godet, Makoto Sato, Mogane Carnet.

Aldora Britain Records: I absolutely adore ‘Danza de La Culebra’. What is the story behind this composition and does it mean anything to you?

Yoram Rosilio: First of all, this is an arrangement of a traditional song from the Huave people, Indians from the South Pacific coast of Mexico in the region of Oaxaca. ‘La Culebra’, ‘the snake’ in English, is an important animal in the mythology of all Amerindian cosmology. This song is usually played in a traditional ceremony with a flute and special percussion made from a turtle’s shell which they strike with deer antlers. Yes! But here it is arranged completely

differently, for a big orchestra, and is the final piece of a suite called 'Sinfonia del Sueno Profundo', 'Deep Dream Symphony' in English. In full, it is kind of a sound theatre and a reconstruction of some of the inner worlds crossed during modified states of consciousness. The final piece, 'Danza de La Culebra', represents the triumphant return to the social world after having been crossing the worlds of dreams and visions after a psychoactive trip. This is done through the solo of the very talented trombonist Christiane Bopp. It is about rejuvenation in the light, returning to family, and tradition and sharing. The melody here is also played in a loop by the whole orchestra, except that the instruction is to modulate the tone little by little, shifting and looping cells to give a feeling of madness heaping up.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Yoram:** It is difficult to answer this question. The notion of a 'favourite' is too difficult for me. I love all different kinds of things and in different ways, and this is not a matter of more or less appreciation. I guess the artist I have listened to most in my life could be Charles Mingus.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Yoram:** Same answer! I guess the album I have listened to the most could be *Mingus Dynasty* by Charles Mingus.

AB Records: First gig? **Yoram:** Luther Allison.

AB Records: Style icon? **Yoram:** None.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Yoram:** None.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Yoram:** Once again, a difficult question. There are a lot of them!



Looking for The Answer

The 60s psychedelic boom still holds sway over much of the UK's independent underground. The artists of today still have a great, undying reverence for The Beatles, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, and so many more. This 'golden era' will never fade and its technicolour flourishes live on in the musical output of creative minds such as Gaz Hunter, specifically his former **TRIPTAMYNDS** project. This was the outlet that first introduced Gaz to *Aldora Britain Records*. Whilst this free-roaming artistic mind has moved on to an impressive and growing solo career, The Triptamynds still remain a chapter of his creative journey that deserves to be celebrated. 2017's *Stories from The Other Side* and 2019's *Lucy Syco Delia: The Sunshine Girl* are a glorious duo that truly exemplify the best aspects of the analogue pop world in all its majesty. Essential further listening also encompasses Gaz's 2022 anthem for modern times, 'Good Things Will Happen to Good People'. In November 2020, *ABR* chatted to Gaz about The Triptamynds and his musical journey to date. That conversation is published here for the very first time.

The Triptamynds have previously contributed their track 'We'll Never be Apart' to our 'Stories, Bold & Untold' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Gaz, how are you doing today? It is so great to be talking to you about the brilliant Triptamynds. Could we start off right at the beginning? What are your first musical memories and what pushed you towards pursuing music?

Gaz Hunter: Hi Tom. Yeah, I'm good fella, thanks for asking. Currently spending my furlough time slowly working on my next album. My first musical memories are of my dad playing Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of The Moon* and *Wish You Were Here* a lot through his top end hi-fi setup. He was a big Status Quo fan too, and they were my favourite childhood band. He ended up giving me his records because I was constantly playing them. I started to buy my own from when I was about eight years old.



*“It must have been mind-blowing to have heard Hendrix live in the front row ...
No wonder people thought he’d come from outer space.”*

Music has been the only hobby or interest that has stayed with me all my life. I used to mime with a plastic guitar when I was a kid, thinking I was Francis Rossi from Quo. I then bought a cheap Les Paul copy from my school, and spent my early teens miming before getting my first proper guitar. I started to get serious in '88 or '89 and began learning Metallica songs via guitar tablature because I couldn't read proper music.



Aldora Britain Records: Can you tell me about The Triptamynnds and how the project came to be? Is it a solo recording project?

Gaz Hunter: I was in a band from '98 until '03ish called Modeliste. We did a few EPs and had enough material for an album. Our pinnacle was supporting Paul Weller in 2000. It kind of unravelled slowly after that unfortunately. Because I was then at a loose end, it led me to start writing on my four-track and I demoed, then recorded, an album of instrumentals in '05 under the name The Psychedelic Reflections. I recorded it live in a ten-hour session with three other guys. I had unused tracks leftover, came in one night after a heavy night out, and laid down the melody for 'Free Your Mind', which became track two on the *Stories from The Other Side* album. The rest followed afterwards.

I got introduced to another local music maker, Simon Ince, who was more of an EDM music producer. At that time, he had more knowledge of home studio recording that I did. He wrote the bulk of the track 'Do You Hear Them?' and played a role as producer and guru whilst I tried to do everything else. That first version is pretty badly played, sung and mixed, but I did manage to sell about one hundred copies of it in 2006. I refer to that now as the 'demos' version. It has its charm though. It's only that one album that is truly under The Triptamynnds name and not really a solo project, although I did do the bulk of it.

Aldora Britain Records: I love the sound. It's obviously influenced by the 60s and has plenty of colourful flourishes. How would you describe it, what do you find so appealing about this era, and who are your biggest influences?

Gaz Hunter: I just try and filter through my influences and hope it ends up sounding like me without sounding too much like anyone else. I don't write complex music, I'm not that clever, and I'm not a technical player either. If it makes me feel good when I'm playing or makes me laugh when I'm trying to sing or harmonise then that's great. There are only twelve notes to use, it's trying to arrange them in ways that other people haven't, which isn't easy. I do have to spend a lot of time shaping melodies and harmonies, and rewriting lyrics because I'm not gifted, literally. And I mean that literally.

I just love that whole 60s period, especially from '65 to '69. Just the whole look of the Flower Power era. Flares, velour trousers, beads, miniskirts, the way girls wore their hair, and the make-up. The developing of studio recording from two to four to eight-track. Guitars, amps, and effects pedals made people think outside of the box, as well as the invention of the Moog synth. I do love the Hammond organ and other keyboard like the Vox Continental, Farfisa, and the mellotron. It must have been mind-blowing to have heard Hendrix live in the front row, through two full Marshall stacks using a fuzz and wah pedal when bands used to play through little 20w Selmer or Vox amps with clean Hank Marvin or Beatles type guitar tones. No wonder people thought he'd come from outer space.

My biggest influences would be the big four... The Beatles, The Doors, Jimi Hendrix, and Pink Floyd. But of course, there's The Who, The Kinks, the Small Faces, The Stones, Jefferson Airplane, Buffalo Springfield, Love, The Byrds in the

“A lyrical theme from my original demos came to light after I shortlisted eighteen to twenty songs ... Two of my favourite concept albums are The Who’s Tommy and The Pretty Things’ S.F. Sorrow, so I slowly assembled and created a narrative around them.”

US. There’s too many to list here. I have a fondness for obscure bands that only released one album or even one single. To me, those bands are just as important. The *Aorta* album is one that springs to mind.

Aldora Britain Records: I’d like to single in on your fantastic album *Lucy Syco Delia: The Sunshine Girl*. What are your memories from making it and how has it been received? Are there any themes that run through the record and who is Lucy?

Gaz Hunter: I pressed up one-hundred-and-twenty-five CDs and sold about eighty to ninety copies, mostly to friends on Facebook. Not too shabby for a homemade album made in my back bedroom without large financial backing, promotional budget, management, etcetera. Those sales paid for the manufacturing and printing costs and my new drum software in the studio, which I’m using on the next album. So, job done, and I thank every single person for buying it. I had lots of great feedback and even had a few tracks played on US college stations and independent radio shows, as well as copies hitting a good few states all over the USA.

2017 should have been a year of celebration with finally finishing the re-recording of the *Stories from The Other Side* album, but instead it was the climax of two years of not-so-great times for me personally. I retreated back into the studio and decided to go through a whole bunch of old songs I had in order to keep my mind occupied. They stretched as far back as 2006, as well as one or two new numbers. I started to look at what I had. A lyrical theme from my original demos came to light after I shortlisted eighteen to twenty songs. They were about love and life, which I didn’t realise at the time of writing them as I tend to just write down whatever words come into my head during the songwriting process. Two of my favourite concept albums are The Who’s *Tommy* and The Pretty Things’ *S.F. Sorrow*, so I slowly assembled and created a narrative around them.

Recording started in November 2017. I started to rewrite the lyrics I had, which took a good six months, and it suddenly took off on its own. It was finally finished in September 2019. Each song seemed to have a theme, an episode, a scene, so I decided to put a psychedelic twist on it. In a nutshell, it’s the story of a guy who starts reminiscing, track one ‘Looking for The Answer’, about the night he took too much LSD and fell in love with a hallucination called Lucy, track two ‘Sunshine Girl’. She leads him on, love bombing him, and creating a false reality, track three ‘We’ll Never be Apart’. They have their first date together, track four ‘I Never Knew That You Fell from The Stars’, and the next day he is absolutely besotted, track five ‘High as A Cloud’. She suddenly dumps him for no reason shortly afterwards, track six ‘Because I Love You’, and then the LSD trip takes a turn for the worse as he tries to understand and work out what happened, track seven ‘I’m Slowly Going Out of My Mind’. However, he gets told by a mutual friend as to what she’s really like, track eight ‘There’ll Never be The One and Only’. So, once he’s in the know, he sets off on a journey of healing and discovery, track nine ‘I’m Free Now’, and discovered Buddhism, track ten ‘Feeling Born Again’, and then waked up from the trip with a new life lesson on board, track eleven ‘No Longer Looking for The Answer’. Part personal experience, part fiction. It wasn’t all bad, I thoroughly enjoyed pushing myself to play better and hone my production skills in the studio.

Aldora Britain Records: ‘We’ll Never be Apart’ is a simply unforgettable song! What is the story behind it and what is it all about?



Gaz Hunter: 'We'll Never be Apart' started life as a tune when it was written in 2009 from the viewpoint of a lover singing to his or her partner, gender neutral. The chorus lyrics didn't change at all, so it was just the two verses to reshape for the *Lucy...* narrative. I envisioned the chorus melody kind of being sung by Elvis or one of those 60s type crooners, holding his hand out to a girl in the front row as he sings it on the stage. And with it being just over two minutes long, it is short and straight to the point. The vibe of the tune totally changed when my Facebook friend Owen Johnstone came over to the studio and laid down the organ part. I'm very proud of the second verse and especially the line, 'A kindred soul in flared Levi's'. Paints a nice picture in my head.

Aldora Britain Records: Fun one to finish, can you tell me something you've never told an interviewer before?

Gaz Hunter: Well, seeing as this is the first ever interview I've ever done with anyone about my music, I guess I could say 'all of the above', ha! Thank you for the opportunity.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Gaz:** As cliché as it apparently is nowadays, it's got to be The Beatles.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Gaz:** The Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Electric Ladyland*. An untouched masterpiece.

AB Records: First gig? **Gaz:** Lindisfarne, Newcastle City Hall, December '83. It was released as the album *Lindisfarnetastic*.

AB Records: Style icon? **Gaz:** Brian Jones. That perfect bowl cut, and immaculately suited and booted.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Gaz:** *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story*, a perfect mix of music and comedy.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Gaz:** I'm not clued up on modern music unfortunately. I'm still discovering bands from the 60s and 70s. King Gizzard and The Lizard Wizard were the last new band I heard and enjoyed.



Floating in The Blue

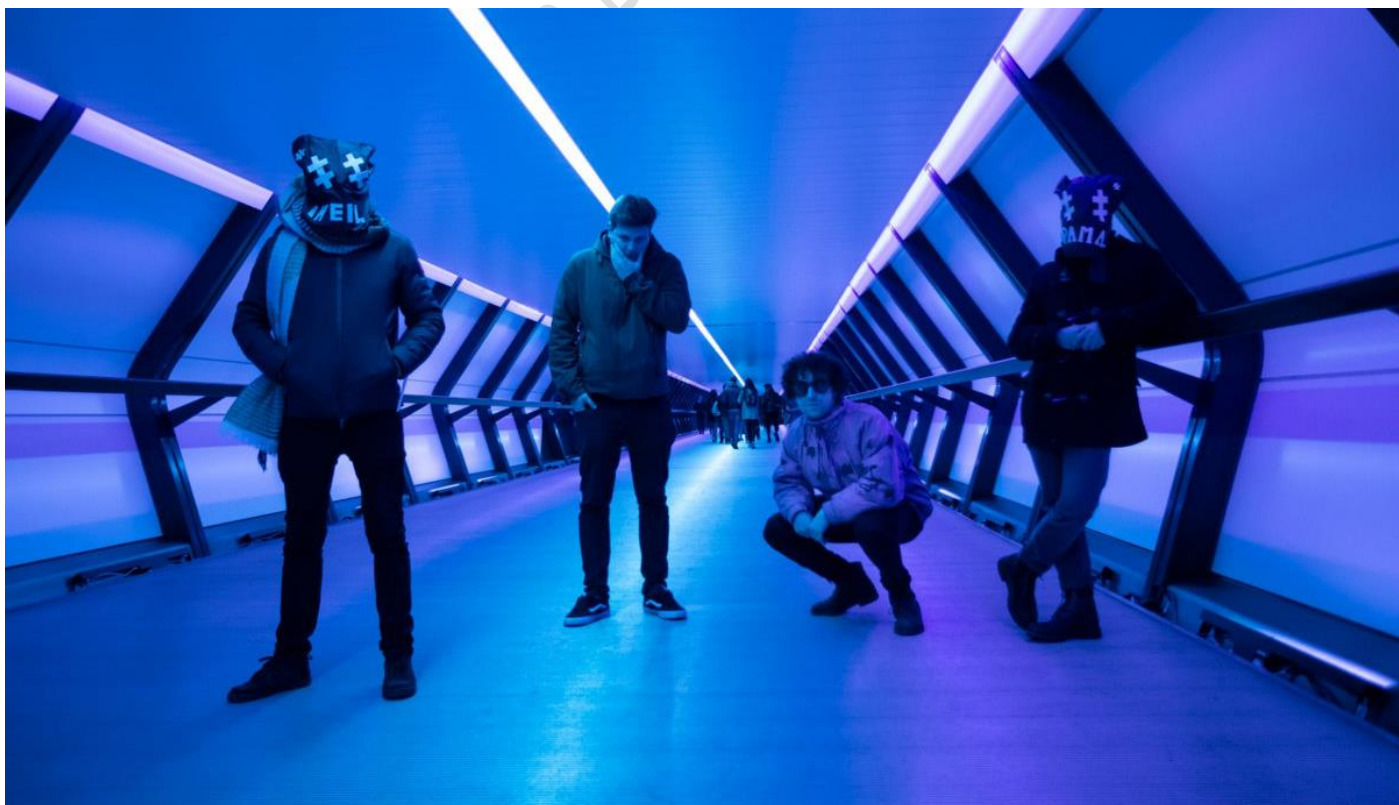
In the Italian city of Brescia in the region of Lombardy, an electro rock collective has emerged with the attitude and the music to take on the world. With a fiercely independent edge, **JESTER SOCIETY** bring their brilliantly crafted synth-punk anthems to eager audiences. The group first came to the attention of *Aldora Britain Records* with the release of their 2020 EP, *Heil Drama!*, a fantastically explosive set that explored themes of loneliness, love and alienation, but through Jester Society's alternative pop lens. In double quick time, the band followed up with their dance punk anthem 'White Bravo'. There has been no rest since either. In 2021, 'Cynical Critical' was unleashed, followed by 'Bad Bones' and 'Neon Whisper' in 2022. This burgeoning indie discography has surely only just begun, and the trajectory being set is unquestionably exciting. Back in May 2021, *ABR* chatted to Jester Society for the first time. After a long wait, that conversation is published here.

Jester Society have previously contributed their track 'Mars Argo' to our 'Everybody's Out There Doing Nothin' New' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Marco, it is such a pleasure to be talking to you today. How are you? I was wondering if we could start at the beginning. What are some of your first musical memories and what pushed you towards actively pursuing music?

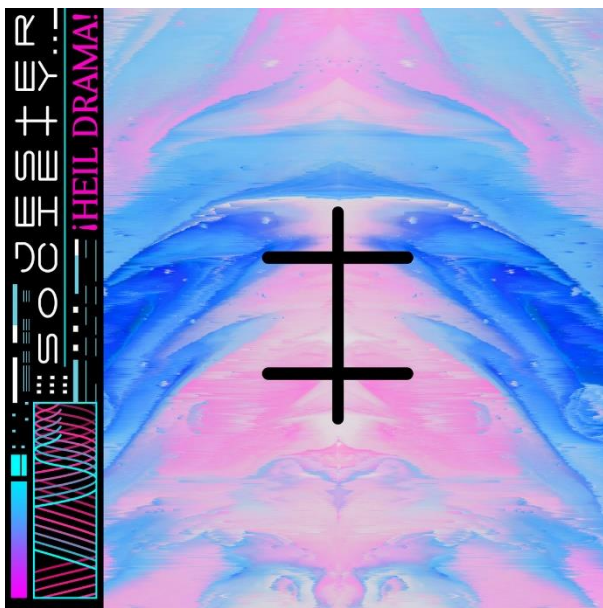
Marco Belotti: Hi Tom, thanks for this interview, it is such a great pleasure for me too! Everything's okay, thanks! Yep, let's start at the beginning. My first musical memories are for sure listening to Queen and Franco Battiato, an Italian new wave singer and songwriter from the 70s and 80s, with my father. This was in the car, to help me get to sleep, and when he used to carry me around the city. I started playing guitar and piano in middle school because I was totally into punk rock and I wanted to be like Billie Joe Armstrong! So, I started studying guitar in my countryside city Palazzolo sull'Oglio, near Brescia in Italy, and in Milan.



“We had great times at Hackney Rhythm Studios with the English-Spanish producer The Orbalist. We worked in the studio and partied every night with jam sessions and a lot of booze.”

Aldora Britain Records: We have to talk about the brilliant Jester Society! How did the band come about? How did you meet the other guys and what was the initial spark behind the project?

Marco Belotti: Me and Alessandro, the Jester Society singer, were at high school together and he was a great fan of my first band, Sweet Bombs. After high school in 2015, we started Jester Society, a new punk rock band, with Davide, the former drummer of the group. Davide left the band in 2018 and the guy with the ‘HEIL!’ mask on his face joined the band behind the drums. Also in the same year, the guy behind the ‘DRAMA!’ mask joined the band with his keyboards. This started Jester Society as the electropop band that you now know. After the release of our debut EP, *Heil Drama!*, the mysterious masked members of the band changed their names to ‘WHITE!’ and ‘BRAVO!’, starting another new era for the project.



Aldora Britain Records: You released the brilliant *Heil Drama!* in early 2020. What are your memories from making and releasing the record, and how do you reflect on it now?

Marco Belotti: We enjoyed the days of making *Heil Drama!* a lot. The EP has been recorded and mixed between our home city and London, the city that has culturally adopted us. We had great times at Hackney Rhythm Studios with the English-Spanish producer The Orbalist. We worked in the studio and partied every night with jam sessions and a lot of booze. We really miss London, when it’s possible we will be back for sure. *[Note to reader: This interview was conducted when international travel was still limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic.]* In Brescia with Paolo Blodio Fappani, we had great times too. We stayed there for a couple of weeks, working really hard, and Blodio became like a second father to us!

Aldora Britain Records: I love that sound that you create as a band. It is like an electro dance take on indie rock. How would you describe it, how did it come about, and who are your biggest influences as a group?

Marco Belotti: Well, our sound is a big mix of all of our influences for sure. It’s been described as a ‘rockier version of Twenty One Pilots with the experimental electronic influences of the Gorillaz, but always keeping an eye on the pop side with vocal lines that seem to be inspired by Billie Eilish’. We always wanted to do something new, trying to create a sound that merges pop with electronica and hip hop, with everything surrounded by a dark glam aura.

Aldora Britain Records: I love your collaboration with Kate on ‘Mars Argo’. What is the story behind this song and what it is all about?

Marco Belotti: Well, one day Kate liked our song ‘Floating in The Blue’ on Soundcloud. So, we listened to her music and it was like love at first sight! We really loved her voice, so we messaged her and asked her if she wanted to do a song together. She said yes! So, we started working by stems and ‘Mars Argo’ became the final result.

Aldora Britain Records: Your follow-up single, ‘White Bravo!’, doesn’t hold back either. How did this track about? Please tell me about it!

“We always wanted to do something new, trying to create a sound that merges pop with electronica and hip hop, with everything surrounded by a dark glam aura.”

Marco Belotti: ‘White Bravo!’ is a song written during the first lockdown in March 2020. It’s an anxious trip that makes us doubt our certainties. Things like friends or enemies, love or obsession, dreams or reality. It’s like a demon made by anxiety that comes in riding a rainbow-made unicorn!

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Marco:** Twenty One Pilots.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Marco:** *A Night at The Opera* by Queen.

AB Records: First gig? **Marco:** Green Day in Milan, 2009.

AB Records: Style icon? **Marco:** Frank Iero from My Chemical Romance.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Marco:** *Fight Club* directed by David Fincher and *Young Frankenstein* directed by Mel Brooks.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Marco:** 100 Geecs and Glaive.



Turn over for the sounds of Banjo Jen...

Banjo Pickin' Girl

Old-time bluegrass and country music travels well. This is a fact. In recent years, it has travelled over the Atlantic to the Steel City. In Sheffield, in the North of England, a banjo picking girl is plying her trade. This is, of course, the spectacular and creative **BANJO JEN**. Jen is a standout figure within the UK's singer-songwriter scene. She has traded in the expected influences and inspirations such as Pearl Jam, Nirvana and Soundgarden, and replaced them with her love of Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and John Denver. A fair trade in the eyes of *Aldora Britain Records*! Two breath-taking EPs have emerged to date, 2018's *Lost & Found* and 2022's *Cloud of Dust*, and both shine a light on a genuinely talented songsmith and musician. 'Sold My Soul for A Dime', 'Banjo Pickin' Girl', 'Fine Line', and 'Whisky Feet' are British bluegrass and country classics waiting for their accolades. Back in May 2021, *ABR* had a chat with Jen to get to know her musical story up until that point. That conversation is published here for the very first time.

Banjo Jen has previously contributed her track 'Sold My Soul for A Dime' to our 'Everybody's Out There Doing Nothin' New (It Doesn't Matter to Me)' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Jen, how are you doing? It is such a pleasure to be talking to you today. Thank you for your time! I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your first musical memories and what pushed you towards pursuing music?

Banjo Jen: Hi! I'm doing okay, thank you, although I'm currently feeling a bit rough after my second vaccine. But it's a small price to pay, so all good! Wow, my memory is rubbish, but I guess my first musical memories are mostly theatre-based as my parents were in an amateur theatre group, so they roped me in from a young age. Therefore, the first songs I knew were all from musicals! Then, as I was growing up, I really loved alt rock and grunge music like Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, etcetera. Very different from the theatre stuff! I learnt to play the organ as a kid,



“I love the storytelling in country music and listened to a lot of Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash and John Denver growing up. But it was quite a long journey to get to writing songs and performing as Banjo Jen.”

and tried guitar when I was a bit older, but I was rubbish. I always listened to loads of different music, but it was certainly never something I considered pursuing as a career. Visual art and design were always my main subjects and that’s what I focussed on through college. I then became a sixth form college art tutor myself for many years. The banjo ‘career’ came a lot later!

Aldora Britain Records: How did the magnificent Banjo Jen project come to be? A ‘banjo picking girl’ from Yorkshire! How did this come about? What appeals to you about country and bluegrass music?

Banjo Jen: Wow thanks, ‘magnificent’, not a word often used in the same sentence as banjo, ha! I love the storytelling in country music and listened to a lot of Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash and John Denver growing up. But it was quite a long journey to get to writing songs and performing as Banjo Jen. And yeah, I guess it’s pretty unusual for a Yorkshire girl, or technically speaking, a Nottinghamshire girl, as I grew up just south of the Yorkshire border!

Many years ago, I saw an Appalachian dance team and string band called Feet First performing at a folk festival. I thought the music and dancing was amazing, so I drunkenly accosted one of the female members in the toilet queue afterwards and told her I could tap dance and that I would love to learn American step dancing and join the team. And they let me in! After dancing with them for a long time, I unfortunately got a health condition which made dancing difficult. I’d bought a banjo a couple of years previously as I loved the old-time music that we danced to and fancied learning how to play some of the tunes on the banjo. But it had been sat there for ages with me having no time to learn. So, when I had to take some time off work, I eventually had chance to learn it and I transferred from being a dancer for the team to a musician.



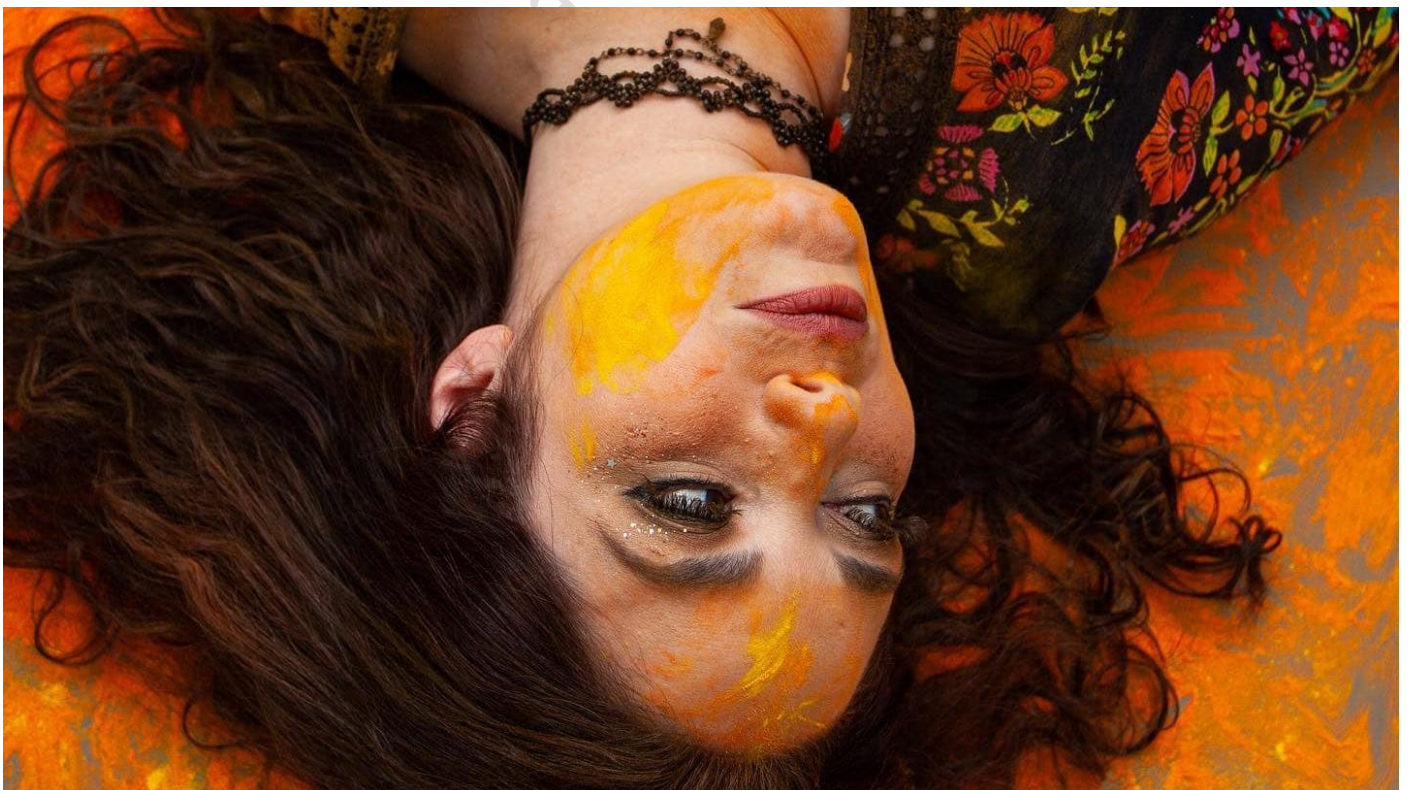
“I’m also influenced by the folk tradition of telling stories and using different characters as the focus in songs.”

As I was learning, I also discovered I could create my own songs to play, but I was terrified of singing in front of anyone at that point! I then moved to Sheffield and started playing in a country trio which really helped to build my confidence as a musician and I started to sing a little back-up and harmony. My bandmate, Ash Gray, was really helpful in giving me some singing coaching and building my confidence to get on a microphone. Look Ash’s stuff up by the way, he’s great! I then gradually started to perform some of my own songs at open mics and at friends’ events and got really hooked on writing my own songs, and that’s how Banjo Jen came to be. The name was actually a nickname people had given me when I first moved to Sheffield, with little more than a banjo on my back, so I thought I might as well keep it as a stage name, seeing as that’s how everyone already referred to me!

Aldora Britain Records: I think you take things a little further than ‘just’ country or bluegrass with your music. There is something quite unique about it. How does your creative process work? Are there any particular themes you enjoy writing about and who are your biggest influences as an artist?

Banjo Jen: Thank you, it’s nice to hear there’s something unique about my music. If I had to categorise it into a genre, I’d go for Americana, as that’s more of a catch-all term for roots music that could include country, folk, blues, etcetera. Some of my songs have quite a country vibe, but I don’t think of myself as a country artist as I’d say a lot of my stuff is more folky. And some of it is a bit bluesy. The purists out there will tell you it’s definitely not bluegrass, ha! That’s a genre which seems to have very specific rules around its definition! And I play a very different style of banjo to bluegrass picking. Though bluegrass has certainly been a bit of an influence on some of the songs.

I’ve always listened to a lot of US female Americana artists like Alison Krauss, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Eilen Jewell, Gretchen Peters and Mary Gauthier. And in more recent times, Sarah Shook, The Secret Sisters, Brandi Carlile and Margo Price. I’m also influenced by the folk tradition of telling stories and using different characters as the focus in songs. When I first started going to gigs and festivals back in the late 90s, I saw a lot of contemporary British folk artists like Kate Rusby, Chris While and Julie Matthews, Oysterband and Show of Hands, and I can hear that British folk influence in some of my songs. I also love the American bands that came out of the 80s and 90s era of alt country



“I wanted it to sound like a tune or song that had been around for years and could be sung around the campfire ... I guess I was picturing an older woman reminiscing about a life with a lot of mistakes and scrapes, but not necessarily regrets.”

melodic rock. Stuff like Uncle Tupelo, The Jayhawks, Old 97's, and my all-time favourite band, the slightly more grungy and alt rock Soul Asylum. I've always been a sucker for a simple, catchy melody.

In terms of the process, I always wait for inspiration to hit before I write. I'm not a writer who fills notebook after notebook and writes constantly. I just wait for an idea to come out of the ether and then I usually process it quite quickly when it appears! And the themes vary a lot. Sometimes the songs are really personal, but they're also often about people other than myself. Sometimes people I know, sometimes historical people, sometimes characters I've made up. But often, there's still an element of me and my own experiences in there.



Aldora Britain Records: In 2018, you gave us the fantastic *Lost & Found* EP. What are your memories from making and releasing this, and how do you reflect on this collection now?

Banjo Jen: I'm really proud of that EP as I never thought in a million years that I would end up recording and releasing my own songs. So, that debut collection marks a real milestone point in my life. I worked with an amazing producer, Mark Stoney, who brought a really nice, subtle production to the tracks, which only had very simple instrumentation. Primarily the banjo and double bass with a small bit of guitar, keys and light percussion. I really enjoyed working with someone who could take the basic bones of the songs and then subtly fill in the spaces to create a cool sound. You need a producer's ear for that, which I don't have, so I loved working with someone who does! I think the original songs on the EP stand up well as they were pretty much the first songs I ever

wrote! I have so many more songs that I now need to record! Look Mark Stoney up by the way, his own singer-songwriter stuff is incredible.

Aldora Britain Records: I love 'Sold My Soul for A Dime', such a brilliant song. What is the story behind the track and what is it all about?

Banjo Jen: Thank you! That song came about from me initially just playing around with a little melody and tune that I came up with which sounded really old-timey, then I started to add the words. I wanted it to sound like a tune or song that had been around for years and could be sung around the campfire as it's really simple. I guess I was picturing an older woman reminiscing about a life with a lot of mistakes and scrapes, but not necessarily regrets. She has a cheeky glint in her eye despite being old and tired, and she knows that she'd probably do it all over again. There are a lot of songs with that kind of theme by men, but not so many sung from a female perspective. And I enjoy the fact that, although she's asking the God she believes in to be kind to her, she's still not really apologetic for her actions!

Aldora Britain Records: I would honestly love to see you live one day. How would you describe a Banjo Jen show? How does the 'Appalachian step-dancing and no-nonsense Yorkshire charm' come together in practice?

Banjo Jen: I usually do a step dancing number somewhere in my live set and it always goes down really well as it's so unusual to set a song to foot percussion. The audience always get their phones out and record that one! I have some more funny, brashy songs, but also some more serious, sad songs, so often there's laughter and tears at the same gig! I also like to talk between some of the songs, telling stories or having a joke with the audience. I love that tradition in

folk and Americana circles, the fact that there's a lot of interaction and engagement with the audience. As much as I enjoy watching bigger pop and rock artists in large venues, there's often a bit of a disconnect between the artist and the audience at those events, whereas at nice intimate folky gigs there's a real two-way connection. So, I hope a Banjo Jen show leaves the audience feeling like they've been a part of it and had a good connection with me, and also experienced a whole range of emotions and had a good laugh!

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Jen:** If that's just based on music, it's an impossible question. But if it's also based on personality, there's no contest, Dolly Parton!

AB Records: Favourite album? **Jen:** Another tough question as it changes all the time depending on mood, but *The Bends* by Radiohead would always be up there near the top.

AB Records: First gig? **Jen:** There were probably a few small folky ones beforehand, but the first really memorable gig was Terrorvision at Rock City in Nottingham!

AB Records: Style icon? **Jen:** Diana Rigg.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Jen:** Ahh, that really is impossible! Can I cheat and give a favourite for different moods? Moving and heart-warming, *Forrest Gump*. Gritty, *Carlito's Way*. Action, *Die Hard with A Vengeance*. Musical, *Bugsy Malone* or *Calamity Jane*. Funny, *Overboard*. Scary, *The Omen*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Jen:** There are so many I could choose, but there's a duo in Sheffield called Soup Review whose new album, *Beneath the Big White Moon*, I've played on heavy rotation during the lockdown periods in this last year, so I'll choose them. Their songs are really amusing, like laugh out loud amusing, whilst actually being a very poignant exploration of emotions and universal fears and experiences. I highly recommend!



Reach for Me

In the Upper Midwestern region of the US, Minnesota-based singer-songwriter **CHRISTY MERRY** has embarked on a brilliantly creative solo career. Christy is a self-confessed thinker, passing the time by writing poetry, music, blogs, and even books. It is this artistic sensibility that has led to two highly impressive EPs, 2021's *Here for You* and 2023's follow-up *Doree & The Dishes*. Across these two impeccable releases, Christy has showcased her love for a variety of music, from tender indie folk to traditional pop swing. The most important connecting factor is her unquestionably relatable songwriting through tender-hearted personal reflections and superbly aware observations, tunes such as 'I Wish You'd Tried' and 'Crazy' are quintessential examples of this approach. In December 2021, *Aldora Britain Records* sat down with Christy to discuss her musical output up until that point. That conversation is published here for the very first time.

Christy Merry has previously contributed her track 'I Wish You'd Tried' to our 'King for A Day' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Christy, how are you? I am so happy to be talking to you today, I actually just finished yet another listen to *Here for You*. Thank you for the music! I was wondering if we could start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Christy Merry: I'm well! I'm glad to be talking to you too. You're welcome! Well, I guess I was involved in choir and chorus and things like that in my teens and used to go to local shows and a yearly local music fest with friends. At the camp I went to every summer, the week would end with a show by PFR, a somewhat Beatle-esque style band who were considered the 'camp band' but made it big on a larger scale around the time I left for college. I started writing songs sometime in my teens. Early on at college in Chicago, twenty plus years ago, I did crew work for big shows that came to town. And later, I formed my first band, Thursday James, a 'folk-alternative-groove' band. We did a bunch of gigs in my junior year to connect folks with a coffeehouse church we were helping to start in Wicker Park. Mostly in parks on a stage that folded out of a semi! The guys in that band were solid musicians, and found the fact that I



“I’ve managed to write a lot of songs over time and keeping them to myself just doesn’t seem the right thing to do ... this is something ... I can give to the world that no one else can.”

didn’t have a lot of musical ‘know how’ as a plus. They liked the unconventional timings I would sometimes use because I didn’t know any better. I’d sing my songs to them, written acapella, and they would figure out what I had heard in my head. That was the beginning. As for what propels me, it’s just I’ve managed to write a lot of songs over time and keeping them to myself just doesn’t seem the right thing to do. There are a lot of things I can spend my time doing, but this is something really only I can do, something I can give to the world that no one else can.

Aldora Britain Records: You are a very creative person and have a ‘thinking mind’. You dabble in poetry, music, blogging, and even books. How does your creative process work? What sparks a new project for you and are there particular themes that you like to explore?

Christy Merry: I write more by inspiration than perspiration. Things come to me or they don’t, and I am not particularly disciplined. I do try to journal regularly. New projects mainly just build over time. If I notice I have a lot of work that centres on a certain subject or genre, then I toss them in a folder together and sometimes a title comes to me and then I move it forward. Like my last poetry chapbook, *Before Cancer Comes for Me*, came from a folder I had labelled ‘Cancer / Grief poems’ and I kept adding to it. I don’t deliberately pursue any particular themes, and these days I do more organising and publishing of past work than writing new work. I have written a lot about relationships, loss, biblical characters, God, etcetera. Hopefully coming at these widely touched upon topics using fresh language. A reviewer called *Here for You* cathartic, and I know I have a tendency to go deep and struggle with heavy things. But with the next EP I’m currently working on, the songs were all chosen because they were dancy, jazzy, and joyful with an old-timey feel. So, hopefully there’s a balance. [Note to reader: This EP is *Doree & The Dishes*, releasing July 2023.]

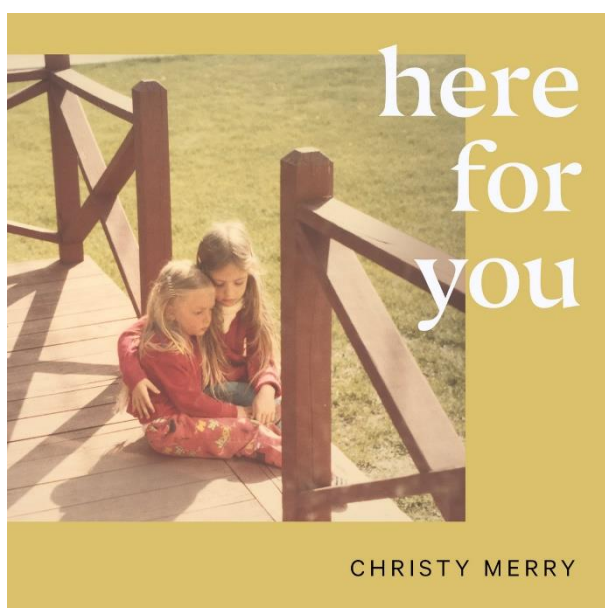
Aldora Britain Records: I really do love your music and your alternative folk rock sound. How did this style come about, what goes into it for you, and who are your biggest influences as an artist?

Christy Merry: Thank you! That means a lot to me. I write my songs mostly acapella, as I mentioned, and the style in the case of this particular EP was shaped mostly by the producers who were involved. I just sang them the songs I



“I have written a lot about relationships, loss, biblical characters, God, etcetera. Hopefully coming at these widely touched upon topics using fresh language ... I know I have a tendency to go deep and struggle with heavy things.”

had, and the sound around it was built by them. My friend Brian Kehew, from the now defunct band Moog Cookbook, whose production work includes Fiona Apple’s *Extraordinary Machine* album amongst others, helped create the initial demo of ‘Peter’s Lullaby’ when I lived in Hollywood in the early 2000s. Other than that, the only instrumentation for these songs that I brought was very, very simple guitar for ‘I Wish You’d Tried’. I had brought that to my friend and produced Matt Patrick when we began working on the *Here for You* EP in 2019. I think Matt kind of took the keyboard vibe that Brian used in ‘Peter’s Lullaby’ and some of my influences like Weeping Tile, Innocence Mission, maybe a little Happy Rhodes, and mixed in some of his own influences. He mentioned a little of ‘Sorrow’ by The National comes in to how he shaped ‘Naïve’, and a little Portishead-style trip-hop is found in ‘Reach for Me’. By mixing all of these different ingredients, he made this project into a coherent whole.



Aldora Britain Records: 2020 saw the release of your debut EP *Here for You*. I love the themes that come through in this record. That feeling of hope for the future. Can you tell me about it?

Christy Merry: I guess the whole EP is about trying, taking risks, facing fears, and pursuing dreams. It’s about helping each other, and being compassionate with each other and ourselves. In ‘Reach for Me’, the chorus has a double meaning because we both reach for each other in longing for connection, and reach on behalf of one another. We take up the slack when the other is struggling or has reached the limit of how far they can get on their own. Right now, I’m really passionate about doing things that terrify me, and risking failure, and being gentle with myself when I do sometimes fail. Nothing amazing ever happens without risk. And when we help each other, we can accomplish things we didn’t think we could.

Aldora Britain Records: What are your memories from recording and releasing the EP, and how do you reflect on it as a whole now?

Christy Merry: In my initial meeting with Matt Patrick at The Library Studio, I had an idea of the EP I wanted to make, but I was flexible. I brought along a huge file binder full of songs and Matt had me sing a lot of them to him as he made little notes. He gave me a list of about seven that he thought I should try to narrow down my choices from. That week, while trying to sort out which were in and which were out, I wrote ‘Reach for Me’ out of the blue and that song kind of tied the theme together and made it clear to me which other songs should be included. ‘Naïve’ is the only song on the EP from the group I initially intended to include. I had to come up with a new name for the project, a cover idea, learn about press releases from my husband Tommy, come up with a virtual release party idea when the pandemic hit, and make music videos with help from Tommy and my friend Andrew Crandall. While doing so, I received help in design, promotion, prayer, and encouragement from so many friends and even strangers, a.k.a. new friends. The turnout for the virtual release party was over fifty people, and the response to the press release with articles and interviews was so much more than I had thought would happen. I think I’m just really thankful for the support of my community and I felt loved during the process. And I felt God’s presence.

Aldora Britain Records: ‘I Wish You’d Tried’ is my favourite song from the EP. What is the story behind this song and what does it mean to you?

Christy Merry: I love that that's your favourite song on *Here for You*. It's definitely the song I most connected with emotionally while recording the EP. The story is that I met someone one afternoon in Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York about twelve years ago. This was shortly before I moved back to Minnesota, and we really connected. I ended up having to cut ties with them after a while because they had some pretty self-destructive patterns and it was affecting me too. Unfortunately, they did not want to accept or seek help at the time. While I felt it was the right decision, I really struggled because I knew they were in a lot of pain, and I couldn't help them. It was always a bittersweet song because I never knew how that person's story ended. Somehow the guitar solo Matt added in our pre-production hit such a chord in me. After that, every time I would practice the song I would cry, which isn't normal for me usually. We didn't end up using that specific instrumentation on *Here for You*, instead we switched it up to something that matched the feel of the rest of the songs more closely. I still have a special place in my heart for that demo and keep it on my website, but I love the version on the EP too!

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Christy:** Over the Rhine.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Christy:** *Cold Snap* by Weeping Tile.

AB Records: First gig? **Christy:** Amy Grant, *Unguarded* tour.

AB Records: Style icon? **Christy:** Lucy Liu's character Watson on the show *Elementary*. I'm a little obsessed with her short ties.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Christy:** The 1999 black and white film *The Girl on The Bridge* by Patrice Leconte.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Christy:** I'm a big fan of Erel Pilo and her project Pilot.



Turn over for the sounds of Hypnotic Eye...

The Good Lord Will Provide

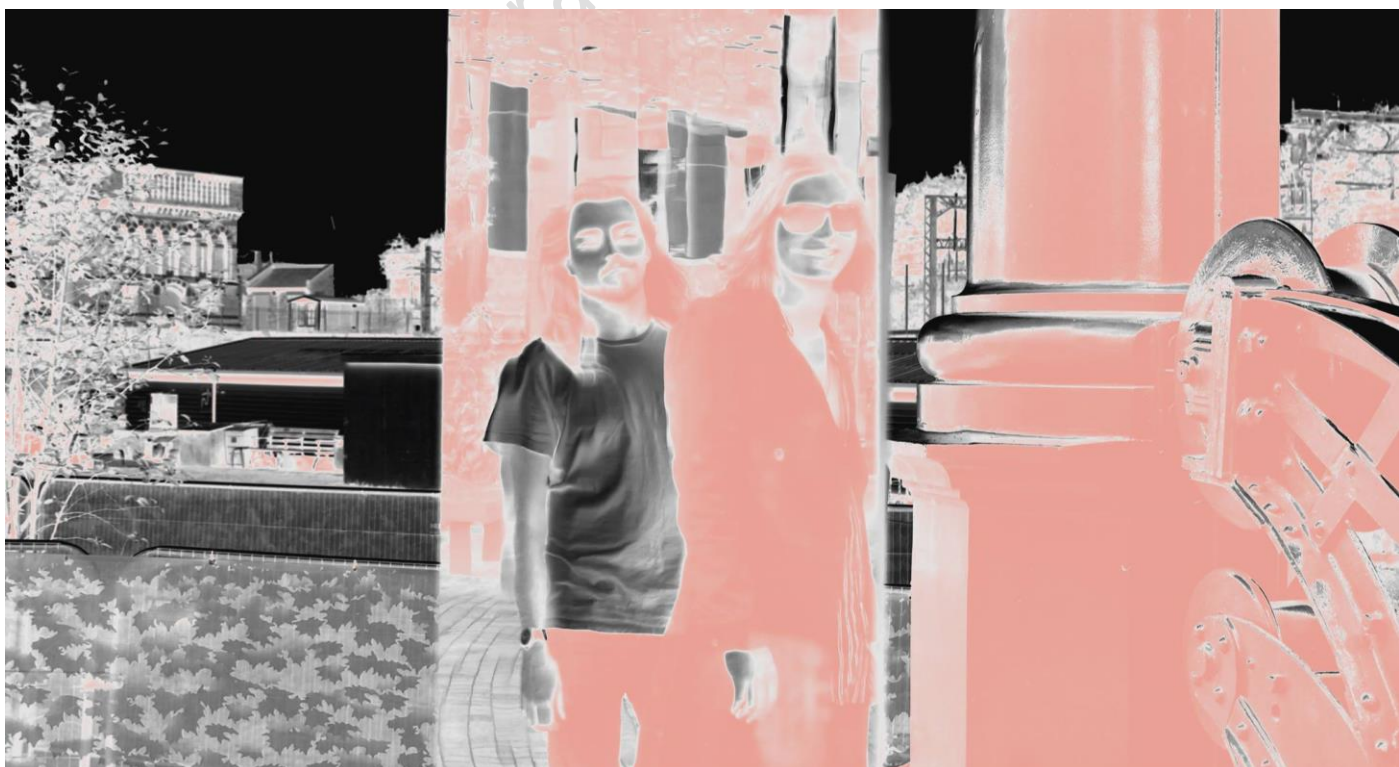
HYPNOTIC EYE are a garage punk duo from England with a raw and direct spirit. They make music for themselves, and the cathartic joy that it gives them, and audiences can instantly relate to this. The quintessential example is their 2017 LP, *Oscillator*, an exceptional twelve-track snapshot of what this two-piece are all about. Tracks such as 'I Don't Know (What I'm Saying)' and 'Are You Blind?' would more than ably fit into any playlist of twenty-first century garage gems, and further singles like 'I Get By' and 'Wedding Day Anti-Blues' also follow suit. The energy of these releases is truly infectious, a modern-day fix of rock and roll mayhem that true music lovers crave. Back in May 2021, not long after *Aldora Britain Records* had discovered the exceptional *Oscillator* album, we caught up with Josef Boronski, one half of Hypnotic Eye, to discuss the band's journey so far. That conversation is published here for the first time.

Hypnotic Eye have previously contributed their track 'I Get By' to our 'Everybody's Out There Doing Nothin' New (It Doesn't Matter to Me)' compilation. Listen or download [HERE](#).

If you enjoy this content, please consider making a small, magazine-sized donation at the following link: <https://paypal.me/aldorabritainrecords>. Thank you!

Aldora Britain Records: Hi Josef, how are you? It is such a pleasure to be chatting to you today. Let's have some fun! I was wondering if we could start off by rewinding the clocks. What are some of your first musical memories and what pushed you towards actively pursuing music?

Josef Boronski: Hello Tom, thanks very much. It's a pleasure to 'be here'. Weirdly, I was thinking about my first musical memories the other day. One of them is making a cassette mixtape for my granddad one Christmas. I was very young. I would play the tracks out of a set of speakers and re-record them with a little microphone. It was such a bootleg rig! The only song I can really remember putting on there was 'Suffragette City', which I loved. But after that, the most important thing for Freddie and myself was certainly our 'discovery' of The Beatles in our early teens. It just changed everything. It was all-consuming, I'd say we were infected by those melodies and were unable to think of anything else.



“We had great musical chemistry, almost telepathy, as a result of learning our respective instruments together. So, I wanted to see how that would work in a two-piece rock and roll band.”

Aldora Britain Records: And now, we have to move onto the brilliant Hypnotic Eye! How did the band come about? How did you meet each other and what was the initial spark?

Josef Boronski: Freddie and I were school friends. Once we’d discovered The Beatles, we both quickly realised we wanted to have a go at making music ourselves. I pretty much immediately picked up a guitar and would practice every waking moment, Freddie learnt the drums and quickly got to grips with engineering, recording, and production. After messing around in various cover bands together, I managed to persuade Freddie to try something new. We had great musical chemistry, almost telepathy, as a result of learning our respective instruments together. So, I wanted to see how that would work in a two-piece rock and roll band where we had the ability to play very spontaneously and instinctively, unconstrained by additional band members. Just drums, guitar, and vocals. We got a couple of songs together and played our first live show at a birthday party of Freddie’s, supporting our own teenage cover band, I think! We immediately understood it had a lot of potential and was a lot of fun, so we went for it. Ultimately, we just wanted to make some music that we enjoyed playing and listening to. It wasn’t really for anyone else or any other purpose, and still isn’t.

Aldora Britain Records: *Oscillator* is a killer record. It is also the album that introduced me to the band. You released it in 2017. How do you reflect on it now and how would you say the band has progressed since then?

Josef Boronski: It feels like a lifetime ago. We were both still pretty young and innocent. The whole album is just guitar, drums and vocals, and I’m amazed every time I listen to it. The star of the show is Freddie’s production. It turned my musical sketes into scary, psychedelic garage rock monsters. I think a lot of the songs are very ambitious. I wanted to write songs with hooks, but which also had dissonant elements which would put off a casual listener. I think we achieved that. The lyrics were mainly about my various neuroses and anxieties, as well as the powerlessness I felt living in a world ruled by greed and apathy. I think I still write lyrics in pretty much the same vein, but I’d like to hope they’re slightly more refined now. It always feels like we’re making progress and evolving when we’re playing and writing together. We’re in the process of finishing off another album which has been hugely delayed by the pandemic. It was pretty much completed nearly eighteen months ago, and we’ve been waiting to polish last details together. I can’t wait to get it done.

Aldora Britain Records: It has a brilliant, loud and fuzzy sound too. How would you describe it, how did the band’s style come about, and who are your biggest influences as a band?

Josef Boronski: I guess it’s a psychedelic garage rock thing. I’m not sure how we really got that sound. I’m sure The Beatles’ influence contributes to the echoey psychedelia a bit. For me, Billy Childish was a big driving influence on the garage side. I got really into Iggy Pop, The Sonics, and also Radiohead and Arcade Fire, which all had an effect on the vocals, rhythms and guitars. I also tend to like to suggest lots of extreme, abstract ideas for production and engineering, and Freddie is great at finding ways of doing them or bringing me back down to Earth. He’s got impeccable taste when it comes to production. He’s also got some slightly different musical influences from me, which I think really keeps things interesting.



“We were writing in a very impulsive way. I would deliberately come to the studio without any developed ideas, so we’d just jam and create something furiously and feverishly.”

Aldora Britain Records: You also have a song called ‘I Get By’ from 2018. This has to be one of my favourites! What is the story behind the song and what is it all about?

Josef Boronski: Again, that song was really about anxiety. The lyrics are very simple, but it’s personal. We were writing in a very impulsive way. I would deliberately come to the studio without any developed ideas, so we’d just jam and create something furiously and feverishly. I was messing about with alternative guitar tunings to help me add accents and overtones to chords. Once we had the bones of this very primitive garage song, I came up with an angry post-Stones intro, got some cyber synth guitar tones for a bridge, and sang it high and quavering.

Aldora Britain Records: I imagine the band are fairly explosive live. What can a fan expect from their first Hypnotic Eye gig and what do you aim to bring to the stage?

Josef Boronski: We really love playing live. The fact that it’s just the two of us means we are completely unhindered. We never have a setlist and we are always going off on tangents and medleys. I like to try to shock Freddie by playing songs faster and more furiously than we’ve played them before, it makes things very entertaining for us both. I suppose I unconsciously make vain attempts at transcendence on stage. When you’re playing live with that intensity, you can forget who you are, your worries and pains, for the briefest of moments. You’re completely uninhibited. I guess that’s why I play music and what I’d hope an audience could get out of it, however fleetingly.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Josef:** I always struggle with favourites, so all of these questions are difficult. It changes all the time, but this week it’s Patti Smith.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Josef:** Maybe either *Exile on Main Street* or *Lust for Life*.

AB Records: First gig? **Josef:** The first one that springs to mind is Iggy and The Stooges.

AB Records: Style icon? **Josef:** Jagger.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Josef:** *Page Eight*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Josef:** Smackjam.



All views, comments and opinions expressed within are those of the artists and organisations represented. Aldora Britain Records does not necessarily endorse off of these viewpoints.

All rights reserved. No part of this e-zine can be reproduced without properly crediting the author(s).

Rewind...

[A B Records Issue 97 \(March 2023\)](#)

Featuring OLD ERNiE, Jan Linton, Garrick Rawlings, Rooick, Electric Religious, Oppenheimer's Elevators, Theresa Pauli, Glass Island, The Utter, and King Thurber.

[A B Records Issue 96 \(March 2023\)](#)

Featuring White Star Bulb Company, Adam Hattaway and The Hunters, Mike Weaver, I Choose Izumi, Vetna, Armchairanarchists, The Greenings, Rhythm Bastard, Death by Dumpling, and Amusement Parks on Fire.

[A B Records Issue 95 \(March 2023\)](#)

Featuring Fog Holler, Chest Rockwell, Arthur Davenport, Crosby Tyler, The Evan Williams Project, Edward Rogers, Willie T & Doctor X, Overneath, Turkey Vulture, and The Rhino.

[A B Records Issue 94 \(March 2023\)](#)

Featuring Electric Horseman, Passilauma, Eric Harrison, Johnny and The Raindrops, The Leeches, Mythical Motors, Walker Brigade, Cimrya Deal, The Braam Brothers, and Oli Spleen.

[A B Records Issue 93 \(February 2023\)](#)

Featuring The Mal Thursday Quintet, John O'Sullivan, Marius Pibarot, Kissing The Flint, Anam Danu, Joel David Weir, Dain Norman & The Chrysalis Effect, Nightbird Casino, Tom Curless & The 45%, and Jackson Williams.

[A B Records Issue 92 \(February 2023\)](#)

Featuring Zhir Vengersky, Turtle Zwadlo, The Faded Out, Mylene L. Chamblain, Tommy Romero, Bill Hartmann, Library Man, Librarians With Hickeys, The 151, and The Co-Conspirators.

[A B Records Issue 91 \(February 2023\)](#)

Featuring Gaspard Oil, Five Things to Say, Peace for Old Ghosts, Catherine Traicos, Jenna Palensky, Grand Alpaca, Mizz Wizdom, Meli Tierra, The Merry Monster Men, and Wolf Prayer.

[A B Records Issue 90 \(February 2023\)](#)

Featuring The Dead Sea Sound, George Krakat, Rolan Garces, Have Blue, Sam Polley and The Old Tomorrows, Musicians Anonymous Cleveland, Sloe Gin, Sylvain Rollet, Serdimontana, and M-Opus.

[A B Records Issue 89 \(January 2023\)](#)

Featuring Val Esway + Global Spider Community, Necessary Animals, Molly Thompson, A Remnant Memory, Nicola Black, Versus the Obsidian Octopus, Arts, DPERD, Fox Green, and Body Lens.

[A B Records Issue 88 \(January 2023\)](#)

Featuring Josh Wunderlich, Darksoft, Hans Hjelm, Chris Church, Message Field, Slow Groan, Ars Pro Vita, King Bastard, DC Cardwell, and Ride Til Dawn.

And it's thank you to...

All the **bands and artists** from all around the world who have featured with *Aldora Britain Records*, it wouldn't happen without you. **Malcolm Hilton** for proof-reading every word in every e-zine, many hours well spent. **Dana Berry** for organising our *Tomorrow's Music Today* livestream events, a lot of hard work and a great exhibition of the true *ABR* spirit. **Chris Chin** from Mark Skin Radio, Boston, Massachusetts, for giving us the remarkable opportunity to have a mini segment in his weekly radio show, Christian's Cosmic Corner, and taking *ABR* to the next level. Indiana singer-songwriter extraordinaire **Joel David Weir** for all his support and kind comments, allowing *ABR* to reach a new audience and for more people to discover great new music, and of course, for your amazing records too. **Holger El Pres** for all your backing over in Germany, it is pretty special to have *Aldora Britain Records* radio specials broadcasting out of mainland Europe. **Scott Gordon** and **James Walsh** for curating the first ever *Aldora Britain Records* live music showcase, hosted in Gloucester in 2022, the first of many. Our label collaborators all over the world, including Red and Christina at **Big Stir Records**, Garry John at **Button Up Records**, and Justine at **Red On Red Records**. **Rik Bardsley** at Vox Office Media for all the fantastic artwork and additional promotion opportunities. **Adam Signore** for our weekly radio slot on his radio shows *The Original Music Showcase* and *the Insomniac's Garage* on Mark Skin Radio, out of Boston, Massachusetts. All those who have run promotional features on *Aldora Britain Records* – **Andrea** at *Pinball Wizard* in Italy, **Andrew** at *The Uncarved Block* in Scotland, **Johnny** at *Mods Of Your Generation* in England, and **Sean** at *Target Radio* in England.
