



ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS

The Global Independent & Underground Music E-Zine
Issue 199, Sunday 18th August 2024
“Tomorrow’s Music Today”

FEATURING THE SOUNDS OF...

Bee Eigen, Tokyo Tramps, Abandoned Buildings, The Flying Beets, Little Clay Bears, Tomas Toman, Chris Daley, Luke Potter, and The Linda Brady Revival

Live Spotlight: RICHARD HAWLEY
with John Smith @ De Montfort Hall,
Leicester

Compiled and written by Tom Hilton

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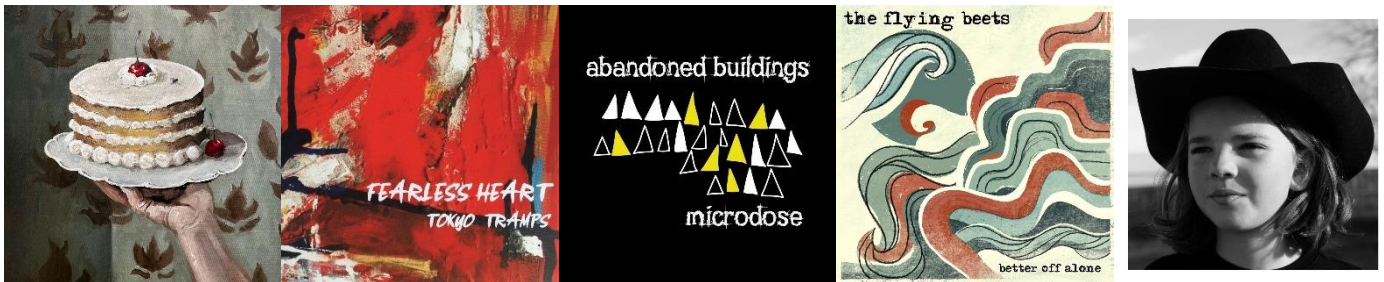


“We all deserve a chance, to join in the dance.”

Jacob Tucker, Grey Start Ghost

Highlight of the Day

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



Bee Eigen: "At the time I was feeling really sort of stuck in my life and confused about my new identity as a mother ... I think both songs represent pivotal moments that helped shape my identity."

Satoru Nakagawa (Tokyo Tramps): "There is no limitation ... I just write about anything that matters to me. And I use all my knowledge and experiences, and most importantly, imagination to write songs."

Jonny Lee Hart (Abandoned Buildings): "The space between the sounds for so many of us is as important as what we play, the textures we all have tend to complement each other rather than compete as we all like to serve the song."

Nathan Waller (The Flying Beets): "I've been writing songs since I was nineteen. It's just been a part of who I am and what I do for most of my life. It's how I express my thoughts and feelings in an artistic way. It's never felt like work or a chore."

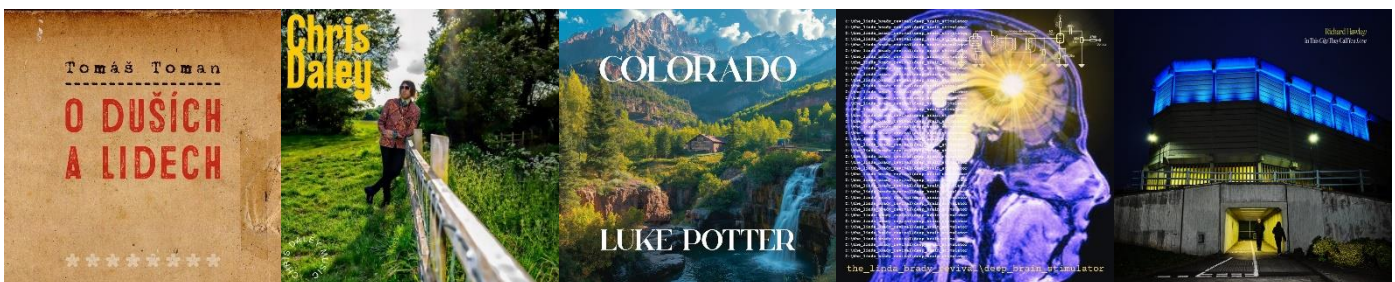
Jackson Hamilton (Little Clay Bears): "I just started experimenting with a four-track tape machine and Logic Pro until things came to fruition. I amassed tons of bad demos and terribly mixed experiments ... until I finally got the hang of recording."

Tomas Toman: "Nowadays the most common theme of my songs are stories from the history of my home region. Even these songs are actually very personal, because they often bring to life the stories of my ancestors."

Chris Daley: "The songs I write are from the heart and from past and present experiences. I love sitting there with my acoustic guitar and just letting the moment take me. Ideas crop up and I'm there ready with a pen and paper."

Luke Potter: "It's not my intention to directly follow the artist route, I've done that for so many years, but I had the songs and thought it'd be nice to put them out into the world but not put big pressures or anything on myself to do big promotion."

Linda Brady (The Linda Brady Revival): "Music has been my help in times of trouble, my party in times of joy, my grief in times of sadness, and my relief in times of anger. It's life."



Incredible Nothing

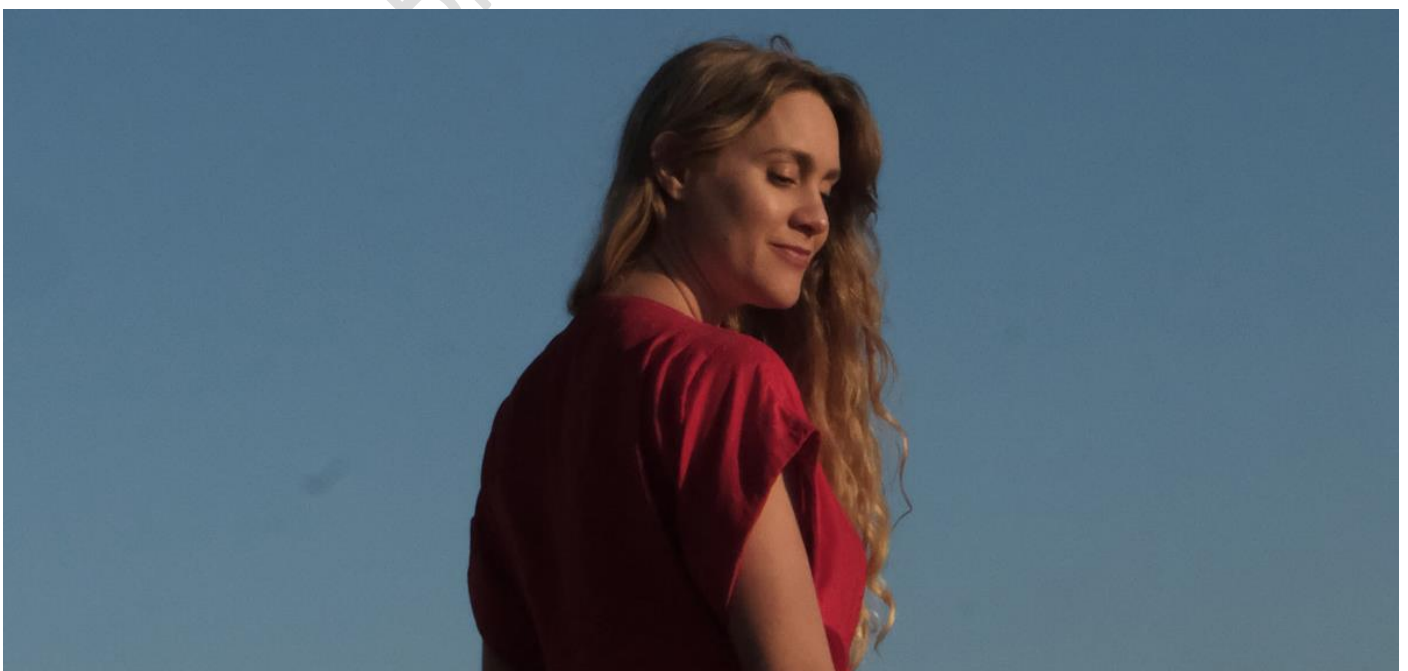
California's troubadouring songstress heritage is undeniable, from the golden era of Laurel Canyon to modern pop greats such as Billie Eilish. The Golden State also has a booming underground scene, which is a welcome home to contemporary up-and-comers including the brilliant **BEE EIGEN**. 2024 has recently seen this singer-songwriter commit her sound to tape with the release of her *Sanguine* EP, a four-track collection that sits in the vast and creative realms between indie folk and storytelling Americana. Across these tracks, Bee provides listeners with a glorious and honest snapshot of her relatable and introspective craft. As the buzz and momentum surrounding *Sanguine* continues to grow, this Nevada City based songstress took some time out to chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about her life in story and song so far. We discussed formative creative memories, her approach to songwriting, a selection of her recorded output, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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Aldora Britain Records: Hello Bee, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Nevada City. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Bee Eigen: Some of my earliest music memories include backseat listening sessions of LeAnn Rimes, Alanis Morissette, and Sheryl Crow. Over the summer, at my dad's house, my childhood soundtrack shifted a bit to classic rock, along with a lot of Beach Boys and Beatles. I loved to sing from a very young age and would make up endless nonsensical songs and 'perform' them for my family. As a kid and teen, I took vocal lessons and got involved in musical theatre and choir. I always had big dreams of being a singer, and I feel most like myself in song.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to the present day and your brilliant solo output. I am really drawn in by your impressive songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?



“At the time I was feeling really sort of stuck in my life and confused about my new identity as a mother ... I think both songs represent pivotal moments that helped shape my identity.”

Bee Eigen: Like many musicians, I'm typically drawn to write when I'm experiencing a strong, usually uncomfortable, emotion. I write as a way to process my feelings. As someone who struggles with anxiety, I often find myself writing about mental health. But I also write about past relationships, personal growth, and childhood experiences. I almost always write from a personal point of view, but occasionally I branch out and create wild, entirely fictional stories about people I've observed during the day. Most recently, a perfectly stoic, murderous host at a popular Bay Area restaurant.

Aldora Britain Records: I would now like to pick out two recent favourites of yours. Let's focus on 'Cake' and 'Aquarium Blue'. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Bee Eigen: I grew up in the Santa Clarita Valley, which is right outside of Los Angeles. I feel like there's this sort of poison mindset that infects people that live there, the music industry is particularly toxic. I wrote 'Cake' about an interaction I had with someone in the entertainment industry that basically advised me to write catchier, more relatable songs if I wanted to 'make it'. At the time, I really took that advice to heart and got kind of lost in the idea of making music that everyone would like. So it's about being ashamed to want external validation, but also my decision to reject that Hollywood advice and take my own path.

'Aquarium Blue' was inspired by the oldest living aquarium fish, Methuselah, which is on display at the California Academy of Sciences. At the time I was feeling really sort of stuck in my life and confused about my new identity as a mother. I felt like I could relate to her tank life, since it felt like I was living Groundhog Day every day. I think both songs represent pivotal moments that helped shape my identity.

Aldora Britain Records: Both of these tracks feature on a superb EP of yours, *Sanguine*. This was also my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist through this process?

Bee Eigen: It was definitely a learning process! Writing the songs is always my favourite part, and definitely the fastest. It took me a long time to finally get these songs out in the world because I had my daughter right in the middle of recording them. All of the songs were recorded at home or at a tiny room I rented in San Francisco that was supposed to be soundproof, but definitely wasn't. Whoops! In the future, I'd love to release more quickly and experiment with more dynamic vocals.

Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to these tunes, I always get the distinct impression that these songs would be elevated to an even higher level up on the live stage. A memorable and immersive evening of story and song, I am sure. What do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist, and what can a fan expect from their very first Bee Eigen live show?



“All anyone truly wants is to feel understood, which is why when someone finds a song that feels like they could have written it themselves, they hold onto it forever.”

Bee Eigen: The songs on *Sanguine* are stripped back on purpose. Because I typically perform completely solo, I wanted the recordings to be as close to what they'd sound like live as possible. I'd say, expect an intimate, honest performance.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Bee Eigen sound and your approach to making and creating music. That spellbinding indie folk feel. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?



Bee Eigen: I've tried out a lot of different styles! Those tracks are definitely buried! While I love many kinds of music, I'm simply not a pop artist. I don't think I could see myself breaking out into a dance number any time soon. I think the indie folk genre lends itself well to my personality and also lets me tell stories with an honest emotional quality.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Bee Eigen: I think people are growing a lifestyle of music that is driven by money and greed. People are craving real connection. All anyone truly wants is to feel understood, which is why when someone finds a song that feels like they could have written it themselves, they hold onto it forever. The artists who express themselves authentically, without listening to some exec telling them how to be or worrying about how to beat the TikTok algorithm, will truly shine.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Bee:** Marika Hackman!

AB Records: Favourite album? **Bee:** Kacey Musgraves, *Golden Hour*.

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Bee:** *Alvvays* by Alvvays.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Bee:** *NSYNC! Haha!

AB Records: Loudest gig as an audience member? **Bee:** Sublime.

AB Records: Style icon? **Bee:** Don't think I have one!

AB Records: Favourite movie? **Bee:** *Almost Famous*.

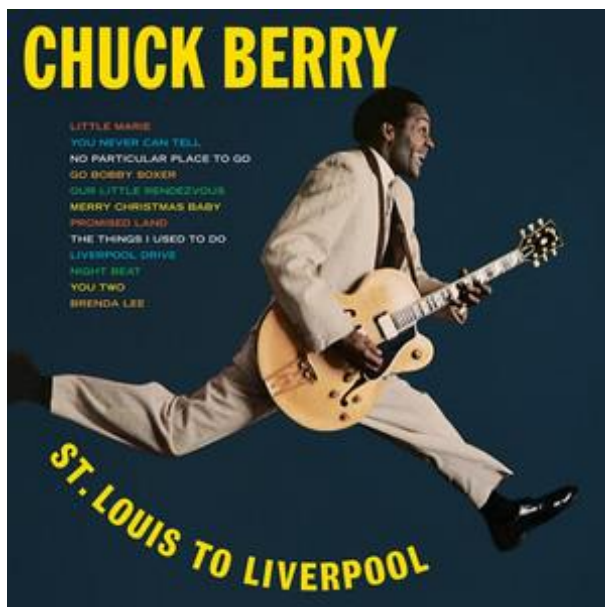
AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Bee:** I don't watch much! I'd have to say *Stranger Things*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Bee:** I don't think you can consider them up and coming anymore, but I love Olive Klug!

The Mississippi and New Orleans

TOKYO TRAMPS are the next chapter in the lineage of Boston's rock and roll heritage. This American-Japanese hybrid have been unleashing a refreshing take on bluesy rock and roll for well over a decade, most recently culminating in the release of their impeccable 2023 LP *Fearless Heart*, their ninth in total. Across this hard-hitting discography, the Tokyo Tramps show their appreciation for the rootsy icons that have gone before them, playing with bluesy intent, soulful emotion, rhythmic drive, and rocking power. This magical recipe allows for them to produce gloriously emphatic and incendiary modern-day anthems for alternative audiences all around the globe. With *Fearless Heart* having passed its first anniversary, bandmembers Satoru Nakagawa and Yukiko Fujii once again sat down for a chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about their Tokyo Tramps journey to date. We discussed their approach to songwriting and songcraft, popular original compositions, a selection of their recorded output, and much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here for the very first time.

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Aldora Britain Records: Hello Yukiko and Satoru, how are you doing? I think it is about time that we welcomed Tokyo Tramps back to the *Aldora Britain Records* e-zine. I really enjoyed our chat last year. Let's do it again! As always, let's kick things off by rewinding the clocks, and let's go to the very beginning of your creative journey. Satoru, your first live music memory was Chuck Berry. Wow! Can you tell me about his show? What formative impact would you say that experience had on you back then?

Yukiko Fujii: Hello! Thank you so much for bringing us back to the e-zine!

Satoru Nakagawa: I was sixteen then. I had just started listening to American music one or two years prior to that. And I knew how important Chuck Berry was. When I found out that he was coming to Japan, I had to go see his show. I

believe he only played for forty-five minutes! He had the great Johnnie Johnson on the piano. It was great! After seeing his show, I knew that I was on the right path!

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's bring proceedings up to date with the Tokyo Tramps. You know how much I love this band of yours. I am definitely drawn in by your impeccable songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Satoru Nakagawa: I was drawn to the songwriting of Bruce Springsteen first, and who was my first musical here. His storytelling was so compelling to me. His stories are not always a happy ending type, but there's some kind of hope in it. And I really liked that about it. As for my own songwriting, I almost always start with lyrics. There is no limitation for topics. I just write about anything that matters to me. And I use all my knowledge and experiences, and most importantly, imagination to write songs.

Yukiko Fujii: Most of the cases, our songs are based on our experiences, daily challenges, and our true emotions. Especially when it comes to the songs that I take the lead vocal, I rewrite the lyrics until I am one hundred percent happy. Hmm, maybe ninety percent! 'Mystery Man', one of the songs in the *If I Die Tomorrow* album, people asked us if this is a true story. I always smile and say, 'No, it's fictional!' I have never seen this 'Mystery Man', but

“There is no limitation ... I just write about anything that matters to me. And I use all my knowledge and experiences, and most importantly, imagination to write songs.”

I could vividly see the scene in my head. I don't know why, but it was like an old movie! Maybe this is the only fictional song we recorded.

Aldora Britain Records: Let's make this more specific now. I would like to pick out two personal favourites. This is no easy choice, but let's focus on 'Young Lion' and 'Sweet Melody'. Absolute Tokyo Tramps gold! For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and the performer?

Satoru Nakagawa: 'Sweet Melody' was actually written during the rehearsal while preparing to record the previous album *If I Die Tomorrow* in 2015. I started jamming the chord progression which eventually became the intro of the 'Sweet Melody'. When it was time to writing songs for *Fearless Heart*, I remembered that, and I started writing the song. The lyrics were inspired by attending a demonstration here in Boston against the former president's Muslim ban. 'Young Lion' was also written in the similar fashion. I was frustrated with all the politics around us. I thought we would need a new generation of courageous people to stand up and bring love back to town. The song was written with three chords, and I like it!

Yukiko Fujii: We have been performing 'Young Lion' in the last several years at our duo shows. I always loved to sing this song because it's a very strong song, a positive message and it has a driving groove. 'Sweet Melody' was one of the top candidates for the next album, but we never played it live. I liked this song, but I never thought that this would be the opener of the new album until we recorded. We always spend hours and days for the preproduction process with a drummer before we go into a recording studio, but for this *Fearless Heart* album, it was during pandemic and we didn't have a drummer, so we just made a demo on the GarageBand app. So, we say it was a studio magic, but those two songs came out really good with drums and additional guitars. I saw a butterfly emerge from a chrysalis! That was an amazing feeling, and I can never forget it.

Aldora Britain Records: Previously, if we travel back to 2000, you released a superb and unforgettable LP, the formative *Long Way from Home*. I have actually just discovered this particular outing over on Bandcamp, but it has made such a strong impression already. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing this set, and is there anything that you would edit or change looking back with the benefit of hindsight?

Satoru Nakagawa: That was our first time making a record. Back then, it was still a big deal! We were proud of ourselves. It was like, 'The world, here we come!' There were times that I felt like changing what I did here and there. But now I'm older and more experienced, I think I leave it as it is.

Yukiko Fujii: Our first record, every step was a new experience, everything was so much fun! We were a newbie trying to get into the Boston music scene, so we needed a demo. We didn't think too much about our genre or style, just wanted to capture 'us' then. We didn't have much budget, but we got together to write and arrange the songs, practiced a lot, tried to do our best in the studio, argued a lot during overdubs and mixing, hired our friend for a dinner to take a cover photo. Sometimes I listened back to the songs in that album, I say we did good. Really good. I wouldn't trade anything. Very precious work we made.



“It's a two-way thing. If the audience are having a good time, we do have a good time ... I hope people see something unique, something fresh, something rock and roll, in us.”

Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to your recorded output, I always get the distinct impression that these tunes would be elevated to a higher level up on the live stage. I am picturing an immersive and memorable evening of rock and roll, for sure! What do you aim to bring to the stage as a band, and what can a fan expect from their very first Tokyo Tramps live show? I hope to be able to attend one of these in person someday!

Satoru Nakagawa: Playing live shows is what we do best. And to me, that's what it's all about. Interacting with people with the music we're playing is the best experience of my life.

Yukiko Fujii: We are performers, we are here to entertain people. I really love to play at outdoor Porch Fest and Farmers Market. Because there are a lot of kids around. First, they look so curious about us, eventually they shake their tiny butt and clap their hands. It's so rewarding to see those innocent souls respond to our music. It's a two-way thing. If the audience are having a good time, we do have a good time. If we can't enjoy the moment, the audience get bored. Most importantly, we are Tokyo Tramps! We sing our originals and our own versions of cover songs. I hope people see something unique, something fresh, something rock and roll, in us.



Aldora Britain Records: I always love to delve deeper into an artist's roots. For me, it is actually one of the most enjoyable parts of any interview. Yukiko, you previously namechecked *A Night at the Opera* as an all-time favourite. Can you remember the first time you heard this record? How would you say it has informed you and your musical output since? More broadly, who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations currently?

Yukiko Fujii: Back then I just listened to the radio day and night, day after day! There was a radio station called Far East Network, FEN, for American military people in Tokyo. They played American Top 40, *Wolfman Jack Show*, *King Biscuit Flower Hour*, *Live from the Bottom Line*, and so on. I was a third grader when I started to listen to it, of course I didn't understand English at all. But I learned vocabulary and idiom from all those hit songs. 'Scarborough Fair' by Simon and Garfunkel, 'Angie' by The Rolling Stones, The Carpenters, Tom Jones, The 5th Dimension. Then I started to go to live concerts! Kiss, the Bay City Rollers, Queen! As you know, Queen got their first big break in Japan. Not in the UK! Japanese girls went crazy about them. Every day when I got home from school, I turned on the record player, cranked up the volume, and sang along to 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. I actually played the record until it was worn out. My poor mother had to endure the loud music while she was cooking dinner!

A Night at the Opera is Queen's fourth studio album, and I also had their first three albums and thereafter. They are a genuine hard rock band. I surely got the rock groove in my body from them. And oh, their tight harmony got me some ear training! So, I would say 70s music built the foundation in me, and 80s music shaped up my musical taste. Well, 70s is five decades ago, 80s is four decades ago! But I see people still love all those 70s and 80s big names and their tribute bands. Tribute bands are doing good and making more money than original bands! I wonder why! In June this year, we had an opportunity to open for an ABBA tribute band from New York. We were not sure if we would fit that position, but amazingly we got a lot of compliments from the audience. It was a good night. Well, I really enjoyed it as I knew all the ABBA song to sing along and dance!

“When I look back on the pandemic, it's just a strange time of our lives ... It's just another reminder to me that life is precious. You can't take it for granted.”

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Satoru Nakagawa: When I look back on the pandemic, it's just a strange time of our lives. I don't know how we got through it. It's just another reminder to me that life is precious. You can't take it for granted for anything. One day at a time, and etcetera. I wonder if what has changed over the years is just music. People have changed as technology has changed. Funny, I was just talking to a plumber who was fixing our toilet this morning. He said a lot of things have changed in his business, both good and bad. He was pointing at a copper pipe saying, it's replaced by a plastic because it's cheaper but in the long run, it can be more costly. I think that's exactly how the world is now. I'd rather make something that has a long lasting impact on people.

Yukiko Fujii: This pandemic showed me how vulnerable people are, how vulnerable business is, and nothing lasts forever. Some venues we used to played at went out of business, some survived but no more live music, relocation, problems with entertainment license, and so on. Things are quite different each year. In 2020 we were totally grounded, in 2021 just a few opportunities and we focused on a recording project, in 2022 we were very busy as suddenly gigs were coming back, in 2023 new venues different gigs. Now, it's very competitive to find gigs because musicians have come back to the market, people won't come out to 9 p.m. shows because they get used to staying home, people won't buy CDs because they get used to being online. How do we cope with all these changes? We ourselves need to change, right? But that's not easy!

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Satoru:** John Coltrane. **Yukiko:** Linda Ronstadt. **AB Records:** Favourite album? **Satoru:** *Blue Train*. **Yukiko:** *Simple Dreams*. **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Satoru:** *Blue Train* by John Coltrane. **Yukiko:** *Forever* by Bon Jovi.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Satoru:** Soujiro, a Japanese artist. **Yukiko:** Kiss. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Satoru:** The Who. **Yukiko:** The Who. **AB Records:** Favourite film? **Satoru:** *Bucket List*. **Yukiko:** *Meet the Parents*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Yukiko:** *Family Feud*.



Microdose

Bradford's **ABANDONED BUILDINGS** are altering perceptions of rock and roll's contemporary underground. From their West Yorkshire homebase, they are reflecting an urban, industrial outlook through their roaming and far-reaching sounds of shoegaze, post-rock, noise pop, and so much more. Their collective strength is indeed this genre-less amalgamation of dreamy, technicolour styles. To date, these have been captured on a formative LP, 2020's *Disappear Forever*, as well as follow-up singles 'Microdose' and 'Rabbit Holes'. These two most recent offerings will feature on Abandoned Buildings' imminent studio album, the fantastically titled *Eroding Light*. As this release date draws closer, the group took some time out of their creative schedules to chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about the band's time together so far. We discussed a selection of their recorded output, popular original compositions, their growth and evolution over time, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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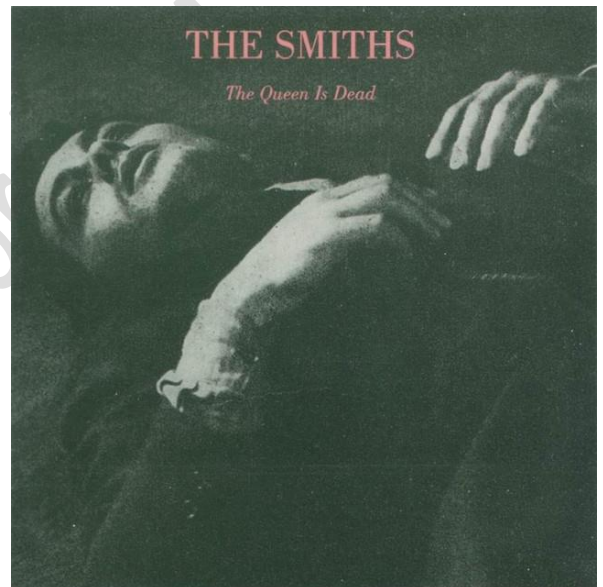
Aldora Britain Records: Hello Abandoned Buildings, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such fantastic artists from over in West Yorkshire. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Andy Ramsden: For me it started through my brother and sister's early teenage records. Through the walls I heard The Cure, Echo and the Bunnymen, The Smiths, R.E.M., Talking Heads, and Joy Division. This was coloured by some of my parents' records like The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Hendrix, The Carpenters, and Mamas and Papas. All those records woke me up to a world that was a lot cooler and more interesting than I'd ever seen. It made me want to find more music like it and to be in a band! Probably a guitar band. Probably with some kind of pop and psychedelic leanings. At secondary school I got the chance to play drums and I just loved it. I loved playing and making music with other people too. Like a music gang who get to invent their own version of rock, pop, or post-rock. Friendship should always be part of why you're in a band. It's great sharing writing songs, gigs, and rehearsal highs together.

Jonny Lee Hart: Really well, thanks for the kind words. My earliest musical memories would be *Bad* era Michael Jackson and the pop from the radio at the time, like Cutting Crew, Madonna, Midge Ure, and Yazoo. I was born when 'Eye of the Tiger' was Number 1 and I loved a lot of the 80s rock ballads as a kid. In my teens I got into Oasis, bought the chord book, then discovered Nirvana. The first song I ever played live was 'About a Girl' at school, then just evolved from there. The Smiths were a big band for me. I got into Mogwai who redefined how a gig should sound to me, 'Paranoid Android' by Radiohead had a massive influence on me. I wrote my GCSE English paper on what the effect of seeing them play at Glastonbury had on me and my life at the time.

Johnny Maskrey: Watching *The Sound of Music* as a kid and thinking, 'I could do better than that shite!'

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to your brilliant current project. The beginnings and early days of Abandoned Buildings must have been an invigorating time. How did it come to be? How did you meet the other members and what was the initial spark that brought you all together on a creative and musical level?



“The space between the sounds for so many of us is as important as what we play, the textures we all have tend to complement each other rather than compete as we all like to serve the song.”

Jonny Lee Hart: I was in between projects but had known Paul for a number of years after being introduced by our videographer Paul Miller. We went to a few gigs over the years and had a lot of time for our previous bands. On a night out when we were meant to be going to see The Chameleons we ended up having a boozy day out and agreed we should actually collaborate so we did. Musically it is a great chemistry, Paul creates the base of the songs then between us we find a way to fill the gaps or add a key element, the space between the sounds for so many of us is as important as what we play, the textures we all have tend to complement each other rather than compete as we all like to serve the song.

Ben Cleverley: I'd played guitar in a previous band, Laboratory Noise, with Paul for a number of years. That band split but we were both still using the Laboratory Noise studio for separate projects. One day Paul met me in the pub and said he was doing some music with Jonny Lee Hart and asked if I'd like to play bass. I'm rubbish at bass so I said no, but I joined anyway because I knew if Paul and Jonny were involved it would be good. So then we had three guitarists but no bassist or drummer. I remember one time we were practicing with a potential bass player and the power to the whole building went, so we were trying to persuade this guy to join but we were all playing electric instruments with no power in the dark! Luckily Paul knew Johnny M and he joined soon after. So we still needed a drummer, and Paul and I were both good friends with Andy, also from Laboratory Noise. He's a fantastic drummer but he was taking a break from being in a band and looking to do other things musically. We were all hoping he'd eventually join, and thankfully that's what happened quite naturally.

Andy Ramsden: For me, I was the last to join I think! Paul, Ben, and me had all been in a band previously. Paul knew I was having a break from band as my kids were young but we stayed in touch and it happened pretty naturally. Like I said before, friends tend to draw me into music projects which then become bands. I think I started by recording some of the early demo tracks for them in our studio space. Then some of the songs needed drums, and well, what can you do? I kind of had to do it because I knew what it needed. It was exciting to hear what Paul had been writing and I felt like I could bring some beats that would suit. I've worked with Paul and Ben for years so it was an easy choice.



“Lyrically, I guess it's about human nature and our often twisted relationship with technology, addictive and destructive. One of my favourites for sure.”

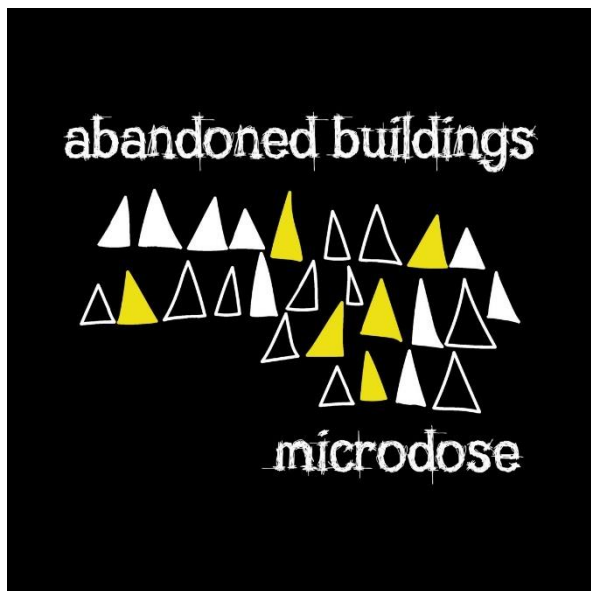
Johnny Maskrey: Paul took me in when he found me cold and naked stood by the side of a road. He gave me warm milk and a bass, then introduced me to the other members of Abandoned Buildings. And the rest, as they, is history!

Aldora Britain Records: Let's chat about your two recent singles, 'Microdose' and 'Rabbit Holes'. I am really enjoying both! For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Johnny Maskrey: I'm sure there are some deep and dark inspirations behind both songs that Paul will share. For me, I just laid down my sweet, sweet basslines.

Paul McNulty: From memory, 'Microdose' was written really quickly and hasn't really changed too much. Generally, I record a demo and the band write their own parts around that, and this one came together straight away in our rehearsal space, gradually getting faster and heavier. It was written at some point in lockdown and the lyrics about being trapped and isolated definitely back that up.

The verses for 'Rabbit Holes' were written around a synth bass loop I was messing around with, and because that felt claustrophobic and slightly sinister, the lyrics came pretty easily, which is unusual for me. The rest of the song was a bit of a grind. By the time I'd finished the demo it had six different sections, all of which I really liked, but it didn't hang together very well. We tried using all sections in all orders as a band for months, but it never quite worked. Eventually, we stripped it back to the original idea and I had a different idea for the chorus. I'm pretty sure it sounded as it does on the album about ten minutes later. Lyrically, I guess it's about human nature and our often twisted relationship with technology, addictive and destructive. One of my favourites for sure.



Aldora Britain Records: Both tracks will feature on your upcoming full-length album *Eroding Light*. I am looking forward to this release and seeing the reaction it receives. It certainly deserves big things! What are your memories from writing and recording this collection, and what can fans expect from the release itself?

Paul McNulty: It wasn't until after COVID that we really played together a great deal, even though we released an album in 2020, so it immediately felt much better starting a new batch of songs rehearsing like a proper band. I think four of the songs were written in lockdown and we spent quite a long time working on them and then recording for what was originally going to be an EP. By the time that was finished I had some new songs that I thought were better, and we just carried on in this loop until we had the full album. We record in batches of two or three songs every few months because that's the only way we can practically do it, with busy lives outside the band, so it definitely felt like a real slog at times, but hopefully worth it in the end.

There were a few times where I thought we had it down but then we would tweak something again, but it would work. There comes a point where we have to let go and release the body of work into the wild, but I'm glad we persevered to get to the point with the songs that we are now. I'm looking forward to being able to play them out live more regularly for the foreseeable future.

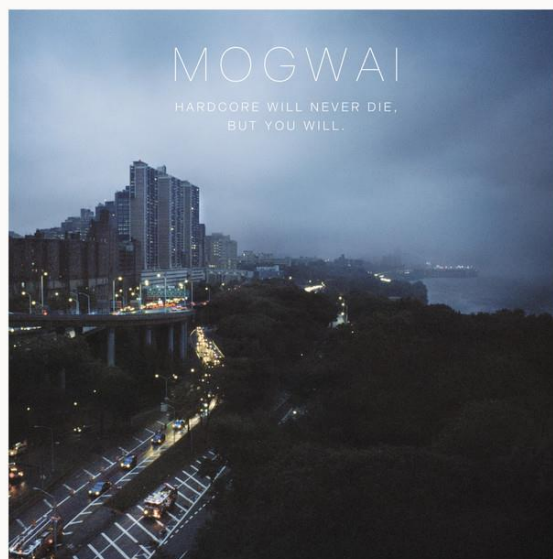
Jonny Lee Hart: It was pretty much as Paul has said, we just kept making more and more batches of songs. There were a few times where I thought we had it down but then we would tweak something again, but it would work. There comes a point where we have to let go and release the body of work into the wild, but I'm glad we persevered to get to the point with the songs that we are now. I'm looking forward to being able to play them out live more regularly for the foreseeable future.

“There comes a point where we have to let go and release the body of work into the wild, but I’m glad we persevered to get to the point with the songs that we are now.”

Johnny Maskrey: I really enjoyed putting the songs together with the other bandmembers. I’m not the biggest fan of the recording process, but the final outputs are banging. Our fans are in for a big treat when this comes out. A big treat.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Abandoned Buildings sound and your approach to making music. Dream pop, shoegaze, psychedelia, it is all in there and more. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Paul McNulty: We definitely like lots of bands within those genres and I would add post-rock to that list. I don’t think we fit neatly into any of those categories, or at least we’re trying not to. When we began recording with Luke at Prospect Studios in Bradford, I said that the loose idea was to have a shoegaze and dream pop feel, while trying to keep the power of the rhythm section you get with a lot of post-rock, so that was the balance we’ve aimed for. I guess the obvious touchstones are bands like Slowdive, Ride, and Mogwai, but I love hearing new music, so we’ve probably stolen from all over the place! We’re just trying to write good songs that we enjoy playing really, and we like messing around with FX pedals.



Ben Cleverley: I like music that transports the listener, that they can get lost in, and that has layers, so you keep discovering new elements that aren't obvious on a first listen. I think the best shoegaze and psychedelic music has those layers. It's not just a case of turning the reverb up to ten, it's building layers of noise with several different melodic lines that sometimes align and can sometimes sound slightly discordant. Having three guitarists, who all love FX pedals, means this happens naturally in the practice room because you often have three slightly different ideas playing out simultaneously. My favourite current bands are probably DIIV, Goat and Hotline TNT, and Bardo Pond but they don't seem to be doing anything new.

Johnny Maskrey: I confess those styles of music are not really my personal taste, I’m more into heavier or groovier stuff. But I love adapting and finding ways to add my style and influence to give the music another layer of texture and groove that might not have been the obvious choice for what has been brought to the table.

Aldora Britain Records: Previously, if we travel back to 2020, you unveiled another pearl of a record called *Disappear Forever*. I have just discovered this one on Bandcamp, but it has made a strong impression already. How do you reflect on this set as a whole now, and how would you say you have grown and evolved as a band since its initial release?

Paul McNulty: Cheers! *Disappear Forever* was a very different project, and although it has its moments, I would say that *Eroding Light* is the first album proper for us. I began recording some of those songs with a friend as a solo project after Laboratory Noise split, then realised I much prefer being in a band. As the others gradually joined the band we just replaced parts I'd recorded with their parts and built the songs up, then added a few new songs towards the end. Not surprisingly, the latter songs are the better ones I think, 'Strata' and 'Tombstoning' in particular. Also, at the time Andy had fallen a bit out of love with playing drums and the only way I could persuade

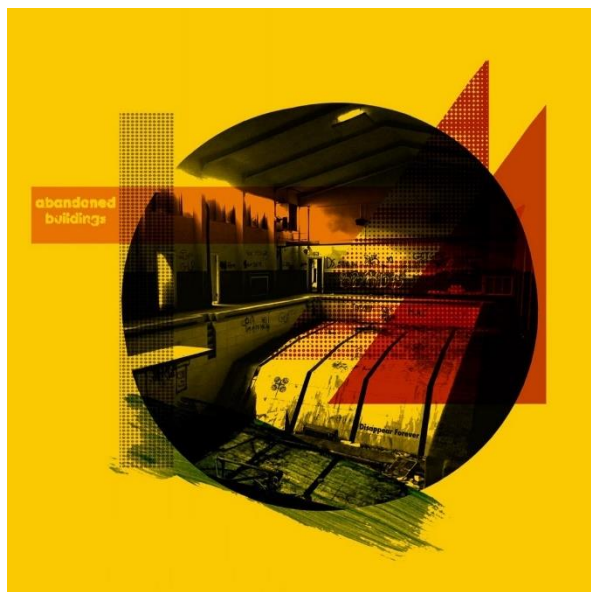
“I think the best shoegaze and psychedelic music has those layers. It's not just a case of turning the reverb up to ten, it's building layers of noise with several different melodic lines that sometimes align and can sometimes sound slightly discordant.”

him to join the band was to promise he could programme the beats, which worked fine, but I think we sound much better with him behind the kit, and thankfully he's back in love!

Johnny Maskrey: The previous album is essentially a collection of songs from where we were still forming as a band, finding our sound and experimenting with different approaches. There are some really great songs like ‘Tombstoning’, ‘Strata’, and ‘Petrichor’ that I still love to play. As an album it is perhaps not as coherent as the new album, which I’d say hangs much better together and feels like a band where we all know our sound and how it all comes together.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Ben Cleverley: It is now possible to easily access more great music than ever before. But it's practically impossible to make a living purely through music.



Jonny Lee Hart: It had a massive impact on me in many ways. I lived alone with no neighbours, worked pretty much all the way through it, and our music gatherings and a few close friends were my only salvation. I ended up on beta blockers, found myself with crippling social anxiety, lost some of my closest family members, but I reached a point where I took stock, did some CBT, changed a lot of lifestyle habits, then post pandemic made sure to start travelling the world, see people, play as much music as possible, and live without a filter.

The music industry has definitely empowered artists themselves to self-release, which is great, but then I cannot stand how certain owners of platforms see our content as free product to exploit. Also there are a lot of hangers-on from the old version of the industry trying to find ways to still make a quick buck from musicians who want to ‘make it’. It’s great that

a lot of the more chauvinistic types are fading away too, as I encountered a few leeches when I was in a female fronted band who have already been mentioned in other people’s books. I embrace social media as a promotion tool for the band as I came from the ‘Myspace era’ of bands. But in terms of anything else, I think people spending too much time watching ‘influencers’ is more like influenza to be honest.

We are very lucky personally we are at an age where we don’t have to care as we have careers and lives outside of music. But it’s the music that is our therapy and it shows. We have product we’ve made with a lot of care and time, for everyone that shares that with us we are eternally grateful and hopefully it spreads the word enough for us to make more albums and play some excellent gigs or festivals in the future. For us that is all we could desire.

Johnny Maskrey: I feel like I have gained a new appreciation for playing music over the last few years. Our band’s WhatsApp group is called ‘Music Therapy’, which it certainly has proven to be, definitely post-COVID and dealing with the challenges of parenthood. Looking at the music industry as it is currently it feels like it is in a deep state of nostalgia – that’s not a reference to one of the tracks on our new album by the way! – where it feels like everyone

“The music industry has definitely empowered artists themselves to self-release, which is great, but then I cannot stand how certain owners of platforms see our content as free product to exploit.”

is needing the comfort of the music and bands they grew up with. Grunge, Britpop, old-school hip hop, rap metal. There's a big 90s revival going on with new bands even emanating these sounds. I don't think we could say our music is doing that as such, although someone did recently suggest after watching us play that we sounded a bit Dinosaur Jr. which was unexpected. I'll definitely take that, but probably isn't the closest comparison we could have.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Paul:** Slowdive. **Jonny:** David Bowie. **Ben:** Dinosaur Jr. **Johnny:** Mike Patton, in all his guises. **AB Records:** Favourite album? **Paul:** Spiritualized, *Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space*. **Jonny:** *Finelines* by My Vitriol, closely followed by *Now Here is Nowhere* by Secret Machines. **Ben:** *You're Living All Over Me*, Dinosaur Jr. **Johnny:** *Check Your Head*, Beastie Boys.

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Paul:** Astrel K, *The Foreign Department*. **Jonny:** *Blue Rev*, Alvvays. **Ben:** *Forever Changes*, Love. **Johnny:** *Eroding Light!* **AB Records:** First gig as an audience member? **Paul:** Soul Asylum. **Jonny:** Catatonia. **Ben:** Teenage Fanclub. **Johnny:** A local hardcore band called Skism, upstairs at the Chillingham Arms, Newcastle, sometime in the very early 90s, with my dad. He was not as impressed. I was inspired and immediately wanted to pick up a guitar and make people's ears bleed.

AB Records: Loudest gig as an audience member? **Paul:** Mogwai in bursts, My Bloody Valentine the whole way through. **Jonny:** I have to agree with Paul on both those. **Ben:** Clinic, because I was stood next to the speaker. **Johnny:** It's either Wet Nuns when I saw them at Long Division Festival, or Conan at the Brudenell Social. Both were loud and made inner ears feel like they'd been ravaged by a swarm of bees for about a month after.

AB Records: Style icon? **Paul:** I have no style! **Jonny:** David Bowie. **Johnny:** Paul McNulty. **AB Records:** Favourite film? **Paul:** *Mulholland Drive*. **Ben:** *Mulholland Drive*. **Jonny:** The original *Wicker Man*. **Johnny:** *Evil Dead 3@ Army of Darkness*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Paul:** *Sopranos*. **Jonny:** *Twin Peaks: The Return*. **Ben:** *Match of the Day*. **Johnny:** *Eldorado*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Paul:** Not sure if these are new bands, but Winter, Horsegirl, Zoon. **Jonny:** Abandoned Buildings, English Teacher, also Alvvays even though they have been around forever. They should not be a band for gatekeeping, they write the best songs of the last decade. **Ben:** Makthaverskan. They're not new but they should be more popular. **Johnny:** The Beatles. I reckon they will do alright.



The Stupid Way You Breathe

The melodic brilliance of The Beatles, the grungy crunch of Nirvana, the jangly pop of Teenage Fanclub, the powerpop bliss of Weezer. These are a selection of the key influential touchstones that go into **THE FLYING BEETS'** all-original sound and style. This brilliant trio from Fort Worth, Texas bring all these sonic traits together to create an alluring homebrew that puts an emphasis on irresistible hooks, alternative drive, and upbeat tempos. This has been gloriously captured on an exquisite series of single releases, namely offerings such as 'Better Off Alone', 'The Stupid Way You Breathe', and 'Villain', as well as formative releases like 'Radio Song' and 'Maybe Baby'. Taking a short break from their current musical activities, bandmembers David Cross and Nathan Waller sat down for a chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about their time together as a group to date. We discussed popular original compositions, their growth and evolution over time, big influences and inspirations, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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Aldora Britain Records: Hello David and Nathan, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such fantastic artists from over in Texas. Thank you for your time. It is amazing how music can bring us together from all around the world. Let's start off by rewinding the clocks, and let's go to the very beginning of your creative journey. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours? It has certainly been quite an adventure since.

Nathan Waller: My earliest memories of music are of my father playing me Beatles songs on his guitar and me singing along. Since then they've always remained a huge influence on my songwriting.

David Cross: First memories of liking music started with Hall and Oates' 'Rich Girl', Eagles' 'Hotel California', Kansas' 'Dust

in the Wind', Cheap Trick's 'I Want You to Want Me', AC/DC's 'Back in Black'. But it was Rush's *2112* that pushed me into wanting to become a musician.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to the present day and a brilliant project of yours out of Fort Worth. The beginnings of The Flying Beets must have been an invigorating time. How did it come to be? How did you meet the other members and what was the initial spark that brought you all together on a creative and musical level?

Nathan Waller: The Flying Beets' creation was a perfect mix of timing and personnel. I met both Dave and Kenn on the same evening and we hit it off right away. I commented on how good Dave, bass player, was to my partner the first time I saw him playing with a band I had the opportunity to open for as a solo acoustic act. Kenn was the MC that evening and it felt instantly like I had met an old friend.

David Cross: The night Nathan opened was my first show onstage in over twenty years. At soundcheck, when he first sang his first line, I looked at my then drummer and said, 'That is the dude I have waited my whole life to play with.' After the show, I approached him like a fanboy and asked him who he played with, he responded, 'Oh, I have been around, but now it is just me and my guitar, I don't want to ever be in a band and have to deal with

“I’ve been writing songs since I was nineteen. It’s just been a part of who I am and what I do for most of my life. It’s how I express my thoughts and feelings in an artistic way. It’s never felt like work or a chore.”

grown men and their feelings.’ Over the next year, Nathan opened for us at least three or four times, each time us getting closer. Finally, it happened, we got together and it was magical.

Aldora Britain Records: I am really drawn in by the band’s impressive songwriting and songcraft. That magical foundation! How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Nathan Waller: I’ve been writing songs since I was nineteen. It’s just been a part of who I am and what I do for most of my life. It’s how I express my thoughts and feelings in an artistic way. It’s never felt like work or a chore. I do require inspiration for melodies and lyrics but am constantly working on chord foundations for future songs. I’ve found that a lot of my songs are about tough subjects but wrapped up in an upbeat package.

David Cross: Nathan is one of the best songwriters with whom I have ever worked. I leave that to him because he is a melody master.

Aldora Britain Records: Let’s get more specific now. I would like to focus on two recent favourites, ‘Better Off Alone’ and ‘The Stupid Way You Breathe’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Nathan Waller: ‘Better Off Alone’ this song was written about a time in my life when I was reminiscing over an old flame. It was a conversation with myself about how to move on. ‘The Stupid Way You Breathe’ I think we’ve all had those moments when we’ve been with or near someone that everything they do irritates you. It’s more of a tongue-in-cheek way of expressing exasperation and a fun way to bring it to my music.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love The Flying Beets sound and your approach to making and creating music. Pop rock, alternative rock, indie rock, it is all in there and more. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Nathan Waller: To go back to The Beatles influence for the upbeat-ness of the songs, but I am also pretty heavily influenced by 90s grunge. When someone once said we’re a mix of the 60s rock and 90s grunge I was plenty satisfied with that take. The Beatles, Nirvana, Teenage Fanclub, Fountains of Wayne, and Oasis.

David Cross: Nirvana, Weezer, and Stone Temple Pilots tend to influence my approach more than anything with The Beets.

Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to your recorded output, I always get the impression that you would put on an electrifying live show. I am picturing an immersive and memorable evening of alternative rock and roll. What do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist, and what can a fan expect from their very first Flying Beets live show?



“If we’re fun to watch and you enjoy the music it’s hard to find a better combination than that. I enjoy connecting with the audience and leading them towards a good time.”

Nathan Waller: We, The Beets, always aim to put on a fun show. If we’re having fun onstage we believe that translates to the audience. If we’re fun to watch and you enjoy the music it’s hard to find a better combination than that. I enjoy connecting with the audience and leading them towards a good time. I rarely prepare anything that I’m going to say onstage but rather go with what comes naturally and it ‘usually’ works out! Haha!



Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Nathan Waller: Life since the pandemic has definitely been challenging for everyone. Fortunately for me and The Beets it has supercharged us to making and recording new music and playing shows. Coming out of all of the isolation of the pandemic gave me an energy to get out and connect. Music industry wise, it appears that shorter and shorter music clips have led the way for popularity via TikTok and Instagram. I think anyone outside of the ultra-popular music is still trying to find

their place. I know that we’ve received love from all over the globe and nothing satisfies me as a songwriter than knowing that people are enjoying my/our songs and making them theirs.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **David:** I am unable to ever answer these. I have too many favourites, and they change based upon mood, time, and context! **Nathan:** The Beatles.

AB Records: Favourite album? **David:** *Nevermind*, Nirvana.

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Nathan:** Weezer, *Green Album*. **David:** *Perfect World* by Sparta Limb and Drew Nold.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Nathan:** U2, Rage Against the Machine. **David:** Rush with Golden Earring, 1982 in San Antonio, Texas.

AB Records: Loudest gig as an audience member? **Nathan:** Remy Zero at a club in Deep Ellum, Dallas, Texas. **David:** Motorhead with Nashville Pussy at the Backroom in Austin, Texas.

AB Records: Style icon? **Nathan:** David Bowie.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Nathan:** *The Fifth Element*.

AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Nathan:** *The Office*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Nathan:** Wet Leg.

Ruby Red and Blue

Jackson Hamilton is an outstanding up and coming singer-songwriter gifted with channelling emotive and soulful undercurrents into his music. Under the alias of **LITTLE CLAY BEARS**, this Fort Worth, Texas based tunesmith crafts sonic delights that sit between the indie folk of Adrienne Lenker and the lo-fi musings of Elliott Smith. This has been exceptionally captured by way of his recent *Distant Storm* LP, an eleven-track collection that provides listeners with a fantastic insight into Jackson's craft, with a tip of the hat to traditional and experimental approaches in equal measure. Particular highwater marks come in the form of 'Cemetery Singers', 'Ruby Red and Blue', and 'Distant Storm'. As the momentum surrounding this record continues to grow, Jackson took some time out to chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about his life in story and song so far. We discussed his growth and evolution over time, big influences and inspirations, the impact of the COVID pandemic, and much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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 Jackson, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Texas. Thank you for your time. It is amazing how music can bring us together from all around the world. Let's start off by rewinding the clocks, and let's go to the very beginning of your creative journey. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours? It has certainly been quite an adventure since.

Jackson Hamilton: I have many fond memories of seeing the musicians in my family play shows or just play around the house. My uncle and grandpa are both country western musicians that often play around the Fort Worth, Texas area, my other uncle was once in a band that I got to see play all the time, and my dad has been in an array of bands throughout my life as

well. I've just been surrounded by music for as long as I can remember. All these musical experiences drove me to want to create something of my own.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to a brilliant project of yours out of Fort Worth. The early days and beginnings of Little Clay Bears must have been invigorating times. How did it come to be? What was the initial spark? Is it an outlet for your solo musings or more of a collaborative kind of feel and approach?

Jackson Hamilton: Well I started in 2023 after discovering a band called The Microphones, who Phil Elverum was a member of. I watched tons of videos regarding his creative process and how he did what he did until I realised I could probably do that too. I just started experimenting with a four-track tape machine and Logic Pro until things came to fruition. I amassed tons of bad demos and terribly mixed experiments, some of which were released on my first album, until I finally got the hang of recording. I would say that Little Clay Bears has never been a collaborative thing for me. I do all the writing and recording and playing of instruments. I just enjoy the freedom of music production when there's no one else involved. It has also been a wonderful learning process and taught me valuable skills.

Aldora Britain Records: I am really drawn in by your impressive songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics, both musically and lyrically? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional point of view or perspective?

“I just started experimenting with a four-track tape machine and Logic Pro until things came to fruition. I amassed tons of bad demos and terribly mixed experiments ... until I finally got the hang of recording.”

Jackson Hamilton: I definitely have certain topics I prefer to write about. There’s a clear theme to be discovered when reading my lyrics, although I don’t know what that theme would be called. It’s just wintery and fictional. I like the aspect of fantasy that appears in many of my songs. I also like the very traditional kind of folksy lyrics as well. I’ve carved out a strange niche writing wise, but I think it can be intriguing for many people.

Aldora Britain Records: I would like to get more specific now and pick out two recent favourites, ‘Cemetery Singers’ and ‘Ruby Red and Blue’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Jackson Hamilton: I think ‘Cemetery Singers’ is just one of those storytelling songs where there isn’t a clear meaning behind it. I think the idea came from a choir on a Microphones album that Phil Elverum called The Precipice Carolers. I thought it was a cool idea and wanted to do some weird dissonant harmony stuff, so I created a story about strange graveyard lurkers that terrify the townspeople of a fictional world.

‘Ruby Red and Blue’ is just a sad song about a girl I never knew. Most of my songs are about things I’ve never done and people I’ve never met. Basically, your face gets red when you cry, and then your heart turns blue in a less literal sense. Some songs are sad just to be sad. I’m sure I wasn’t all that sad when I wrote it, but I really loved that fictional woman.

Aldora Britain Records: Both of these tracks are taken from an exceptional LP of yours, *Distant Storm*. This was my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist throughout this process?



“The distant storm, the cemetery singers, the birds, the tundra ... I definitely found comfort in writing this album. It was a great way to process my fear and find some light in the darkness.”

Jackson Hamilton: I wanted *Distant Storm* to be more concise with a clearer theme than the previous record, which was twenty songs long. It was my last semester of my last year in high school, so naturally I was feeling afraid of the looming future. I wrote the title track about that fear and uncertainty and compared it to a ‘Distant Storm’ blowing in from some scary place. The distant storm, the cemetery singers, the birds, the tundra, they’re all examples of the uncertain and undecided future that began to haunt me as I grew nearer to adulthood. Other themes include starting a family and finding someone I can love with all my heart. It kind of balances out the fear with some joy. I can’t wait to be a dad. I definitely found comfort in writing this album. It was a great way to process my fear and find some light in the darkness.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Little Clay Bears sound and your approach to making music. That indie pop, folk rock blend. Perfect! How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Jackson Hamilton: I’d say that my style is very influenced by the musicians I listen to, obviously. This includes Phil Elverum, A.A. Bondy, Townes Van Zandt, Blind Pilot, Blaze Foley, Silver Jews, Adrienne Lenker, and Elliott Smith. Every song I ever wrote was certainly very inspired by whatever I was listening to at the time. My style is just an amalgamation of all the music I cram into my brain.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

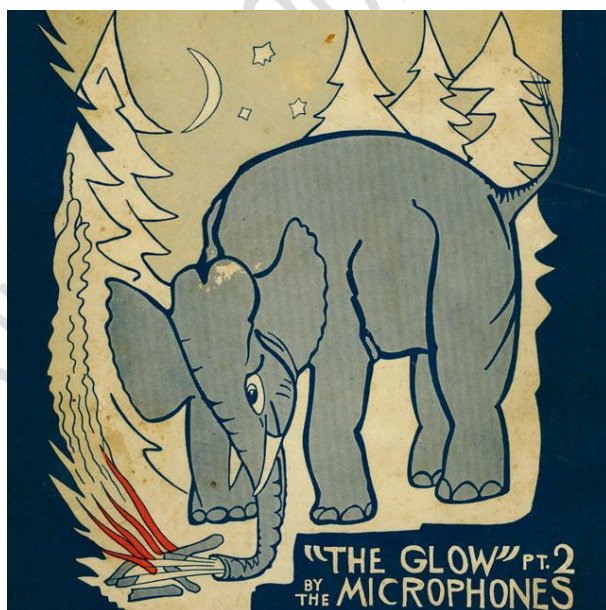
Jackson Hamilton: I really don’t have much insight on that. I’m just trying to get along, same as everyone else.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Jackson:** Phil Elverum. **AB Records:** Favourite album? **Jackson:** *3 Rounds and a Sound*, Blind Pilot. **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Jackson:** Purple Mountains, *Purple Mountains*.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Jackson:** I remember seeing Blind Pilot with my dad when I was very little. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Jackson:** There was a local band called Homewrecker and the Bedwetters. I saw them at a house show once and it was certainly louder than any other show I’ve been to. **AB Records:** Style icon? **Jackson:** Musical style icon is Phil Elverum. If we’re talking fashion then I have no clue. I like to wear jeans and band shirts.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Jackson:** *Juno*, *My Suicide*, *The Witch*, *Interstellar*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Jackson:** *Freaks and Geeks*. **AB Records:** Favourite up and coming artist? **Jackson:** There’s an awesome artist called Onille who has a great album out. I don’t know if he’s up and coming but he certainly should be.



About Souls and People

Folk music has a prominent place in cultures and countries all around the world, always proving to be a fantastic catalyst in bringing people together, through history and through song. This is the space that Czechia based singer-songwriter **TOMAS TOMAN** explores. Through his output so far, dubbed as 'landscape folk', this modern-day artist brings in experimental textures to an acoustic foundation. This provides an exceptional underpinning to his lyrical observations and brilliant ramblings. Tomas' approach to Czechia's folk landscape has most recently been captured on a quintessential LP entitled *O Dusich a Lidech*, a glistening snapshot of his artistry and creativity. As the excitement surrounding this album continues to grow, Tomas took some time out to chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about his adventures in folk music to date. We discussed big influences and inspirations, the impact of the COVID pandemic, formative creative memories, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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Aldora Britain Records: Hello Tomas, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Czechia. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Tomas Toman: Hi Tom, thanks so much for inviting me to this interview. Happy to be talking to you! No one actively guided me to music, I gradually found my way to it myself. The turning point for me was when, at the age of seventeen, I went to a concert of the popular Czech band Chinaski for the first time. That's when I realised that I would also like to make music. Not long after that I bought my first guitar and started learning to play it. I've been writing stories and poems since I was a child, so when I started playing the guitar, I somehow

automatically started composing my own songs. I didn't even have any other option, because playing cover songs was beyond my capabilities. And since I still haven't learned how to play the guitar properly, I have no choice but to continue to compose and play my own songs.

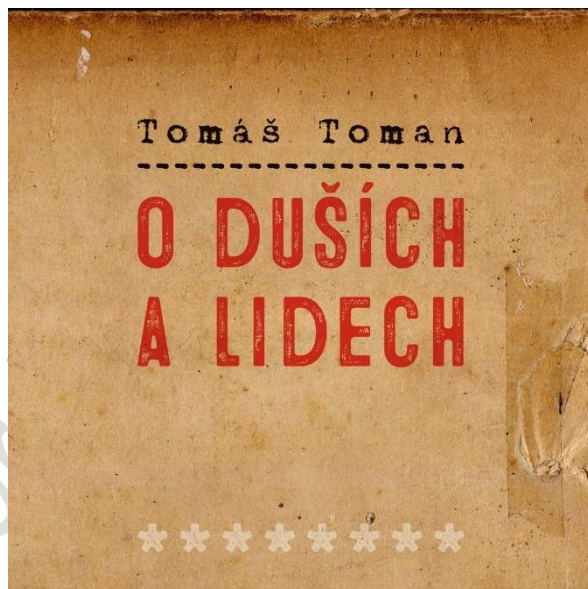
Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to the present day and your impeccable solo output. Despite being a native English speaker, I am really drawn in by your impressive songwriting. How do you approach this part of your process? Are you drawn to specific themes? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective?

Tomas Toman: For me, composing music is a process that lives its own life. I work in a national park in the Krkonose Mountains, a region where I have lived since childhood. As part of my work, I find myself in the mountains almost every day, and that is where most of my musical ideas come from. Inspiration usually comes to me completely unexpectedly, so I always carry a notepad and a pencil with me. The lyrics are usually the first thing that comes to my mind, but lately it's been happening more and more often that the melody comes to me along with the lyrics. I don't choose the themes of the songs, but the themes choose me. The themes of my older songs were usually related to my personal experiences, but nowadays the most common theme of my songs are stories from the history of my home region. Even these songs are actually very personal, because they often bring to life the stories of my ancestors.

“Nowadays the most common theme of my songs are stories from the history of my home region. Even these songs are actually very personal, because they often bring to life the stories of my ancestors.”

Aldora Britain Records: Earlier this year, you unveiled a glorious record in the form of *O Dusich a Lidech*. This was my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing this set, and how would you say you grew and evolved throughout this process?

Tomas Toman: I worked on the songs for the album *O Dusich a Lidech* for about two years. One could say that it's a concept album. One day, while working in the mountains, the inspiration for a song that deals with the complicated Czech-German history of the Krkonose Mountains suddenly dawned on me. A few verses popped into my head. I wrote them down and gradually added more verses. It took several months to complete the song. In the meantime, I started working on a few more songs with similar themes. Again, the ideas came completely spontaneously. The title song 'O Dusich a Lidech' was created as the very last one. When I finished it, I intuitively felt that it was the last missing piece in the mosaic of the upcoming album.



I recorded all ten songs at home and sent the resulting demo to producer Jan Sladek, with whom I had already worked on my debut album. To my great joy, Jan agreed to take on my songs again. Recording at the Soundevice Studio in Prague with sound engineer Adam Pakosta was one of the best experiences of my life. Jan Sladek also invited an absolutely phenomenal lineup of guest musicians. I vividly remember the moment when Jan sent me the final master of the album. I was so tired after a long day at work that I could hardly keep my eyes open, but as soon as I listened to the master, all the tiredness was immediately gone. I was excited. It sounded exactly how I imagined the record would sound. Jan, Adam, and all the wonderful guests helped me turn my dreams into reality, because I would never have achieved such a result on my own. The opportunity to work with them gave me more than I could have hoped. In addition to the valuable experiences that hopefully moved my playing to a higher level, thanks to the recording of this album I established a collaboration with the excellent guitarist Jan Kicko, who started playing with me at concerts.

Aldora Britain Records: It is a gem of a record from start to finish, but I would like to pick out two personal favourites. Let's go for 'Glasendorf' and 'Marie'. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Tomas Toman: 'Glasendorf' was the very first song which laid the foundation for this album. It deals with the fates of the defunct mountain village of Glasendorf where my ancestors come from. This village was located in the borderland, in the so-called Sudetenland. Before the Second World War, mostly German speaking inhabitants lived in this region, but after 1945 most of them were forcibly moved from post-war Czechoslovakia to Germany. After the departure of practically all the inhabitants, Glasendorf turned into a ghost town. Not long after that, all the abandoned buildings were demolished, and the area of the village became a memento of the fleetingness of all signs of human presence. And that's what the song 'Glasendorf' is about.

“Every time I play these two songs, as well as all the other songs from this album, I feel like I'm bringing the places and people back to life.”

The song ‘Marie’ is probably the most personal of the whole album. It tells the story of my great grandmother, who was imprisoned by the Nazis at the end of World War Two because she got pregnant by a Soviet prisoner of war. Fortunately for her, and the whole world, the Nazi reign of terror was soon to end. I composed this song as a part of an application for a festival, which included a challenge to write a song about ‘advent’. I got the idea to connect the story of my great grandmother with the gospel story of the Virgin Mary. Every time I play these two songs, as well as all the other songs from this album, I feel like I'm bringing the places and people back to life.

Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to the record, I always get the distinct impression that these tunes would be elevated to an even higher level up on the live stage. An immersive and memorable evening of story and song, I am sure. What do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist, and what can a fan expect from their very first Tomas Toman live show?

Tomas Toman: My live shows are more like chamber recitals. I mostly play in small clubs and cafes. I also really enjoy concerts in churches and other places with a rich history. Since this year, I have started performing in a duo with guitarist Jan Kicko, who enriches my concert sound with a wide range of tones. It is a great honour for me to play with such a great musician and a nice person who is a pleasure to work with. During my concerts I also share the stories that the songs are inspired by in order to better draw the listeners into the world of my songs. When I succeed, it's an extremely beautiful feeling.



Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Tomas Toman sound and your approach to making and creating music. That rootsy and folky foundation. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Tomas Toman: My style has evolved somewhat spontaneously. I might be repeating myself, but similarly as the topics of my songs, it was again my style that found me. Actually, I don't even know exactly what to call the genre I play. I like the term ‘landscape folk’, as the Czech alternative folk singer-songwriter Petr Linhart calls his genre. He is the one who influenced me the most in my music. Thanks to him, I realised that it is possible to tell the stories of landscapes through songs. I feel the best as a storyteller with a guitar. Among my other role

models in music are the singer-songwriters Jiri Smrz, Hmlisto, and Clovek Krve, and the long-defunct band Cp. 8. I also look up to Czech poets from the Romantic period, for example Karel Hynek Macha.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Tomas Toman: When the COVID pandemic hit, I was just returning to making music after a break of several years. I didn't start doing live shows more intensively until 2022, so in this respect the pandemic and the related lockdowns didn't limit me that much. But on a personal level the pandemic hit me like probably almost everyone in the world. During the years of 2020 and 2021, I wrote most of the songs on my debut album *Na Cestach*.

“Some phenomena in contemporary society remind me terribly of the period before the Second World War ... For that reason too, I see it as necessary to remember history, because if we forget it, it will repeat itself.”

Although no song directly reflects the pandemic itself, many songs echo themes closely related to this period, loneliness and loss, but I hope that the album is also a little hopeful.

I think that the pandemic period has affected the music industry the most by accelerating the onset of modern technologies, especially streaming. The advantage of streaming is that you can easily watch almost any concert, even from the other side of the world. Thanks to streaming during the pandemic, I have discovered several new bands that I would not have come across otherwise. On the other hand, in my opinion, modern technologies contribute to a kind of desocialisation, and not only in music. I think that the direct contact between the performer and the audience at live shows is something that cannot be mediated by any technology. The concert experience is incomplete without direct interaction, both for the performer and the listeners.

In recent years I have also been impacted by other pressing social issues, especially related to the occupation of Ukraine. Although the album *O Dusich a Lidech* tells stories from the past, it is in a way also turned to the present. Some phenomena in contemporary society remind me terribly of the period before the Second World War. For example, the rise of populists exploiting people's fear. For that reason too, I see it as necessary to remember history, because if we forget it, it will repeat itself.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Tomas:** Petr Linhart. **AB Records:** Favourite album? **Tomas:** *Ceskoslovenska* by Hmlisto and Petr Linhart. **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Tomas:** *Will o' the Wisp* by Barbora Mochowa.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Tomas:** Chinaski in 2007. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Tomas:** Chinaski on a special club tour in 2011 when they played punk songs from their early days. **AB Records:** Style icon? **Tomas:** Czech singer-songwriter Jiri Smrz for his naturalness and informality.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Tomas:** *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Tomas:** I don't watch much TV, but I always enjoy watching *The Simpsons* on DVD. **AB Records:** Favourite up and coming artist? **Tomas:** The Winter Sounds. Their new EP *Europa* is a masterpiece!



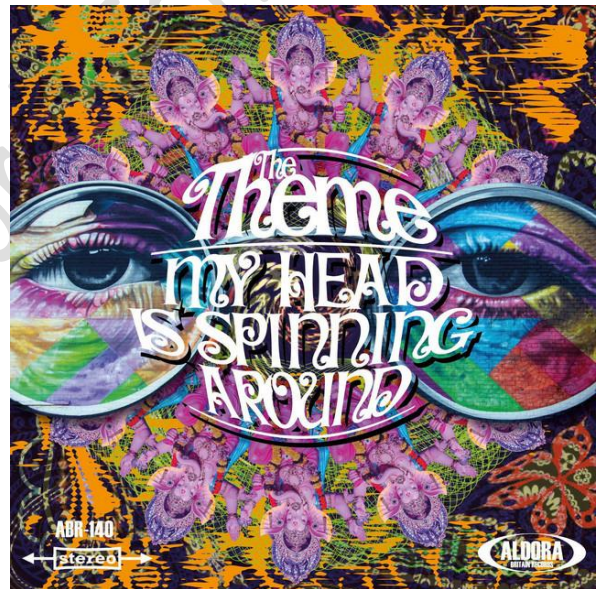
Hide Away

CHRIS DALEY is a modern-day artist who exists at the crossroads between the emotive power of soul music and the strut and swagger of rock and roll. These are the essential qualities that this indie and alternative British troubadour harnesses with the release of his latest single 'Hide Away', a powerful anthem that follows in the footsteps of such songwriting greats as Simon Fowler, Paul Weller, and Noel Gallagher. This is the heritage that Chris taps into with a glorious and unrelenting abandon. 'Hide Away' provides the perfect continuation of this singer-songwriter's timeless work with The Theme and paints a vividly bright picture for a solo future. Taking a break from his current live schedule, Chris sat down with *Aldora Britain Records* to chat about his life in story and song so far. We discussed the lasting impact of the COVID pandemic, formative creative memories, his approach to songwriting and songcraft, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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 Chris, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from down in London. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Chris Daley: My first introduction to music was through my mum, I remember as a kid mum would have her records on. She was a Mod back in the 60s. There was Mod, Northern soul, Motown being played and I fell in love with the sound. My dad also had a pub in the Eastend and would have bands on each weekend. There was also a lodger who lived at the pub, he was from Manchester and he introduced me to Oasis, The Verve, Charlatans, Shed Seven, Pulp, Suede, Blur, and Paul Weller and The Jam. I was eleven and that was it for me then, I knew what I wanted to do. I fell in love with music even more, picked up the guitar, and started learning my craft. Paul Weller, Richard Ashcroft, Noel Gallagher, Neil Young were my music idols.



Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to your time with The Theme. That band definitely achieved some pretty special things! How did your collaboration with Paul come to be? How did you meet the other members and what was the initial spark that brought you all together on a creative and musical level?

Chris Daley: The Theme was such a special time in my life. It all started when lead guitarist Pete, former member and rhythm guitarist Darren Cade, and the legend and frontman Gary Davis came to see me at a gig in a Greenwich pub called The Mitre back in 2016. I then fell in love with the band. I went to their shows on many occasions. I was introduced to Paul at a Theme gig. Paul and I had very similar musical tastes and we would converse over our favourite songs and we then become great mates. Myself, Paul, and the drummer Martin decided to start a band called The Highs not long after that. We penned down a few tunes but it was when Gary decided to leave the band and I was catapulted to frontman of The Theme. Paul is one of the greatest songwriters I have ever known. I loved and still love singing The Theme's and Paul's songs. Paul inspired me to write and I also penned down a few numbers for the band. I miss that band but like many things in life they have to come to an end. Maybe one day we'll be back.

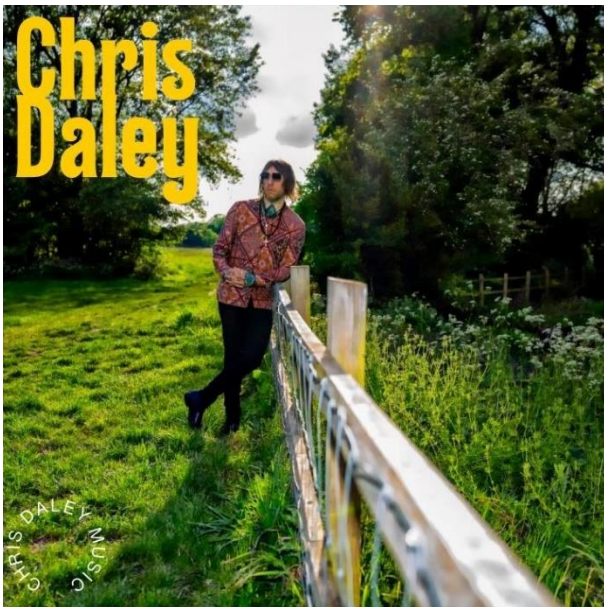
“The songs I write are from the heart and from past and present experiences. I love sitting there with my acoustic guitar and just letting the moment take me. Ideas crop up and I'm there ready with a pen and paper.”

Aldora Britain Records: Throughout your time with The Theme, and now with your solo output too, I am definitely drawn in by your impressive songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Chris Daley: I will be honest, I was clueless on songwriting when I started out my musical career. It was working with Paul in The Theme who inspired me to write. The songs I write are from the heart and from past and present experiences. I love sitting there with my acoustic guitar and just letting the moment take me. Ideas crop up and I'm there ready with a pen and paper making voice notes on my phone of songs. Some work, some don't, but the process is so enjoyable and rewarding, when you hit that one tune and you're like, 'Oi! Here we go!'

Aldora Britain Records: Let's get more specific now. I would like to focus on your most recent release, the unstoppable 'Hide Away'. For this track, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire it and what does it mean to you as the writer and performer?

Chris Daley: 'Hide Away' is about hiding your feelings and emotions from those we love, and not saying how you feel through our own self not wanting to be labelled as weak. I wrote this song over two years ago and at the time of writing 'Hide Away' I was suffering with depression and addiction to alcohol and drugs and was in a really dark place. Looking out to the world sitting in my garden I just put all my feelings out onto paper and the words just came. Now nearly a year sober and clean I perform this song and it reminds me of those dark days and how far I've come.



Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to your recorded output, I always get the impression that you would be elevated to an even higher level up on the live stage. A memorable and immersive evening of rock and roll, I am sure. What do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist, and what can a fan expect from their very first Chris Daley live show?

Chris Daley: Being onstage for me is like stepping into a new realm of being not of this world. It feels like a meditative state of euphoria and sense of being, so present in the now. I put my heart and soul into performing onstage. It's like I open my soul up like a book for the audience to read. Energy and soul, a feeling of being part of the journey connecting people through music is my goal and what fans can expect from my shows.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Chris Daley sound and your approach to making and creating music. Alternative, rock and roll, Britpop, soul, it is all in there and more. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Chris Daley: Firstly, thank you, my mum all day long. She is my inspiration. Mum's taste was Mod, Motown, soul, and Northern soul. The vocal styles from these genres hit my soul hard and inspired me. I then went on to research other genres and musicians and love listening to new music. What goes into it for me is joy from the heart and soul that feeds out into the lyrics, vocals, and rhythm. Influences for me at the moment have to be

“I put my heart and soul into performing onstage. It's like I open my soul up like a book for the audience to read. Energy and soul.”

Richard Ashcroft, both The Verve and solo, Paul Weller, both solo and The Jam, Ocean Colour Scene, The Brian Jonestown Massacre, Supergrass. Also, current artist I have to say inspire me are Laurie Wright, he's incredible, Kevin Iverson, the guys genuine and so talented, and Tom McQ he is super talented and has such a beautiful soul, his music feeds your soul.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Chris Daley: Yeah it's been pretty crazy, I am not one to dive into politics but I do feel all this craziness has taught society to look after number one, because we can't rely on the man in a suit in parliament. The last several years have been massive life changing experiences for me mentally, physically, and spiritually. Coming from a hopeless state of mind and body through addiction it has taught me who I am today and for that I am grateful for the tough times as it moulded me into the artist I am today. I think it's done the music industry wonders, people in lockdown were able to sit on their own and tap into something else, something deeper, that creative gene. I know scores of people who picked up guitar, started a band or solo career, and created music. Now the pandemic is behind us the live music scene is alive with people are wanting to experience new artists and live music. The bad side of the industry is ticket pricing for me! Snakes using the industry for their own benefit for pocket.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Chris:** Richard Ashcroft. **AB Records:** Favourite album? **Chris:** *Heavy Soul*, Paul Weller. **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Chris:** 66, Paul Weller. **AB Records:** First gig as an audience member? **Chris:** Oasis. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Chris:** Oasis, Finsbury Park.

AB Records: Style icon? **Chris:** Anton Newcombe, The Brian Jonestown Massacre. **AB Records:** Favourite film? **Chris:** *The Boat That Rocked*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Chris:** *Only Fools and Horses*. **AB Records:** Favourite up and coming artist? **Chris:** Monumental, great young lads with bags of talent, buzzing for their future.



Count My Lucky Stars

Bristol based artist **LUKE POTTER** is a contemporary singer-songwriter and musician with a modern and alternative edge. His fantastic original compositions find a home in between the worlds of pop music and indie folk, taking the best elements of both to create meaningful and relatable odes, reflective songs with an enduring and optimistic outlook. This is certainly the case with his recently released *Colorado* record, a fourteen-track snapshot of some of his best compositions so far. This particular album was a true labour of love, three years in the making, and featuring some intensely personal moments. As the excitement behind this release and the songs continues to build and grow, Luke took a short respite to chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about his creative and artistic journey to date. We discussed formative musical memories, his approach to songwriting and songcraft, a selection of his recorded output, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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 Luke, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Bristol. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Luke Potter: It was hearing 'Iris' by the Goo Goo Dolls on headphones sitting in the back of the car that turned my world around and kickstarted me on my music journey, I'd never heard anything like it. I was about seventeen and I picked up one of the many guitars that were in our home and started writing songs. I haven't stopped! Haha! It probably helped that I was raised in a musical family and there was always music in the house. The Beatles were always playing alongside pop music my mum loved, mainly from the 60s and early 70s. My dad was also a member of a band called The Affair that was signed by Virgin and Simon Cowell back in the 80s. My parents have always been so supportive of me and I'm really lucky for that.



Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to the present day and your brilliant solo output. I am really drawn in by your impressive songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

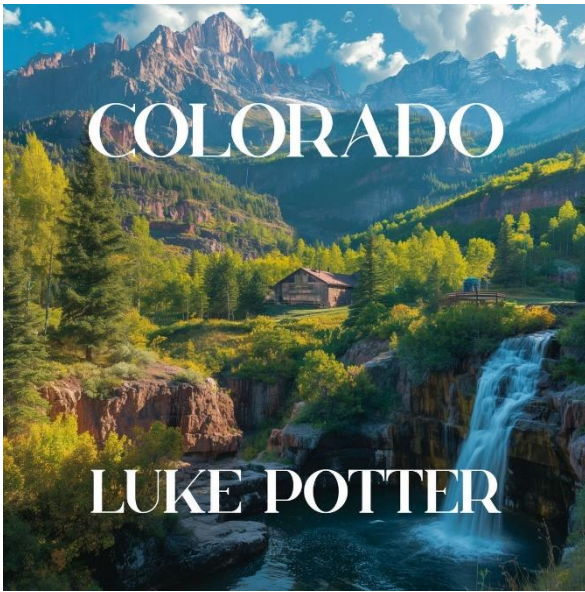
Luke Potter: Songs come in many ways, a lyric might spark something or a bit of melody. More often these days I sit in a studio with an acoustic guitar or a piano and work until ideas take us on a journey. It can take twenty minutes or it can take days.

Aldora Britain Records: I would now like to get more specific and pick out two recent favourites. Let's focus on 'This One's for You' and 'My Steps'. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Luke Potter: 'This One's for You' was written about my grandad. He died when I was about fifteen but he was such an amazing person and he means so much to me that this song just came out one day. I think it says how I

“It’s not my intention to directly follow the artist route, I’ve done that for so many years, but I had the songs and thought it’d be nice to put them out into the world but not put big pressures or anything on myself to do big promotion.”

feel and I think it’s relatable as we all lose people we love but they stay with us and I know that’s how it should be. ‘My Steps’ was written after the breakup of my marriage and it’s basically me giving me a good talking to and telling myself that I can take control of my life and make sure I explore all the things that life has for me, even if things seem hard to bear.



Aldora Britain Records: Both of these tracks are taken from a superb LP of yours called *Colorado*. This was actually my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist throughout this process?

Luke Potter: It’s a collection of songs I’d written and produced over the last two to three years in my Sweet Factory studio whilst writing and working with other artists. There’s a diary thing in there going on too as I tend to write from the heart and the lyrics reflect what I’m going through. It’s not my intention to directly follow the artist route, I’ve done that for so many years, but I had the songs and thought it’d be nice to put them out into the world but not put big pressures or anything on myself to do big promotion and do the Spotify route. The album’s only

available through Bandcamp or if someone sees me live and wants to buy a copy.

Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to the full album, I always get the distinct impression that these songs would be elevated to an even higher level up on the live stage. I am picturing an immersive and memorable evening of story and song! What do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist, and what can a fan expect from their very first Luke Potter gig?

Luke Potter: I’d love to play more shows where I can sing these songs with just me and an acoustic guitar or with a band but it’s so difficult getting those gigs. Most people out for an evening just want to hear covers unless you’re established.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Luke Potter sound and your approach to making and creating music. That alternative pop edge is stellar! How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Luke Potter: It’s all come about organically. I’ve worked with some amazing people over the years who have taught me and I’ve had some crazy talented mentors too. And I’ve spent a lot of time writing with other people and producing artists. Everything develops and you do more and you learn and apply the learning. At the end of the day you want to produce good songs and everything should be geared to that.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Luke Potter: I’ve become quite realistic about how success should be measured. Yes, I’ve been signed to a major label, actually two, but for whatever reasons it didn’t work out. But for me, the important thing is to make

“I’ve become quite realistic about how success should be measured ... the important thing is to make great music and do everything that allows me to carry on making a living from what I love which I’m happy to say I’m doing.”

great music and do everything that allows me to carry on making a living from what I love which I’m happy to say I’m doing. Funnily, COVID helped me, for two years I worked solidly in the studio, working on writing and learning how to produce. It was really important for me to develop song production and that has, I think, given me another ‘string to my bow’ and made me pretty self-sufficient.

And there’s side projects too. I’m crazy excited to be working with an amazing singer called Albert Stott who’s only twenty and sings like a young Michael Bublé. He’s incredible, and along with my friend Kasper Holm Larsen, who has worked with Kylie Minogue, Selena Gomez, Calum Scott, etcetera, we’ve been writing and producing songs that we think will make him a star. And whilst that’s happening, I’m also working with my bro Jacob Browne on a band project, Starlight Alice, and we’ve put out five singles in 2024, all with an Americana, pop, country vibe and the feedback has been amazing! I just keep working, you never know!

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Luke:** The Goo Goo Dolls.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Luke:** *Bleed American* by Jimmy Eat World. **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Luke:** *Monsters* by The Midnight.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Luke:** Jason Mraz, Hammersmith Odeon. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Luke:** Status Quo. I had to leave after three or four songs as it was so deafening!

AB Records: Style icon? **Luke:** Mmm, not sure on that one!

AB Records: Favourite film? **Luke:** *Space Jam*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Luke:** *Family Guy*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Luke:** Albert Stott and Starlight Alice.



Build Something

Washington D.C.'s **THE LINDA BRADY REVIVAL** have ignited a fresh powerpop spark. They have done this through the release of Linda's first album in twenty-five years, the brilliant *Deep Brain Stimulator*. Across twelve glistening all-original compositions, this American tunesmith overcomes the odds of having been diagnosed with Parkinson's, in a world of endless tumult, and delivers an inspiring and hopeful performance. Her key influential touchstones on this album are the iconic new wave 70s and 80s songwriters, brilliant and underappreciated names such as Neil Finn and Graham Parker. With *Deep Brain Stimulator* having recently been released, Linda took a short timeout from her current creative activities to chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about her musical process and endeavours. We discussed her approach to songwriting and songcraft, a selection of her recorded output, popular original compositions from her back-catalogue, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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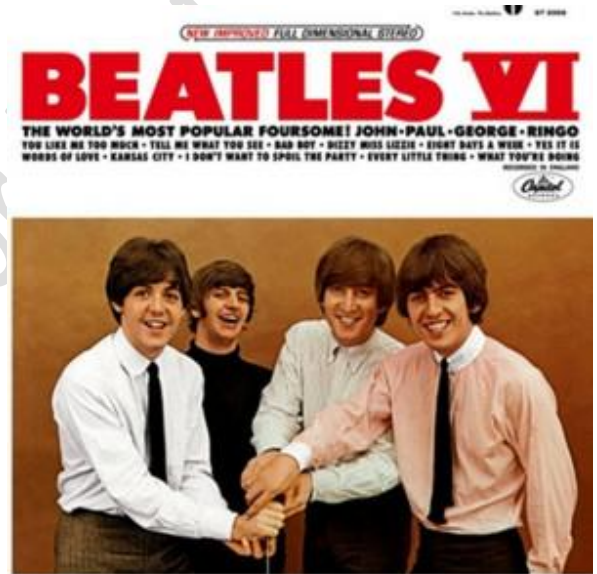
Aldora Britain Records: Hello Linda, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Washington, D.C. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Linda Brady: Hi Tom! I'm quite well, thank you. I appreciate your taking the time to talk with me. My favourite music comes from your side of the Atlantic, so I agree that music certainly brings us together. As a kid, my parents had 45 RPM singles lying around from the 50s from when they were teenagers. My dad grew up in the Bronx, when the street corners were filled with wannabe doo-wop groups. When I was five or six, I found the case of 45s and it was like striking gold. 'Rock Around the Clock', Dion, Everly Brothers, the best stuff. When I first heard the Beatles around age seven it was love at first sight and sound. I mean they were truly my first love. I also loved The Beach Boys as a child, and as I grew, I realised how unusual and original their harmonies were, which led me to Brian Wilson. I branched out to love many other artists, but The Beatles and Brian Wilson were the foundation and I'm sure I wouldn't be playing music if not for those guys. Music has been my help in times of trouble, my party in times of joy, my grief in times of sadness, and my relief in times of anger. It's life.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to The Linda Brady Revival. You formed this project with the world in a mess and after being diagnosed with Parkinson's. How did it all come to be? What was the initial spark? Is it an outlet for your solo musings or more of a collaborative kind of feel and approach?

Linda Brady: It had been over twenty-five years since I recorded my first album. That was a fantastic, magical experience, but after that, I really wanted to be a normal person for a while, have a family, etcetera. So I did. Then I was diagnosed with early onset Parkinson's disease, which is degenerative in nature, meaning I wouldn't always have the chops to do this next album whenever I wanted to. I was told by doctors to start doing things on my bucket list before I couldn't physically do them anymore. The title of the album is the name of the hardware in my brain to help my symptoms.

During my time away, I was always writing, but nothing serious. I poured creativity into teaching my kids, which I am so glad I did. Then one day in January 2023, I was driving my kids to school, and I heard in my heart, 'Do what



“Music has been my help in times of trouble, my party in times of joy, my grief in times of sadness, and my relief in times of anger. It’s life.”

you were made to do.’ I knew exactly what that meant. So I went home and began writing. This album flowed out like a waterfall. The songs are all mine, so in a way, it is a solo thing, but when I found the guys in the Revival and Andy, my engineer and co-producer, it was complete serendipity. They are the perfect band for me in temperament, quality, and taste, and they have incredible talent. Recording this album was a joy from beginning to end. An absolute joy.

Aldora Britain Records: I am definitely drawn in by your relatable and impressive songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics, both musically and lyrically? Perhaps coming from more of a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Linda Brady: Writing this album was quite an experience. It wasn’t that I was drawn to specific themes, I had to write these songs. They were urgent for me. Normally I keep a book with ideas and lines and if I can’t think of anything I use it. Nothing on this album was written that way. All of it was written either very quickly, ten minutes to an hour, or over a course of many, many months with many revisions. Nothing in between. One of the songs, ‘SSV’, was written on the spot as I sang it into my phone with most of the words the same as they ended up. I had to figure out the guitar chords to my singing, which is backwards for me. The song ‘The Barkers’ took me about a year to finish. I must have revised it a hundred times until it said what I wanted it to say. It’s a surrealistic song with a lot of imagery, and I wanted to get it right.

There is a spiritual element to writing songs and I was tapped in, and continually amazed. It was like I didn’t write these songs at all. I was the vessel. I don’t mean to sound self-important, actually the point is I wasn’t important. I had nothing to do with it other than writing it down. A scribe.



Aldora Britain Records: Earlier this year, you released an impeccable album called *Deep Brain Stimulator*. This was also my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing this set, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist through this process?

Linda Brady: Thank you! I’m glad you like it. It really was a labour of love, and the best part was that everyone involved had their hearts in it. I knew what I was supposed to do, so I did it, but at the beginning I had very little confidence. I just kind of looked up to the sky and said, ‘What now?’ But as time passed and things fell into place seemingly supernaturally, I was convinced that this was meant to be.

For example, I hadn’t played in a band in years. Where on Earth would I find an excellent drummer? To me, the drummer is the most important member of the band. I was talking to my husband about it, and he dared me to ask Kenny Aronoff. I had told him that when I was about twelve years old, I saw John Mellencamp singing ‘Lonely Ol’ Night’ on TV. I asked myself, ‘Who the hell is that drummer? He slams it so hard and yet with such dignity!’ And it was Kenny. My husband remembered that and double-dog-dared me again to contact Kenny. He said, ‘All he can say is no.’ And you know what? Kenny said yes, the very next morning. That was the first clue that we had something.

“Those are words to live by. ‘Build Something’ was written in my brain long before it was written on paper or with a guitar. It was my response to the chaos around us in the last few years.”

I still did not have the rest of a band. I pulled out my favourite albums from my collection and stopped on my Shoes albums. I told a friend, ‘I want a band like Shoes,’ and she said, ‘Why don’t you ask them?’ I was feeling quite cocky at this point after getting Kenny to play, so I took another leap and asked Jeff Murphy of Shoes to help play on it. He also said yes. It was absolutely ridiculous how this was falling into place. After each ‘yes’ my confidence grew and then, I found my band. I couldn’t believe my luck. By the end I felt very sure I was doing what I was supposed to be doing.

Aldora Britain Records: It is a gem of a record from top to bottom, but I would now like to pick out two personal favourites. Let’s focus on ‘Yes Man’ and ‘Build Something’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Linda Brady: ‘Yes Man’ might be my favourite too. That one was unusual in that I had it sitting around for years, unfinished, with different words that were pretty bad. You’ve probably noticed that there is a lot of snark on this album. Sarcasm is a coping mechanism I use quite frequently! This song might be the snarkiest. When we recorded that song with the band I played ‘Go All the Way’ by Raspberries as a guide. ‘Sound like that!’ And they sounded great.

Brian Wilson has a wonderful song called ‘Oxygen to the Brain’, where he sings, ‘Never destroy when you can create.’ Those are words to live by. ‘Build Something’ was written in my brain long before it was written on paper or with a guitar. It was my response to the chaos around us in the last few years. People hating each other without having met, judging each other without having spoken, people knocking things down and leaving them there in a shambles, literally and figuratively. It really reminded me of when my own children were little, and I had to separate them and tell them to knock it off. That is what I wanted to say to the world, ‘Mom says, knock it off!’ But I realised afterward that I was as much of the problem as anyone else, and that I too have a desire to knock things I don’t understand. The human condition is a real thing. No one is exempt. I have to tell myself to build something too.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love the Revival’s sound and your approach to making and creating music. A blend of Americana and powerpop energy. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Linda Brady: The genre thing is hard. There are way too many genres, it’s pretty absurd. I was told by one folkie that my songs sound like Motown. This was meant as an insult, but there is no greater compliment in my universe. I love pop music. I love Motown. I love anything Neil Finn does. Graham Parker influenced my singing and songwriting quite a bit. He’s fantastic. I really like Radiohead. Bob Dylan is my hero. He is the anti-‘Yes Man’. He has risked a lot over many decades to be true to what he believes. I love Laura Nyro’s weird and wonderful first couple of albums, I love Ella Fitzgerald and the jazz standards, Joni Mitchell.

But always, always, I come back to The Beatles, and the wonder of those years discovering every album of theirs, like a prize that was better than the last. *Help*. *Rubber Soul*. *Revolver*. There was an American release called



“Technology has made people believe they have friends that they do not have. It has taken childhood from many kids. And it has created a loneliness epidemic that is incredibly sad to see.”

Beatles VI that was very dear to me. Teenage Fanclub are The Beatles of my adult life, in that they really inspired me to make music again. I adore the triple crown of *Grand Prix*, *Songs from Northern Britain*, and *Howdy*. When we recorded this album, the first thing I asked my co-producer and engineer, Andy Eade, was whether he could get the guitar sound of “Sparky’s Dream” for me. That is exactly what he did, and he made sure we kept as close to it as possible as the project got more complicated. God bless that man. Your compatriot, he’s from Warminster, between Bath and Salisbury.



Coming back into this all these years later, I rely heavily on Bob Dylan’s *Rough and Rowdy Ways* and Brian Wilson’s *That Lucky Old Sun*. They inspire me especially because each of these albums was made so late in each artist’s life. They are both magnificent.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Linda Brady: The music industry has changed a lot even in the short time since the pandemic. In many ways the pandemic was a blessing to some. For me, it solidified the ability to work

with artists who are far away. The technology rollouts were sped up and I was able to benefit from that for this album. But it has also been a very troubling few years in many ways. Technology has made people believe they have friends that they do not have. It has taken childhood from many kids. And it has created a loneliness epidemic that is incredibly sad to see.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Linda:** Paul McCartney.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Linda:** I’ll say the first Ramones album. I have a rotating list of about twenty-five albums. **AB Records:** Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Linda:** It was probably *I Do Not Want What I Haven’t Got* by Sinead O’Connor. A masterpiece.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Linda:** My parents were very cool and took me to see The Beach Boys with Brian Wilson in 1980. **AB Records:** Loudest gig as an audience member? **Linda:** Last summer I saw the Neal Morse Band and it was loud. Mike Portnoy from Dream Theater was on drums. He hits it!

AB Records: Style icon? **Linda:** Look at me. Do I look like I have a style icon? Maybe Bob Newhart.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Linda:** *The Best Years of Our Lives*. **AB Records:** Favourite TV show? **Linda:** *Keeping Up Appearances*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Linda:** I don’t know if I’d call her up and coming because she’s here already, but Rose Alaimo. Check her out. She’s the real deal.

Tonight, The Streets Are Ours

Richard Hawley with John Smith at De Montfort Hall, Leicester, Wednesday 5th June 2024

(Featured photography by Dean Chalkley)

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On an average looking evening in Leicester, at the opening of the British summer, Sheffield's unofficial poet laureate **RICHARD HAWLEY** arrived in town. As the informal and recreational matches of cricket and football raged on in the neighbouring city centre greenery of Victoria Park, a different storm brewed within the De Montfort Hall. Here, rock and roll was ready, the be-quiffed rockabilly stylings of Hawley, complete with Roy Orbison shades, and his musical band of brothers prepared, ready for a brilliant evening indulging in their new record, *In This City They Call You Love*, as well as choice picks from their ever-expanding, glorious back-catalogue. The stage was set for a night of chamber pop cinematics, raga rock odysseys, neo-psychedelic flourishes, and worldly lyrical observations. An evening of Sheffield nurtured wonder was in store.



Prior to Hawley and his musical compatriots, travelling troubadour **JOHN SMITH** took to the stage for an altogether different experience. Smith's speciality lays in the indie folk singer-songwriter field. Throughout his set, there were moments of wit, especially with his appealing and humoristic approach, regaling the audience with tales of supporting 'Big' John Martyn in the same venue, misguided ventures into bitcoin trading, and COVID era arguments around the house. Smith pushed himself forward, fully embracing an audience that began as a passive and indifferent mass, ending his portion of the evening with a hearty singalong that perfectly lends itself to his acoustic-based style of music. The highlight was this rousing rendition of 'The Living Kind', the title track of Smith's most recent record, a joyful slice of revelry that sat elegantly alongside other charming and warm outings, as well as beautifully heart-rending and nostalgically longing compositions too.

Following Smith's spirited and worthy opening set, the lights went low and Hawley and his five-man band arrived onstage, beginning with an audacious and exquisitely sprawling rendition of 'She Brings the Sunlight'. This opening number set the tone for Hawley's portion of the evening. With a three-man guitar-wielding frontline creating an impenetrable wall of sound, exceptionally underpinned by a solid foundation of bass, drums and keyboards, this was a statement of intent, a seven-minute psychedelic odyssey, thundering and direct. In these opening moments of Hawley's set, each guitarist was given ample space to shine early in proceedings, with the frontman himself unleashing something otherworldly and mind-bending from his six-string weapon of choice. From the off, the full group displayed a tightknit connectivity and brotherhood.

Offerings such as the murderous, menacing and mysterious 'Two for His Heels' followed in this vein, as did 'Standing at the Sky's Edge', a performance which soared and became a masterful and brash opus, a full-frontal, breath-taking assault on the senses. However, the beauty of Hawley as a musician and performer is his diversity and versatility. Whilst these tracks of rock and roll changed perceptions and radically pushed the set along, there were also moments of reflection with contemplative baroque numbers, these included 'Open Up Your Door', 'Heavy Rain', and new single 'Prism in Jeans', which landed somewhere in-between Roy Orbison's crooning style and Lee Hazlewood's brilliant orchestral nature. The new track 'Deep Space' provided a fantastic surprise highlight with a punchy delivery, a song that truly came into its own up on the live stage. This in turn provided a

“You’re precious to me, like Owen’s poetry, and I wish you well, my heart of oak. When you sang ‘Bay of Biscay’, the whole world it drifted away, and the wind it sighed, through the hearts of oak.”

stellar foundation for such Hawley classics as the bold and driving ‘Alone’, the expertly delivered raga of ‘Leave Your Body Behind You’, the superb monochrome juxtaposition of ‘Don’t Stare at the Sun’, and the soundtrack favourite of ‘Tonight the Streets Are Ours’ (as heard recently in *Baby Reindeer*), exceptionally placed after Hawley’s spot on and fantastically articulated political discourse for the evening.

The audience were invited to rewind time for a composition written by sixteen-year-old Hawley, ‘Just Like the Rain’, a song that glistened and shimmered and testified to this songwriter having always been a self-proclaimed ‘miserable f****r’. The rock and roll overload of ‘Is There a Pill?’ and the anthemic, poetic crescendo and swansong of ‘Heart of Oak’ closed the main set. Before long, however, Hawley returned with a reduced band to perform ‘People’, the central point of the new record, *In This City They Call You Love*, paving the way for the euphoric full-band rockabilly shuffle of ‘I’m Looking for Someone to Find Me’, and the expansive closer ‘The Ocean’. Throughout the set, Hawley and his band delivered a rare modern-day rock and roll spectacle, complete with reflective introspection and contrasting total freakout moments. More than that, this was a career spanning set, with newbies and oldies perfectly interplaying, and that is a testament to Richard Hawley, a poetic rock and roller who is here to stay, an artist whose music will endure long after we have all faded away.

Setlist

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1) She Brings the Sunlight | 11) Coles Corner |
| 2) Two for His Heels | 12) Leave Your Body Behind You |
| 3) Prism in Jeans | 13) Heavy Rain |
| 4) Open Up Your Door | 14) Don’t Stare at the Sun |
| 5) Standing at the Sky’s Edge | 15) Is There a Pill? |
| 6) Deep Space | 16) Heart of Oak |
| 7) Just Like the Rain | |
| 8) Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow | 17) People |
| 9) Tonight the Streets Are Ours | 18) I’m Looking for Someone to Find Me |
| 10) Alone | 19) The Ocean |



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Rewind...

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[A B Records Issue 189 \(July 2024\)](#)

Featuring the sounds of Campbell and Johnston, Endrick and the Sandwiches, Joe Cotton, Theo Travis, Richard Hawley, John Smith, Near Death Experience, Clare Free, The Heat Inc., Mike Stapleton, and Matt Ellis.

[A B Records Issue 188 \(July 2024\)](#)

Featuring the sounds of The Eric Hisaw Band, Mick Shaffer, Alkaline Trio, Lowlives, Soloman Smith, Jack Adamant, Sonny Bill Glover, The Safety of Life at Sea, Russell A Bave, Kristina Jacobsen, and Camille Miller.

[A B Records Issue 187 \(July 2024\)](#)

Featuring the sounds of Mike Evin, Mojo Holler, Zoe FitzGerald Carter, Richard Hawley, John Smith, Mat D, Phil Doleman, Mark Rubin – Jew of Oklahoma, Number Stations, Zebra Crossing Sounds, and Barefoot Iano.