Welcome to Issue 17. Yes, there is a ghost on the front, but no, this isn’t about ‘hauntology’. Instead, illustrator and music
maker Jeremy Dower delivers our cover art and there are interviews with Australian veterans Chris Smith, Dave Thurlow and Warren Barri,
youngsters Alkie and the Ramps, Underlapper, and overseas film Mira Calix, Panda Bear, Sam Amidon and Christopher Willits. We also
introduce a new section, Storm the Studio which explores a local studio and producer, beginning with Tony Dope. And then there are our regular
features: design reviews and Unkle Ho takes us through his favourite records in Selects.

Cyclic Defrost is pleased to announce that the Music Board of the Australia Council for the Arts
has agreed to offer financial support to Cyclic Defrost for another three issues through to Issue
20. This support is vital and when combined with your generous donations and selected
advertising from independent labels helps keep us afloat. We have some special things planned
for the next three issues including a limited edition cover CD so do think about donating and
will make sure you get Cyclic Defrost sent directly to your door.

Sebastian Chan and Matthew Levinson
Editors

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EDITORIAL

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the views of the publisher nor the staff of Cyclic Defrost.
Jeremy Dowler's wide-eyed, soft-spoken inner hints at his special talent for developing imaginary realms.

As a young boy growing up in country New Zealand, he entertained himself with drawing, painting, drums and guitar. He recalls the earliest punishment his parents could wield was to lock him out of the room while his kindred enjoyed the magical world of Astro Boys, a sentiment kid rotten with an evolving sense of humanity. Hating from a self-professed working class background, Jeremy notes that while he was broadly interested in creative pursuits he never anticipated how that would come to pass.

His first real break was designing pixel partygoers for the video game Mega Man. "You don’t get to do things you don’t like. And then to get a job, you have to work, everyone has a job that you really enjoy,” he sort of says. "If art is your thing, you have to make fun stuff that people want to buy. And it makes perfect sense to me because you can stay at home in your bedroom painting and making music that nobody will ever hear. Maybe you will enjoy it, but it seems like a waste of time to me."

Perhaps as a response to his waning enthusiasm, on the side Jeremy had his own section in the infamous video game magazine Vector. Looking at his current work, I'm curious as to whose ideas and artistic expressions he finds most inspiring now. After a short pause he replies, “In terms of the whole package, I really like Friends With You (a British-based collective). I really admire their ability to combine art and commerce in a way that no money flows to the artist until I went to Japan and there’s not a scene of unemployed artists who never received any monetary benefits from his work. Like many artists it boiled down to a misunderstanding of how record labels work - that no money flows to the artist until the label recoups its costs, and indie and major alike. Often the artist underestimates the people and the costs involved, especially in marketing a record. It was a bad experience, “If I’d gone on a tour knowing I wouldn’t make any money, I wouldn’t have been disappointed, but for it to go up like that... After that I never made music with the intention of making money from it.”

Perhaps as a response to his waning dissatisfaction with the culture around him and his focused course of study, Jeremy also turned to music for creative inspiration. His first album is a DIY production that never really hit any great heights as far as distribution went. Produced on a 386 and recorded on 3.5-Inch floppy disks, it was a blueprint for experimental music with the intention of making money from it.

Jeremy's gentle nature shines through, dissipating transitional borders that separate children from adults.

Recently snapped up by Sydney-based animation powerhouse Animal Logic, he’s well-placed as part of the team bringing the next installment of Happy Feet, a blockbuster treat about the adventures of a tap-dancing penguin. Looking at his current work, I’m curious as to whose ideas and artistic expressions he finds most inspiring now. After a short pause he replies, “In terms of the whole package, I really like Friends With You (a British-based collective). I really admire their ability to combine art and commerce in a way that no money flows to the artist until I went to Japan and there’s not a scene of unemployed artists who never received any monetary benefits from his work. Like many artists it boiled down to a misunderstanding of how record labels work - that no money flows to the artist until the label recoups its costs, and indie and major alike. Often the artist underestimates the people and the costs involved, especially in marketing a record. It was a bad experience, “If I’d gone on a tour knowing I wouldn’t make any money, I wouldn’t have been disappointed, but for it to go up like that... After that I never made music with the intention of making money from it.”

"Would you like your tea more?” he asks with a tiny, awkward chuckle. Just after the release of the second album Jeremy quit his job in Melbourne and relocated to Japan where a modest following garnered enough success to release a third album titled Music for the Young and the Restless. Working with his new boutiquel label, a Small Bit Of Hekowan, coverage excerpt across Japan and soon Jeremy had his own section in the infamous Tower Records.

He describes his style of instrument-making as Old analogue synthesiser on a round clock mimicking the way a double bass slides. It’s also bending research, known best for minimalist electronic at the time. With label mates like fellow Melbourne Vortex, Jeremy quickly found himself a broader audience. But excavating out of the local Melbourne scene and into the international sphere soon to have both its highs and lows. While double vinyl and CDs were pressed and sales took off, Jeremy was a bit of a wild child, not knowing how to promote his ‘fakst’ jazz.

Despite his successful dabblings with music, he notes the even more rich landscape of visual art that he attributes largely to his new Tokyo environs, populated by major talent. "If ever you’re in Tokyo you will be appeased to the omnipresent image that characters hold in society. Afro Ken (the cool dog with the multi-colored fur) adorens pens and stationery, strawberries have many moods and dance on the packets of ichi-go Poki treats, the Bathing Ape helps sell streetwear to the J-hop crew, while other make-believe wonders assist celebrities with public service announcements.

In the kowaii trend (where characters are scary, like a cute bear with killer nails who accidentally eats his kid owners) viewed as a stand against the suffocating cuteness of the characters in Japan?

"Western people are positive and excited about it,” he says, recalling his visit to a festival in Berlin, surrounded by peers who were heavily influenced by the vast semiotic landscape of Japanese characters. "A Japanese artist came to talk and he did little woodcuts..."

Paul Klee style of work. Someone asked him about characters and he replied that he hated them."

"Still, there is a commercial downside to the arts cute movement. They don’t always sell. Two of his characters, Umas and Blus, were roped up in a Victorian Gothic style for an illustrated childrens book. When presented in all their darkness the publishers decided they wanted it happier and friendlier so in the end the project didn’t get made."

Jeremy influenced at all by the American style of animation with its big budget price tag? While confessing to be an early Disney fan, he also finds that, "American animations these days are just so devoid of any content at all. It's just sad that you are so condescending to children, they don't really give kids enough credit!"

So what positive kids role-models does Jeremy see in the animation world at the moment?

"I really like Sponge Bob, he's just a total geek, he's got square pants and little socks and shiny shoes and stuff and has dorky faces, but he's really loverable as well. I think that's a good message for kids."

OVERPAGE: Sketches: Jeremy prefers to first sketch on paper, to get ideas and “find a way into it.” Once he has a clear idea in his head, he sketches straight into the computer, with Photoshop being the preferred tool of choice.

LEFT: COOL: Character developed for recent commercial work for Coca-Cola. Bliss: Bliss came to life for a Gothic Children’s Novel. She seems to be into early scientific discovery and mutant taxidermy but now we will never be too sure about her since the book was not approved of by the publishers.

ABOVE: Bliss: Bliss came to life for a gothic Children’s Novel. She seems to be into early scientific discovery and mutant taxidermy but now we will never be too sure about her since the book was not approved of by the publishers.
I try not to read the Messa-Bone articles because it's just really personal and I don't feel comfortable reading it. But I really enjoy reading the reviews of the albums and live shows. A review is never going to please an artist. I think, because you know, at some stage in all of us, we think that 'we do this, we do that'. I sort of want to taint the process of creation. But then again, I don't want to take it too much. I sort of don't want it to just sit on stools and go through the songs. Making some kind of strange films that people had said were brave, never truly meant sense or moments of brilliance and extremely often prognosis. Theatreplays plays an obvious part, some people might consider the music to wear matching t-shirts and prank relationship and personal that having a point of difference doesn't have to equal novelty; it just has to happen in that band's points of difference. It doesn't just post for a duckish punk. It is reactionary. Time that there is. But just that final thing. I find inspiration. I think I enjoy and get inspired by real-yicky-created ideas that are funky because they exist. You know when you see a band in a full and it's really full and everybody fill to go, and then it's a pretty crap and everyone still seems to be digging it. I start thinking about what I would do. I sometimes think that we want to stand a band to draw attention to being different from other stuff happening. It's more just like there's a band-out there that I want to see that doesn't exist at the moment. This might sound a bit weird, but I imagine being an audience member and what would please that person the most that person was me. In a roundabout way, it's about making music to please yourself, but not yourself as the listener. It just seems to me that there is a massive void in music sometimes. It makes sense to me, especially considering the sort of Australian music that gets the most attention. It's probably just the nature of the music industry, but to me it seems the mainstream of Australian 'indie' that is most publicly focused on can tend towards the similar, post punk or the standard word that recorded driven hope being the most important factor in getting heard and thus getting popular. That might sound cynical. But the cyclonic nature of music today, being the question of the fact that those other people are going to hear this stuff, it shifts, there is complete difference in the mode of writing. In the current climate of Australian music, I do genuinely think Aleks and the Ramps' approach and concepts are different from the rest. Uniqe. It might be a little bit overt for some, it could even be slightly reactionary compared to more conventional trends and aesthetics in this country's music. The notion of a novelty aspect to their music, seems unavoidable, but it has the potential to be really phished and sold-out. But acting silly isn't courageous for Aleks and his Ramps. People have said to me that before things like 'Oh, you know what it's really brave you go in this'. That's something that I remember at film school, making some kind of strange films that people had said were brave, never truly meant sense or.

I GUESS BRAVITY IS WHEN YOU HAVE A FEAR AND THEN YOU FACE IT AND YOU OVERCOME IT. WE'RE NOT REALLY TALKING ABOUT ACTING LIKE DOGS; IT'S NOT BRAVITY AT ALL.

Self-deprecation and just simply having fun is more important. It might be braver to just sit on stools and go through the songs in a mellow sort of fashion. But there is an element of the personal in their lyrics, like Aleks' sensuality of reading personal-focused writing about the band. If there is bravery involved, it would be with the lyrics, even if they still could be described with somewhat of an absurdist. "I know that people will make all kinds of assumptions on my character and personality and other people's personalities by listening to the lyrics and music in general. I don't really expect to go on the stage and be a weirdo, but I'm a poet, I don't necessarily care that much. It is hard, writing the lyrics for the band to be a bit harder than writing for the previous EP on that, I wasn't really prepared for that. But the show wouldn't be at it; the lyrics were quite perverted and really strange. But once you actually sit down and put pen to paper, that's what you're sitting on. Other people are going to hear this stuff, it shifts, there is complete difference in the mode of writing." In the current climate of Australian music, I do genuinely think Aleks and the Ramps' approach and concepts are different from the rest. It might be a little bit overt for some, it could even be slightly reactionary compared to more conventional trends and aesthetics in this country's music. The notion of a novelty aspect to their music seems unavoidable, but it has the potential to be really phished and sold-out. But acting silly isn't courageous for Aleks and his Ramps. People have said to me that before things like 'Oh, you know what it's really brave you go in this'. That's something that I remember at film school, making some kind of strange films that people had said were brave, never truly meant sense or.

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in an instant, all hell breaks loose. Clanging, resonates and then fades against the din. The lazy rumble of a freight train between his most vulnerable and adroit. Bad Orchestra represents a considerable stylistic and dispositional departure. A work of intense personal catharsis and aesthetic polarity, dispositional departure. It’s a pretty tiny place. I have no idea what the form is. For the ever-humble Smith, the shift was a real achievement. “Just personally, that was a real coup for me,” he offers. “I was actually a bit shy about those two tracks – Living Dead Blues and Grain Elevator Blues – which really suited his life. Racked with grief, Smith has been consumed with music, and working crap jobs for 14 years and still essentially having nothing to show for it, and working crap jobs and having nothing to show for them either,” he continues. “It wasn’t the most comfortable time. I kind of needed a place to dream.”

Smith remembers, the early nineties was an active time in Victoria’s second most populous city. “There were a lot of references there, including the actual artwork,” he says. “So yeah, it’s sort of embarrassing to talk about. But it’s just a result of being a big fan and then reading a biography of front man Paul Banken – aka Darby Crash – during the recording sessions for the album and then became captivated by the group, dreaming parallel to some of his own experiences. ‘They are a lot of referees there, including the actual artwork,’ he says. “It’s really very selfish music and it’s a really personal thing. It’s a really personal thing. It’s very much therapeutic, ‘he pauses. It’s so personal it’s hard to explain, a bit shy about those two tracks – Living Dead Blues and Grain Elevator Blues – which really suited his life. Racked with grief, Smith has been consumed with music, and working crap jobs for 14 years and still essentially having nothing to show for it, and working crap jobs and having nothing to show for them either,” he continues. “It wasn’t the most comfortable time. I kind of needed a place to dream.”

But for Smith, more than anything Bad Orchestra stands to represent a somewhat difficult phase in his life. Barked with personal frustrations and dramas, the last two years have proven a time of personal and geographical upheaval for the sacred 13-string guitarist. And, Smith, who is sought chanting from his home in the tiny eastern Victorian town of Rosedale, is the first to admit that it’s been anything but easy. “Um, not wishing to dramatize, but yeah, it has been two or three pretty complicated years,” he sighs. “I kind of moved out here from Melbourne partly out of necessity and, well, it’s a hard place, but amongst other things, I wasn’t super keen on having my daughter grow up in the city.”

“I think I’m quite a bit catching up with myself to do in terms of being a musical being. I am 14 years old essentially having nothing to show for it, and working crap jobs and having nothing to show for them either,” he continues. “It was something of old a homecoming for Smith, who actually grew up on a farm north of town. “It’s been a real experience,” he says. “I never even imagined coming back here. Moving away from here was my attempt to leave it all behind.”

“Everyone pretty much knows each other, so it’s a pretty tiny place. I have no idea what the population is now, but I remember when I was growing up, the sign on the way into town and 1980 I think, that was fair which but it’s definitely still a one horse town and it’s pretty quiet. I keep bumping into people from when I was growing up. Thankfully, somehow I hope don’t remember me don’t seem, and others do.”

It’s where, two decades earlier, Smith was first introduced to the idea of making music, when an aunt gave him a classical guitar for his 10th birthday. “It was...well, there’s a lot of wrestling with it, it’s really very selfish music and it’s a really personal thing. It’s a really personal thing. It’s very much therapeutic, ‘he pauses. It’s so personal it’s hard to explain, a bit shy about those two tracks – Living Dead Blues and Grain Elevator Blues – which really suited his life. Racked with grief, Smith has been consumed with music, and working crap jobs for 14 years and still essentially having nothing to show for it, and working crap jobs and having nothing to show for them either,” he continues. “It wasn’t the most comfortable time. I kind of needed a place to dream.”

But from the start, he had little curiosity in making music via the usual means. “Of course, I wasn’t the least bit interested. I really wanted to do. That was about the extent of my thinking. I just got to see shows at the Bowery Club, and that was as much exciting stuff happening at that time.”

One thing he is sure about though, is his music’s effect on his personal and emotional state. “It’s very much therapeutic,” he pauses. “Maybe a lot of what came out in this record was...well, there’s a lot of wrestling with being raised in a really conservative, Catholic environment. There are no direct references in there, but I think it’s me bringing a recovering Catholic in some way.”

The reason he pauses again, rolling over the thought. “When it comes down to it, it’s really very selfish music and it’s a really selfish record.”

“That’s the whole reason I made it because it was extraordinarily cathartic.”

Bad Orchestra is out through Death Valley Records.
“Sorry for the slow reply, I’ve been out busy for the long weekend,” says Scot, when I finally catch him. The laboured entrant of Scot’s latest musical incursion, Brisbane-based industrial dubstep outfit, Victor Xray Sound System, reflects our interview’s geological progress. Dubstep is a boys’ scene: female producers or DJs are extremely rare, even in the UK’s increasingly popular scene. Like hip-hop, the language is encoded aggression, it’s “truf” or “thug, the music: ‘chops’ and ‘clashes’.

“Fortunately, heavy on the bass. Producing breakbeats that roll through Sydney’s nascent post-punk scene, reflects our interview’s position, perhaps, for someone who’s spent a year, until it got too much battling the squatting. Four of us moved out around the corner, into another squat, where we lived for over seven years, outlasting The Gunnery. In fact, some of the soon-to-be Vibe Tribe guys moved into the place next door to us, although at that time they were all anarcho-punks and not at all into electronic music.”

It’s evidence that from very early on, there was an explicit link between warehouse spaces and the emerging music scene in Sydney. A link that cemented with time, from the post-punk and experimental music early ‘80s to rave. As Ben Byrne noted in a recent essay, musicians, addicts and criminals, sometimes dressed as Easter bunnies, skipping around, to see some obscure music played, but that’s not the immediate audience. They give a mixture of all of the above. People got caught up in the highs and lows.

As the Gunnery ebbed, collectives like Clan Analogue and Jekyll heads pulled up the slack. “I think the biggest change occurred in the last, Lanfranchi’s, closed. That’s a real pity.”

“After the Gunnery shut, there were still interesting rented warehouse spaces around Sydney,” says Scot. “But I hear that the last, Lanfranchi’s, closed. That’s a real pity, because these spaces always gave the interesting stuff a place to be performed.”

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“when the big dance parties hit their stride - as opposed to electronic music that you might dance to. A lot of venues either shut down their stages for poker machines or turned into music venues powered by DJs. Both those things pushed live electronic music to the margin.”

“Clan Analogue was formed in part as a reaction against this trend - a way to promote local electronic music, particularly stuff that wasn’t techno... cheesecake? I guess that might be a word to describe it, that’s why I joined, around the time of EP2. It was pretty exciting. I think over time, Clan and all its - directly and indirectly - were quite successful at championing this scene.”

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“On the other hand, what becomes ‘popular’ is, in a sense, vastly more controlled than before. Look at some of those Countdown specials that Rage runs around the new year. "It seems to fit into the spaces between other music like drum’n’bass, minimal electronic and dubstep, and rock like Bowie or Roxy Music, lots of reggae, rock like the Rolling Stones. Lots of electronic music, both modern, like dubstep, and more nostalgic, like Kraftwerk." Scott downloaded tracks and DJ mixes, then mail- orders vinyl takes him fancy, though he recently shifted to buying MP3s to save on shipping costs. Whatever the format, Brisbane’s sun and surf brand t-shirts are a long way from London. “Well” starts Scott, “Queensland seems to have this sound fascination with alternative music, from punks and goths, and so on, right through to the scene. I think it’s because there’s a really seedy underside to the whole sun’n’surf and Aussie hoiligan thing that infests this place. It’s really mainstream Australia in a way you can almost totally insulated from inner-city Sydney nowadays, especially if you’ve got any money. So there’s a side of me that wants to push back against that other, to confine it with something that doesn’t gel with its own value.”

“When I came up, I guess I realised I could continue on in a happy little bubble of my own making, reggae’s really big up here, or I could challenge myself a little and stretch out in different directions.” Inspired by the city’s well established industrial goth community, his music got darker. That darkness, and dubstep’s inherent and calculated use of repetition, must make it a challenging sound in a place like Brisbane. Despite this, there’s a thriving community of DJs pushing the sound. “It seems to fit into the spaces between other music like drum’n’bass, minimal electronic and dubstep, and rock like Bowie or Roxy Music, lots of reggae, rock like the Rolling Stones. Lots of electronic music, both modern, like dubstep, and more nostalgic, like Kraftwerk.”

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The Dark Arts of Dub

“...is called the Dark Arts of Dub.”

“The Dark Arts of Dub is 12-inch is available through Vinyl Factory Distribution, or online from Trans.com.au. The Horse, He Sick blog can be found at moduleautonomous.org/music. If the level of detailed arrangements packed into the 12 albums tracked reflected the scope of Underlapper’s creative ambition in the studio, then that same factor is also...”

“S t o n e - B a s e d SiX P i e c e uN d e r l a p p e r F i r s t d e b u t • A r r o w h e a d s • t h e C e n t r a l L o c k o f s c h o o l f r i e n d s M A R C CH O M I C K, M A T T F U R N E L, M O R G A N C O U L L, S I M O N D H, C R E G s T O N E a n d S I M O N T Y T T Y COLLABORATE, WHO FUSED THEIR DIVERSE INFLUENCES ON THEIR GROUP JAMMING SESSIONS OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS. bY T H E 2 0 0 6 t h e y h a d r o l l e d O U T A R R O W h e a d s, A L F L a t e x a N d s, k a T e a n d T y t t h e R E M a r k a b l e c o n c e r t, u p o n i t s R e l e a s e, w h a t c a m e f o r t h... I M M E D I A T E L Y S T O o d A s A R E C O R D, A C H A R A C T E R I S T I C L Y D I F F E R E N T F E E L t o M A N Y o f t h e O T H E R aRTiST S P O L U T A T iN g F E R A L M E D i A S A R C U L A R L Y L E F T F i E L D-E L E C T R O N i C F o r m s. M O D E R N M U S i C, P E R h A P S M O S T n o t e W o r t h y d u e t o i t s P R O M I N E N T I N C O R P O R A t i o n o f H i p-H o p d r a w n e L e M E N T S.”
arguably a barrier the band were forced to
work through in order to arrive at their
intricate works to a live setting. Indeed, by all
accounts these same difficulties emerged during the live performance of tracks from What Came Forth Red Spring, a new album
 supposedly a won’t be added to by the rest of the band. "The songs from the last album were usually written by one or two members and then added to by the rest of the band."

"Whereas, this time around, we were able to focus on our individual parts and decide what was needed in a song before the foundations were set," Greg continues. "There are some songs on this album which were written by playing together and juggling on particular ideas. Then, there are others which started as ideas from one or two members in the group, and were then looked at by all of us to decide what the song needed."

Underlapper have already had several opportunities to perform Red Spring live in both Sydney and Canberra and they have worked well. "The shows so far have been very positive," says Greg. "We seem to get a good response from the new material and once the album is released we will be taking it down to Melbourne to play a couple of shows and hopefully we will get back down to Canberra over the next few months. As well as playing a Feral Media showcase in the sound lounge at the Seymour Centre in early July alongside Barrage and S A duo School Of Two (who both have upcoming releases on the label), we are also planning an official Sydney album launch at the moment."

"I guess one of our constant struggles is just trying to fit on the stage," Greg confesses. "We have played plenty of venues where we are cramped and spend most of the gig running into each other. Apart from that, trying to get everyone together is always a task, although we seem to have a pretty good routine at the moment."

"Feral Media have given us plenty of room to work with creatively and have always been supportive of what we are doing. Hopefully, the band will continue to grow and gain the recognition it deserves. We need more people like them who are willing to take the experiment and take a chance on music that may not appeal to everyone, but deserves the attention of those wishing to seek it out."

Red Spring is available through Feral Media/Fuse Distribution.

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"I live in the hills. I’m the anti-networking guy," says Greg. "For the artists and people that I’ve grown close with over the past few years, I see myself as a dark womb for new ideas."

"I’ve been interested in the dark womb concept for a long time and it’s something that no one else is doing. “ Snog’s Tom Waits, Nick Cave and Swans. "I think the only way you can get excited about art is to draw on the extravagant conspiratorial work of these two key projects seemed to overwhelm the listener with the power and profundity of art school. "Even if you’re doing dark or intense stuff, there should be some joy about it, because you’re grasping the insane, important stuff of life."

The group combined the timbres of European EBM artists like Front 242 with the more percussive songwriting approach of Tom Waits, Nick Cave and Swans. "I think the only way you can get excited about art is to draw on the extravagant conspiratorial work of these two key projects seemed to overwhelm the listener with the power and profundity of art school. "Even if you’re doing dark or intense stuff, there should be some joy about it, because you’re grasping the insane, important stuff of life."

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was the intrinsic explanation. Do I have a reasonable one incredible for that scientific, rational gets better all the time. The universe is just on this linear path of progress, so everything fit with capitalism – ‘survival of the fittest, either. “I’m highly suspicious of evolution, that he doesn’t buy the obvious alternative against intelligent design theory, insisting recent song ‘De-evolutionaries’ as a paean is strong, he’s no reflex left wing reactionary. my mind. If I told you, you wouldn’t believe about myself, but the thought has crossed matter rings true for the corporate slave suggest, perhaps, that some of his subject these fans are, or what their positions are, and that he doesn’t make it up. “We have hardcore fans who are in quite powerful situations.” This suggest, perhaps, that some of his subject matter rings true for the corporate slave masters “I don’t want to get too excited about myself, but the thought has crossed my mind. If I told you, you wouldn’t believe it. It’s anonymous.” While Thrussell’s anti-capitalist sentiment is strong, he no reflex left wing reactionary he did dispel an interpretation of Stong’s recent song ‘De-evolutionaries’ as a pursane against intelligent design theory; insisting that he doesn’t buy the obvious alternative either. “I’m highly suspicious of evolution, because there’s too much of an ideological fit with capitalism – survival of the fittest, the fittest have the right to live while the weak just watch this linear path of progress, so everything gets better all the time. The universe is just too incredible for that scientific, rational explanation. Do I have a reasonable alternative to suggest? I’m comfortable with acknowledging that I am too limited to understand. In fact, it’s one of the things that gives me hope, that the universe is enormous and unfathomable. One of the central ideas behind Faecal Juggernaut was the intrinsic problem of trying to be an honest person in a corrupt market. For Thrussell, this contradiction is most blatant in his reliance on technology to convey his message. “I can stand up and yell at the top of my lungs, ‘I’m a hipster’. They’re the tools available: They’re the only ones I can use.” Naturally, the dilemma extends to his position of respect in an industry he openly scorns. “It’s caused me to lay awake at night. As much as you think you’re honest, you’re part of the market. Our motives are sincere but it’s difficult not to reflect on the fact that we’re involved in this.”

So, how does he sleep? “I’ve nearly thrown in the towel many times, but a pragmatic voice pipes up and asks ‘what the hell are you going to do?’ The only things that really interest me are these things that really interest me are these artistic pursuits. If you’re making art, you clearly feel that it has something important to say (if) you don’t share it publicly and are completely sitting in a cave, and I’m halfway there, you can never really make things better or different.”

Thrussell insists his relationships with labels have been amicable for the most part – with a notable exception. “Black Lung was on a real scaldfag label that didn’t pay me properly. In 1997, I was playing a whole load of Black Lung shows in Europe. I thought ‘has anyone ever bought a Black Lung record in Italy?’ Then I go to Italy and I’m headlining these shows for free. “I didn’t, one of the things I was doing interviews on the TV with my own translator! Every interview, they ask me ‘What’s it like having a rave hit all across Europe?’ And I’d go ‘I don’t know. What’s inside?’

As it turned out, Black Lung single ‘The More Confusion… The More Profit’ is a re-working of forgotten crows across the continent. ‘In retrospect, a highly ironic title, but for none of us was thinking of the continent at the time.’

At the same time as he was exploring technique with Black Lung, Thrussell formed Soma with Snog collaborator Porter Bourke as an outlet for stylings influenced by electronic records. The first release collected his Omni Recording Corporation label and has overseen the re-release of the work of a dozen artists who are a world away from the established cliches of the genre.

“They’re quite challenging. People have this bias that country is about intolerance. The work unethered through Thrussell is far from conservative, and highlights what Thrussell sees as an important lost tradition. ‘Before the age of now, when people just watch television, poor white people had a culture. You could get a strong sense of it. Some of it is quite radical. For example, Jimmy Driftwood has a song called ‘My Church’ which is a nature worshipping ode dressed in flimsy Christian garb. He’s singing about how nature is his temple. ’”

The Omnus release schedule yields some tantalizing titles and lavish cover art. Porter Wagner was the first to champion a young Dolly Parton and is still active as a recording artist, but had a deal with geniuses who were languishing as deleted vinyl titles. The lyrics of Wager’s ‘Rubber Room’ would not be out of place on a long album, a padded cell is depicted as a happy haven to the ill of the modern world. When they come to take Porter away, they find him ‘screaming pretty words, trying to make them rhyme’. Other highlights include The Operative Mind of John D. Lownard, a Nashville psyche-pop opus written by one whose songs wormed themselves into the catalogues of Johnny Cash, Laibach and Jeeves, and a collection of genuine country hits and zen moments from Henson Cargill, has manifested in another way. He’s tackled an epic, electronic re-release of the work of a dozen artists who are a world away from the established cliches of the genre.

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Paying homage to the mining town of Victoria’s_suitable industrial dance-floor wrecking epic, ‘Coming Down’ envisaged the plight of the people in this situation. “They’re quite challenging. People have this bias that country is about intolerance. The work unethered through Thrussell is far from conservative, and highlights what Thrussell sees as an important lost tradition. ‘Before the age of now, when people just watch television, poor white people had a culture. You could get a strong sense of it. Some of it is quite radical. For example, Jimmy Driftwood has a song called ‘My Church’ which is a nature worshipping ode dressed in flimsy Christian garb. He’s singing about how nature is his temple.’”

Not content with two active projects and a thriving re-issue imprint, Thrussell’s latest project takes Song’s sonic assault on over-hyped consumer culture a step further. The Enemy spins into diabolical pop music (sample lyric: ‘It takes a special kind of psychotic to bomb the living fuck out of Iraq’), for which Thrussell has proposed his label this good-looking томагавк to mime in the videos while he relaxes, Strengarian, behind the curtain. “I’ll work much better than having grumpy old men in there. We’ll see if they take it on. Meanwhile, he stays bunkered in his hillside cave, with children’s new song material in preparation for a forthcoming album. Thrussell remains a man of unlikelihood to be.”
TULLAMARINE AIRPORT, MELBOURNE, 1975: WARREN BURT said he was driven to "working on his cassette recorder by a custom official. Inserting a tape of his own compositions, the airport is created with a..."

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Page 21
continually

TO COST YOU $1000. A GOOD LAPTOP THAT IS SUITABLE
QUALITY SOUND PRODUCING INSTRUMENT YOU
STARTING OUT, WHAT IS THE CHEAPEST HIGH
performances with Nagorcka illustrates the
and Nagorcka’s duo, all played regularly
Ros Bandt and Plastic Platypus, Burt
no money would be involved. Anyone could
denizens of the Melbourne scene could
musicians, artists and the multifarious
the Council of Adult Education in Melbourne doing
distance strange projects. When I left Latrobe in 1981, I got a job at
hundreds of musicians did we interact with? How many arts
until 1994. Once again, it was totally unfunded, but how
they had gotten any money. They said: ‘Nobody wants
and Andrew Preston were in charge. They found that a
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friendly, like you were talking. It couldn’t be hiding behind a

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THE TECHNOLOGY TODAY IS UBIQUITOUS, CHEAP AND AVAILABLE FOR EXAMPLE, FOR A YOUNG MUSICIAN STARTING OUT, WHAT IS THE CHEAPEST HIGH QUALITY SOUND PRODUCING INSTRUMENT YOU CAN HAVE THE COMPUTER, IT'S CHEAPER THAN A GUITAR & DEFF IN FEATURES SO... A GOOD LAPTOP THAT IS SUITABLE TO GET YOU BACK ABOUT $900-950."

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“Making a record is probably one of the times in your life that you feel good about being a musician, you feel excited about it, you know what you’re doing,” Tony says.

“Gaps are so transient and there’s so much other stuff involved. But actually just focusing on the music and trying to understand the music and understand the person… It’s a pretty beautiful and interesting process.”

When Tony says he is trying to “understand the person,” he is talking not only about the many and varied guests who appear on Saddleback records, but also his work as a producer for other recording artists such as Holly Throsby, Jack Ladder and the Woods Themselves.

“I guess because people come out of their environment and into my environment, that probably helps them focus on what they’re doing. Working somewhere you feel good and focused into my environment, that probably helps them focus on what they’re doing. Working somewhere you feel good and focused into my environment, that probably helps them focus on what they’re doing.”

Tony says, “Gigs are so transient and there’s so much other stuff involved. But actually just focusing on the music and trying to understand the music and understand the person… It’s a pretty beautiful and interesting process.”

For Tony, it’s not so much the perceived environment seems to have an effect on I’m feeling, and also where I’m living – the environment seems to have an effect on it all.”

For Tony, it’s not so much the perceived quality of the studio gear that’s important, it’s more about the process - and that is all about setting the scene.

“When I make records I don’t think too-consciously about what I’m trying to do. It’s more a situation of improvising; it’s more about playing and then pulling it together, making it work together. I try to make it as natural as I can.”

Saddleback is a pleasantly simple and functional project. Tony is the driving force; his improvised audio sculpting combines with the performances of various guests, who nearly always contribute acoustic instruments.

“I buy instruments I find interesting, and they just get played, poorly, but I pull it together. I get a bass clarinet after the last record. That’s been a lot of fun”.

Both Saddleback albums were recorded using a combination of digital and analogue gear, but Tony’s preference certainly lays in the tape and microphone realm.

“The environment is so beautiful and so relaxing. It informs the recordings, because you’re in a position to focus on the exclusion of everything else,” Tony says.

“I think the things that affect the music most are the instrument choices and how I’m feeling, and also where I’m living – the environment seems to have an effect on it all.”

Tony’s preference certainly lays in the tape and microphone realm. “I’m in a house with nice rooms; I like piano, lute and it just came about just from playing and seeing what worked.”

“Sometimes there’s already players involved, sometimes not, and I am the player, or we pull people in. So it’s really just collaboration and trying to be on the same page. I don’t really plan things too much in terms of arrangements and things.”

Recording an album can be an open-ended process, depending on the skills and working practices of the artist who is involved. There are so many options available to an artist who is ready to record, even on a tight budget, that unless some focus, deadlines and discipline are applied, the journey from ideas to a completed album can literally take years.

Tony Dupe’s appearance of working with other artists to create recordings has been dependent on the artist’s preferred method of working. “Sometimes there’s already players involved, sometimes not, and I am the player, or we pull people in. It’s really just collaboration and trying to be on the same page. I don’t really plan things too much in terms of arrangements and things.”

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These familiar with the work of Animal Collective – especially those who have witnessed their astonishingly loose, instinctual live performances – will not be entirely surprised by the spirit that moves through Person Pitch. Sweeping and bending, shifting tempos and displacing harmonies with a flicker. Panda Bear, known more prosaically as Noah Lennox, incorporates a medley of influences from Basic Channel to Black Dice (both name-checked in the album’s liner notes) without ever sounding contrived. The arrangements are complex but not formidable, built upon spare vocal layers, and samples that echo and melt as if they had been sucked out from damp tunnels. It’s a tension between the oceans and the airbourne, the half-submerged and the sun-kissed. It’s best expressed on the glorious ‘Take Pill(s), which begins with several obtuse, competing rhythms and a lysergic, reverb-drenched sample, shaking itself dry with a celebratory, looping chorus – a fact that any decent 60s pop group would have been proud to call its own.

For me as a listener there might be a real space, but there’s also a totally dream-like, fantastic space that the record has as well. And that comes through visually. I don’t feel like it would be impossible for that not to come out somehow. Do you think that’s what I set out to do? I don’t really have any agenda or schedule with it; I was without deadlines. I didn’t have to be doing it if I didn’t want to. How do this apply to your solo albums? Do you view them quite separately or do you think there’s something that ties them together?

Well, I think the approach I’ve taken for everything I’ve ever done is that I always like the music to be an accurate reflection of the things I care about. And that’s never changed, really. Obviously with Young Prayer I was written after a significant death. I tried to be as positive as I could about the experience of making the album. Whereas with this one it was a mixture of making a conscious decision to try and do something that was way more casual – that didn’t take itself quite so seriously, I guess – and also wanting to reflect what’s happened to us in the past couple of years. I feel like I’m a whole lot more personal, much more positive. And the environment I live in is a super, sunny place, so I think it was a mixture of making a conscious decision to do something casual – that didn’t take itself quite so seriously, I guess – and also wanting to reflect what’s happened to us over the past couple of years. I feel like that it would be impossible for that not to come out somehow.

Well, it’s a way of side-stepping people’s expectations. People can never second-guess what you’re going to do if you keep doing something different.

Yeah, we keep people on their toes.

Firstly, how have you felt about the reaction to the album so far? Everyone is just in love with it.

It’s pretty mind boggling, I certainly wasn’t expecting anything like it at all. That’s not to say that I thought the album was shitty – I mean, I was happy with it, but I didn’t think it was anything extra special. I’m really glad that people have liked it.

Do you make it a bit nervous that everyone has taken it to heart so quickly? Or is it just exciting?

It’s more that I know that I’ll probably get slapped pretty hard the next time around. You can’t keep these things going for more than a brief period of time: looking back at history, that’s the way these things work. So I’m bracing myself to get seriously slammed.

Do you feel like that’s ever happened with Animal Collective or touring with Animal Collective and I had free time, I’d work on it. I never really had any agenda or schedule with it; I was without deadlines. I didn’t have to be doing it if I didn’t want to.

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For me as a listener there might be a real space, but there’s also a totally dream-like, fantastic space that the record has as well. And that comes through visually.

I feel like a lot of my favourite music is music that takes the edge off reality in some ways, and again that’s not something that I consciously set out to do, but I feel like it’s my sensibility with music and with sound, to try and make it feel like I’m dreaming – or it sounds chorus – like some kind of alternate reality.

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Do you think that Lieber was the place you were trying to evoke on the record, or was it some place different? Because there’s the place where you record an album, which obviously has an impact on the sound, but then there’s the place that you’re trying to evoke.

I don’t know that that’s what I set out to do; I wasn’t really trying to capture this place. But at the same time I was referencing experiences and thoughts that I’ve had while I’ve been here, so I was trying to represent this place in a roundabout way.

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to be, so I was only making music when I wanted to be making music.

And it took a couple of years to put together, is that right?

Yeah, only did it a song at a time. One of the reasons is that I never really had a chunk of time when I could do it on it, but also I figured that if I worked on it a song at a time, and put out one single at a time, then all the songs would be as strong as each other.

Was there a point when you were putting out the angles where you realised that it was going to be an album? Or was it always going to be an album from the start?

I kind of knew that it was going to be an album from the beginning. The first song, which was ‘Search For Delicious’, came out with a magazine, and I wasn’t sure at the time that I was going to use that song, but everything after that I knew that it was going to be an album. The first song, which was ‘Search For Delicious’, and put out one single at a time, then all the songs would be as strong as each other.

I didn’t really have any other song that sounds quite like this one on the album, but that was the inspiration for the artwork, that we were trying to make it symmetrical like that.

The artwork is incredibly elaborate. And when I was reading some other interviews with you, you were talking about the fact that you don’t necessarily listen to music all the time –

Yeah.

-- So I was wondering about other influences on the record, visual influences and things that are non-musical, which you were showing us.

It’s mostly – almost exclusively I think – my relationships with people and things around me that are the most influential, as far as any other stuff goes. It’s hard to point out specific examples, but I guess the point is that I’m not really art-type stuff that has an impact. My family is definitely a major inspiration and an influence on me.

I don’t think about it that way, but that’s true. Each half is like a mirror image.

I don’t know if you’ve got the artwork for the album, but that was the inspiration for the artwork, that we were trying to make it symmetrical like that.

Was it hard to sequence the album, once you had all these individual tracks, or did it feel like the whole thing worked together?

It was a little bit difficult. I feel like I stumbled upon the sequencing in a really lucky way, and for me it worked really well since I felt like it felt good. I tried to be symmetrical about it, in terms of the lengths of the songs, and that’s ultimately how I put it together. ‘I’m Not’ at the centre of it, and then long songs like ‘Good Girl/Careless’ and ‘Bros’. Then medium-length songs, and you keep going out to tracks like ‘Take Pills’ and ‘Search For Delicious’, which are the shorter songs. I had it in my head visually that it’s really technical and stupid, but it’s true.

I didn’t think about that at all, but that’s true. Each half is like a mirror image.

I don’t know if you’ve got the artwork for the album, but that was the inspiration for the artwork, that we were trying to make it symmetrical like that.

And this goes back to what you were talking about before, that you think of each record you make as a reflection of where you’re at, at the time. Does that make it easier to go back to each record once a few years have passed, or do they start to feel distant?

I hardly ever listen to them after they’ve done. But I think that also has to do with the fact that you spend so much time writing the songs, practicing the songs, playing the songs, recording the songs and then mixing the songs that by the end of the process you’re sick of it. By living through the material so much you’ve actually distanced yourself from it. Person Pitch is kind of an exception to that, in that even though I spent a whole lot of time doing each song. I had space in between the single releases so that when I came back to listen to it again it still had some sort of fresh quality for me. I may find myself listening to this one more.

Have you played much of the album yet?

As I was going along [recording], I’d play a show every once in a while, and play all the songs that I was writing. Just recently I’ve been putting in the effort to do what I guess are ‘official’ Person Pitch shows. I’ve taken a lot of the songs plus a couple of newer things and jumbled it up. Songs like ‘Take Pills’ and ‘Bros’, I’ve split them up and arranged them differently, to try and keep it new. It’s kind of hard.

And how are you doing that live, are you using sampling?

Yeah, I have two samplers and a microphone. It’s quite a bit more stripped down than the album sounds like, it’s kind of hard. I feel like it’s a little more aggressive and a little more esoteric. I feel like the album is easier to follow than a lot of the shows are, for better or worse.

Are people dancing at the live shows?

There were a couple of people who were dancing the other night. I don’t really lift up my eyes too much when I’m playing, and I do I don’t really notice what’s going on.

I think because it’s such a danceable record in so many ways -

Oh, thanks.

It is, and it’s fitting I listen to it, especially with a song like ‘Carrots’, I have a vision of it being blasted through an enormous sound system.

That was totally my dream for it when it was released, that it would be played in a club system, and hopefully people are dancing [laughs], not just listening.

Well it’s certainly a contact that I’ve been missing out on. And a few people have talked about it in terms of dance music, for instance the Basic Channel connection?

With something like Basic Channel I definitely want to move around to that kind of stuff, but it’s not really danceable in any way. There’s such a dreamy sweetness to it, I definitely want to move but I don’t want to get too hectic about it, do you know what I mean? There’s something private about that music, when you’re doing it, it’s a private, personal experience. Maybe that’s just me.

I think that’s true, and that’s maybe because a lot of it is so sparse. Whereas with Person Pitch it feels like – and you see this another way – there are so many parts to it, and with your vocals being multi-tracked it sounds crowded, and it makes me think that music, when you’re dancing to it, it’s a tribal thing? Whereas with Basic Channel, it’s much more stripped back.

I see what you mean. Thinking about it now there’s some kind of narcotic [to the album], very subliminal but still raison. I’m thinking about the latter part of ‘Take Pills’ where the percussion is bouncing off each other and it sounds like a crowd.

I wanted to ask about the list of influences, like Basic Channel, that appear on the inside of the album cover. It’s always really exciting to hear something that you like and then to start tracing back the influences on it, so I was wondering if that had ever happened to you, whether you’ve ever heard something that you really liked and then started to trace where it’s come from?

Yeah, for me. Two things spring to mind immediately. One is The Orb. I think I can safely say that they were the first electronic music that I ever heard. I was about 17 and I moved into this kid’s room, and he had left a whole bunch of music behind, and it just blew my mind. I sort of had a vague sense

"IT’S QUITE A BIT MORE STRIPPED DOWN THAN THE ALBUM SOUNDS. IT’S SIMILAR, BUT I FEEL LIKE IT’S A LITTLE MORE AGGRESSIVE AND A LITTLE MORE ESOTERIC. I FEEL LIKE THE ALBUM IS EASIER TO FOLLOW THAN A LOT OF THE SHOWS ARE. FOR BETTER OR WORSE."
of what techno was and what house music sounded like, but it was from there that I went back into the world of electronic music. And something like Daft Punk, worked in the same way, where it really hit home for me. Because that was the experience it was supposed to evoke. I feel like you’re supposed to experience that music with lots of other people and you’re really supposed to feel it in your body. There was a period of five or six years where I was learning about that.

I was interested to read that you found a lot of the samples for the album on iTunes and stuff like that, just grabbing bits from different places. Was it fun or was it frustrating to travel through a universe of music, trying to find the sounds that you wanted?

I think that I didn’t really know what I wanted: it was more that I got what I got. And you never expect that at all. I mean, Animal Collective has got it a little bit, especially with Jung Songs, because of the multi-tracked vocals and the multi-part harmony and that kind of stuff. I assumed that I’d get a lot of dub references [from critics], and maybe a little bit of Buddy Holly and that. ’60s, early ’70s pop rock, but definitely not the Beach Boys, specifically. It makes me feel a little bit displaced in myself, especially, that I didn’t think that was going to be a problem for me. I think I got a lot of the dub references [from critics], and maybe a little bit of Buddy Holly and that. ’60s, early ’70s pop rock, but definitely not the Beach Boys, specifically. It makes me feel a little bit displaced in myself, especially, that I didn’t think that was going to be a problem for me.

You say that you’re disappointed in yourself for not picking up on it more and stuff like that. Was it something to do with you, or was it something to do with the way you were affecting people?

Yeah. What I mean to say is that you’re supposed to feel it in your body. There are a lot of interesting things about that. One is that a lot of people get bummed out because they don’t understand the words on Person Pitch, and how that takes away from the way it sounds in a church. There are a lot of interesting things about that. One is that a lot of people get bummed out because they don’t understand the words on Person Pitch, and how that takes away from the way it sounds in a church. There are a lot of interesting things about that. One is that a lot of people get bummed out because they don’t understand the words on Person Pitch, and how that takes away from the way it sounds in a church.

It’s also interesting that it of comes as that way - like the Beach Boys, to people listening to complex house music is something really annoying. It’s kind of crazy to me that people can have the same feelings about two very different kinds of music. I feel like a really good way of understanding what’s going on here is to understand what philosophy is. And that’s the easy way to understand what’s going on here is to understand what philosophy is.
He’s also starred in and scored a major motion picture, American Ultra, and has a creative CV that makes most people tired just reading it. Learning fiddle at the age of three, and recording/performance since the age of seven, Sam has been involved musically with The Amidon Family, Popcorn Behaviour/Assembly, Downeast, Stars Like Fins, New Muddy, Childplay, Wild Apparatus, Sierra, Markant James, Stompin’ Egan, Billy Budd, Tall Fires, Elysan Fields and Ego Contact, to name quite a few. His latest album, Proved Falsehearted and homespun album released on respected Plug Research label is the honest newest release for the much lauded and critically acclaimed albums Journeywork and Strangest dream. By Messing around with and sometimes changing the chords and arrangements, and the album unconsciously grew out of that with no real intention to record..."I BEGAN TRYING DIFFERENT HARMONIC IDEAS BY MESSING AROUND WITH AND SOMETIMES CHANGING THE CHORDS AND ARRANGEMENTS, AND THE ALBUM UNCONSCIOUSLY GREW OUT OF THAT WITH NO REAL INTENTION TO RECORD..."

Taking a dip into a rich heritage of American folk music and following trailblazing musical archaeologists Alan Lomax and Harry Smith, Sam and childhood friend Thomas Bartlett uncovered 12 Appalachian folk gems as well as a childhood friend Thomas Bartlett uncovered Lomax and Harry Smith, Sam Amidon and American folk music and following Proved Falsehearted and homespun album released on respected Plug Research label is the honest newest release for the much lauded and critically acclaimed albums Journeywork and Strangest dream. By Messing around with and sometimes changing the chords and arrangements, and the album unconsciously grew out of that with no real intention to record..."I BEGAN TRYING DIFFERENT HARMONIC IDEAS BY MESSING AROUND WITH AND SOMETIMES CHANGING THE CHORDS AND ARRANGEMENTS, AND THE ALBUM UNCONSCIOUSLY GREW OUT OF THAT WITH NO REAL INTENTION TO RECORD..."

Not only was Sam blessed by having many of three, and recording/performing since the age of seven, Sam has been involved musically with The Amidon Family, Popcorn Behaviour/Assembly, Downeast, Stars Like Fins, New Muddy, Childplay, Wild Apparatus, Sierra, Markant James, Stompin’ Egan, Billy Budd, Tall Fires, Elysan Fields and Ego Contact, to name quite a few. His latest album, Proved Falsehearted and homespun album released on respected Plug Research label is the honest newest release for the much lauded and critically acclaimed albums Journeywork and Strangest dream. By Messing around with and sometimes changing the chords and arrangements, and the album unconsciously grew out of that with no real intention to record..."I BEGAN TRYING DIFFERENT HARMONIC IDEAS BY MESSING AROUND WITH AND SOMETIMES CHANGING THE CHORDS AND ARRANGEMENTS, AND THE ALBUM UNCONSCIOUSLY GREW OUT OF THAT WITH NO REAL INTENTION TO RECORD..."

Fiddle music runs freely throughout the New England heartland of Vermont, and the Amidon family are a strong lifeline in that movement’s heritage. Both Sam’s parents, Peter and Mary Alice Amidon are performers and teachers of music. Growing up in this solid environment with strong family ties must certainly set the scene for Sam’s musical trajectory.

“I grew up in a small town called Brattleboro, I lived there along with my friend Thomas who produced the Chicken project came about when I started exploring songs I had heard my parents sing, or stuff from old field recordings as a way of learning the guitar and singing my voice. I began trying different harmonic ideas by messing around with and sometimes changing the chords and arrangements, and the album unconsciously grew out of that with no real intention to record, it was really just a way to reconstruct them entirely. Instead, he makes versions of these old tunes, nor does he think about. It was incredible.”

“I called him up and he was really sweet guy. "Around this time I started buying random old brothers on drums, Popcorn Behaviour released their self titled debut album, Sam doesn’t attempt straight cover versions of these old tunes, nor does he think about. It was incredible. ”

“It was incredible. “Around this time I started buying random old field recordings as a way of learning the guitar and singing my voice. I began trying different harmonic ideas by messing around with and sometimes changing the chords and arrangements, and the album unconsciously grew out of that with no real intention to record, it was really just a way to reconstruct them entirely. Instead, he makes versions of these old tunes, nor does he think about. It was incredible. ”

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“Growing up, I mostly played the fiddle and sang with my parent’s group, performing concerts here and there as well as singing in choirs. It wasn’t until my voice broke that I was able to sing along properly, so I concentrated on playing fiddle and it was mainly Irish and New England folk music. Then in high school, Thomas and I had a band that performed the place, again playing folk music,” The band Sam refers to is Popcorn Behaviour, later to be renamed Assembly. Originally formed when Sam and Thomas were entering their teen years, and accompanied by a bunch of ageing hippies who settled there some time ago and as lot of folk music being played in that area, up in the hills, “Sam explains. “There’s a pretty rural place, I didn’t grow up in the woods or anything but he was further up in the hills,” said Sam. “There’s a lot of folk music being played in that area, up in the hills. Tommy and I lived there along with my friend Thomas who produced the Chicken project came about when I started exploring songs I had heard my parents sing, or stuff from old field recordings as a way of learning the guitar and singing my voice. I began trying different harmonic ideas by messing around with and sometimes changing the chords and arrangements, and the album unconsciously grew out of that with no real intention to record, it was really just a way to reconstruct them entirely. Instead, he makes versions of these old tunes, nor does he think about. It was incredible. ”

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“Growing up, I mostly played the
for an artform that is obviously a huge part of its life. I’m inspired to the sense of responsibility in carrying on the lineage and the essence of the stories when presenting these songs in a new audience.

“I’m not sure about the notion of carrying this material with a lot of them but also in this totally different context.”

Let’s forget for the other cog in the Sam Amidon wheel, Sam’s childhood pal Thomas Bartlett. Bartlett has been a driving force in Sam’s life and also a member of some of the many groups that Sam has played with over the years. I haven’t heard much output from Sam’s other projects, save the odd MP3 file hosted on various websites, but he alternated with some early choral music with a choir – it was a blast. It was terrible weather that night, a real blizzard swept the city, but the show was sold out, at full capacity and was a really wonderful evening. I was terrified! The piece will be on the next record for Bedroom Community. The version is ragged in edge and expressive, going through permutations along the way.

“I’m actually leaving for Iceland today to complete another record similar to the Chicken project, but with those guys in their studio which I’m very excited about. I have no idea how it will end up sounding, as we’ve said it will end up sounding without hearing what the other person is doing. Tomorrow morning, we’re going to shove it all into the machine and see what comes out. My role and the source material is pretty similar – it’s all folk songs.”

“Nico Muhly and I went to Iceland last October where we played a concert as the Iceland’s 20th anniversary. It was a blast. It was terrible weather that night, a real blizzard swept the city, but the show was sold out at full capacity and was a really wonderful evening. I was terrified. The piece will be on the next record for Bedroom Community — the version is ragged in edge and expressive, going through permutations along the way.”

“It’s all folk songs.”
I had noticed with pleasure, in a recent magazine article, that Sam had composed the title track of his new album, but he was working on another project, and I was glad to get the chance to talk to him about it. He was happy to share the details of his recent work, and I was impressed by his dedication to his craft.

One track from the album seems to be a response to the solitude of being alone a lot. Thomas had noticed with pleasure, in a recent magazine article, that Sam had composed the title track of his new album, but he was working on another project, and I was glad to get the chance to talk to him about it. He was happy to share the details of his recent work, and I was impressed by his dedication to his craft.

For one so young, and seemingly tireless, I was glad to get the chance to talk to him about his recent work. He was happy to share the details of his recent work, and I was impressed by his dedication to his craft.

A central figure of the international sound art clique over the last decade, working on something and I go outside and it's winter. I don't know what that is yet. I just like to keep busy and to be able to pay the rent making good music here and there. I was glad to get the chance to talk to him about his recent work. He was happy to share the details of his recent work, and I was impressed by his dedication to his craft.

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which you kind of do, again, in our kind of lovely. “But the actual landscape is just very green and sounds like an inane thing to say. But I think you can really hear and you really notice when you don’t. You know, and recording a Peel Session in 1998, I disagree. But obviously, you know, it’s technology isn’t organic at all, but even by the fact that you record it means you’ve failed. ”

“Obviously I grew up with a lot of space, which you kind of do, again, in our kind of countries. Everything’s kind of very spread out and you can really see the sky and living in London – I really like London – but you don’t really see the sky much. Which kind of sounds like an untrue thing to say. But I think when you’ve had something like that, you really notice when you don’t. You know, and London is a very green city – there are lots of parks and a lot of trees and the sort of a concrete jungle – but you just don’t have that view or that horizon. I think I kind of realise in that it actually really like that.”

“Yeah, I think it’s definitely the purest expression so far, “ she says. “I think that’s what the record plays, the more the tracks unfold, “ she offers. “I mean, I really like that you can really make a tenuous link that maybe it’s a bit like the savannah, and it makes me feel quite uncomfortable, computer-enabled visions is emotionally detached electronic textures and shattered beats, her latest effort sees her embrace an international contemporary art community’s obsession with urban space in her compositions.

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Indeed, Passamonte’s work even invites comparisons to visual and sculptural art’s antithesis – couldn’t be further from the savannah, and it makes me feel quite uncomfortable, computer-enabled visions is emotionally detached electronic textures and shattered beats, her latest effort sees her embrace an international contemporary art community’s obsession with urban space in her compositions.

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“Photography is really a case of learning to use your tool and understanding your tool, and understanding that – depending on your knowledge of that tool – the picture you can take vary so much. All that kind of stuff really helped me learn to deal with computer interfaces for music; realising that you don’t have to fight against it, that you can enjoy what technology can do for you. It can be an extension of you, like a brush for a painter or something.”

This synthesis between artist and apparatus rings truer than ever on new album Eyes Set Against the Sun. Where her previous works focused on the generic, emotionally detached electronic textures and shattered beats, her latest effort sees her embrace an international contemporary art community’s obsession with urban space in her compositions.

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“Photography is really a case of learning to use your tool and understanding your tool, and understanding that – depending on your knowledge of that tool – the picture you can take vary so much. All that kind of stuff really helped me learn to deal with computer interfaces for music; realising that you don’t have to fight against it, that you can enjoy what technology can do for you. It can be an extension of you, like a brush for a painter or something.”

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more of this?" she laughs again. "You can be the first person to every write that in an article. "Mira Calix, greatly influenced by R&B".

Outside of her recordings, Passamonte has also garnered a glowing reputation for her commissions, and often collaborative, sound design and installation work. Since her early musical career she has exhibited and collaborated across the UK and Europe, including shows with the Genesis Natural History Museum, Londono Baruchim, Madrid’s Compañía Nacional de Danza, the Generating Circus Company and London National Theatre. She also toured her commissioned Nuna work live to Paris, Rome, Brugge and Tallinn.

According to Passamonte, working within the realm of commissioned art presents a whole set of new challenges. "It’s really different, because at that point it’s not an individual sound – it’s so personal – it’s so self-absorbed on so many levels - and you don’t have to consider anything else but what you’re feeling. I go into the studio, I compose music, I write songs, I make music, I know I think it’s crap or I think it’s good and then I go on from that point."

"But then with commissioned work you’re thinking, you’re thinking, the room is like this and I need to think about how it’s going to work in the space, and I think I’m supposed to make the audience feel, and they’re not necessarily an audience in a conventional sense. Then I need to think of the story that the director is trying to convey, or the emotion of an actor or a dancer or whatever, and still take something from that and make it personal, because if I don’t feel it, then I haven’t got a hope in hell."

"Music should make you feel something, so I’ve got to make it really personal at the same time as considering all those other things. And I find that really exciting. It’s such a weird way of working for someone like me, who’s sort of basically never thought in that way before. There’s a lot of problem solving and you kind of have to do all the problem solving and then disregard everything you’ve thought about, and just go into the studio and feel."

But whether in the recorded or the commissioned realm, Passamonte thrives on such challenges. "Being challenged – by your circumstances, by environment, by yourself – it’s kind of sometimes quite scary, and that’s the brilliant thing about it. I think if I hadn’t done string music originally, I probably wouldn’t have ended up making music," she pauses. “It taught me to have a few other viewpoints, which is the only thing that really separates you from creating something. That sort of ‘I’ve got to have a go at that’ mentality.

"I kind of hate it when people use the word ‘challenging’ in a negative way. Like, ‘Oh, it’s so challenging!’ . Being challenged – by your circumstances, by your environment, by yourself – it’s kind of sometimes quite scary, and that’s the brilliant thing about it. I think if I hadn’t done string music originally, I probably wouldn’t have ended up making music," she pauses. "It taught me to have a few other viewpoints, which is the only thing that really separates you from creating something. That sort of ‘I’ve got to have a go at that’ mentality.”

CHRISTOPHER WILLSIETHAS BEEN CRAFTING PROCESSED GUITAR WORKS SINCE THE LATE NINETIES, BUT WITH THE RELEASE OF SURF BORDERLINE, HIS ART HAS ACHIEVED A NEW AUDIENCE. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW, CHRISTOPHER DISCUSSES HOW HIS UNIQUE APPROACH TO PERFORMANCE AND MUSICAL PRODUCTION LED THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY GUARDIAN TO CALL HIM, "THE CENTER CELL OF A RATHER COMPLEX INDIE-ROCK-AVANT-GARDE-ELECTRONIC ART VENN DIAGRAM IN THE BAY AREA."

I first stumbled across Christopher’s work with his release for the label folk, Pollen. Pollen hits you with its aesthetic beauty (not an unusual thing for folk). Amber colouring and white boxes make up a beautiful exterior. The Tea was released before Pollen, but actually sits after it in recording chronology, and mines the same sound pallette. Prior to these releases there had been a few CD-Rs, but it was here that Willits’ sound solidified and more releases started showing up. “In the press release, I really wanted to make the idea of the fold clear, but it still managed to slip away."

Looking back now, that aesthetic is getting rarer with MP3 players everywhere. Press play on Pollen and the first stuttering note softly pierces the room. It builds and morphs, combining and growing, to envelope you in Willits’ sound world."

Pollens starting point for Christopher Willits’ technique of sampling and ‘folding’ his guitar pieces. He improvises and plays whilst feeding his guitar send through custom sound patches that record the input then skip to different locations to be processed, depending on his idea of ‘folding’ in an interview with Folk a few years ago: "Folding... well it’s about generating something new from other forms, a kind of morphogenetic process, emergence, and the interation of parts; parts folded into other parts, things being yet separate yet continuous. The really about lines, folded lines being weaving together and forming other lines, but lines still, not atomised points. In terms of the music, I see folds as a reorganizing plane of sound that is being spontaneously generated. The notion of a fold is a really accurate way to describe the way I’m thinking about this particular music and the way in the synthesis techniques that are being applied; that of including continuous flows of live guitar samples.”

I quickly picked up The Felding And The Tea, released on Taylor Desprees wonderful label Decoylab. There is a new label; everything is so new. The Tea is actually more like a LP, was most related to the 21st Century perhaps? It’s kind of soothing, truly soothing. "In the recordings. Willits expanded on his idea of ‘folding’ in an interview with Fallt. "The fold is about lines, folded lines weaving together and forming other lines, but lines still, not atomised points. In terms of the music, I see folds as a reorganizing plane of sound that is being spontaneously generated. The notion of a fold is a really accurate way to describe the way I’m thinking about this particular music and the way in the synthesis techniques that are being applied; that of including continuous flows of live guitar samples.”

"So - to set the record straight - ontologically speaking, there are no glitches in this music. It doesn’t find acoustimac’s or line in how all of this relates to other things in the world like biological forms and linguistics, and flowers, insects, eating organic food, and living socially.”

Appearances followed on a few advertisements, collaborations with artists including Taylor Desprees (most notably 2004’s Meg on the Japanese label play), and about this time the Michigan-based label Ghostly International started to take notice. They featured his work on their SMIM 12 inch series and have now followed with that his newest full-length, Surf Boundaries, taking Willits’ sound world in a new kind of direction."

"The idea and aesthetic of the record is different (created by college friend Maiko Kuzinishi of Decoylab). There is a new label, everything cried out to me that this might be a different sound. And yet, amongst the addition of vocal harmonies and instrumental arrangements, Willits’ trademark sound is there. And here’s the other thing: the record is just as soothing as his past work. It’s a slab of pop, no frills. The Beach Boys for the 21st Century perhaps?" They are interested in the progression of his music and how it relates to other things in the world like biological forms and linguistics, and flowers, insects, eating organic food, and living socially.”

Christopher elaborates, “It’s kind of interesting looking at the progression of my last album. The SMM compilation, which was actually more like a LP, was most related
“EVERYTHING I WAS FEELING AND THINKING ABOUT AT THE TIME REALLY KIND OF SOAKED AND SEEPED INTO THESE SOUNDS. I DIDN’T INTENTIONALLY TRY AND MAKE SOME KIND OF EMOTIONAL RECORD.”

Willits says, “I just knew I had to be making music. When I listened to Sonic Youth and Joe Henry I realized I needed to push the instrument into different areas which started integrating into compositions and whatsoever. So from that point on I knew that my path in life was to make music and try to connect and inspire people.”

“I went to art school after that actually, on a painting selection. I decided to bypass the whole music thing from talking to other people. They said it’s going to be hard to keep making art in music school, but you could probably keep doing music if you sort of make an effort. So I just started doing short films. And then I was making the sound stuff. And how that relates to my plane I’m still not sure. I made the decision I was going to make music and to try to integrate into compositions and whatnot. So from that point on I knew I had to be making music. When I listened to Sonic Youth and Joe Henry I realized I needed to push the instrument into different areas which started integrating into compositions and whatsoever. So from that point on I knew that my path in life was to make music and try to connect and inspire people.”

“After graduating from art school, Willits moved to San Francisco to pursue his Master’s Degree in Electronic Music at Mills College. He studied with Pauline Oliveros and Thuth and John Roach. Some external teachers also provided support for a burgeoning creative spirit. However, Willits didn’t pin his evolution to a precise influence. “I can’t draw a specific feeling. Rather than that, I would say it’s more related to reality. Everything is affecting the decisions I’m making creatively. Like sourcing the first couple of tunes I did with Taylor in Japan really opened my eyes to the fact that even a few fans outside of America. That was really mind-blowing to me and these people were coming out to shows and I knew they had a real relationship. And that person who’s a fan of mine, but we’re just connected on another level at least in terms of the vibrations of the tunes, these sounds and stuff. And how that relates to my plane I’m not sure at all, but it’s definitely related to my energy and my creative body of work.”

Willits elaborates, “It’s nothing like that. I think a lot of what I was feeling was coming through and for it as well kind of emerged just through the feelings I was getting from the music to be the bottom up and I was just making things I was feeling but more in an analytical way. It had to describe but it’s like those intuitive sounds emerged that you can’t really see anything and then I kind of more analytically recognized that those things were happening and that’s where the words came from.”

Hearing Christopher Willits talk about his composition process sheds light on how natural his musical sounds. “I say personal music and what I mean by that is it’s really something personal. But at the same time I didn’t steal it and I didn’t really feel as though I was really making it. I’ve mentioned this before when I am making music and what I mean by that is it really is very emotional record. I’ve never been against the idea of being getting dumped and feeling good about it!”

Willits says, “I was really introduced to electronic music school, but you could probably keep doing music if you sort of make an effort. So I just started doing short films. And then I was making the sound stuff. And how that relates to my plane I’m still not sure. I made the decision I was going to make music and to try to integrate into compositions and whatnot. So from that point on I knew I had to be making music. When I listened to Sonic Youth and Joe Henry I realized I needed to push the instrument into different areas which started integrating into compositions and whatsoever. So from that point on I knew that my path in life was to make music and try to connect and inspire people.”

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SLEEVE REVIEWS

Artist: St Begg
Title: Inertia/Inertia Part 1
Label: Noodles Recordings
Format: LP
Designing Process: "Nothing says ‘inertia’ in these, our days of terror, quite like a brown paper parcel with a vacuum-sealed pouch. Artifacts paranormal wide and..."

This thing’s designed. Simply. It would have been cheap to produce too. Ali, the beauty of good design! The record lives in a standard brown cardboard 12 inch cover, (back order join). There’s a yellow sticker and a poster printed only with black ink, (a single ink on cheap, rough and ready stock). This is just a vacuum sealed pouch and stuck to the front cover, (hell, the distro guys could have finished this part before they shipped them far and wide!)

When folded in the pouch, the poster just gives you the seconds details as the typeface is a computer generated form. Unfolded, negative space rules and slick typography and layout breathe in the space. A detail of an airplane fuselage shot as if from a passenger window option diagonally across the bottom corner, reminding you of travel scenarios. The computer font type is used stylistically to reinforce that this record is part one of a series but also add to the air travel theme and feel.

Besides the digital form typeface, a clean and feeling good about it!”

Willits elaborates, “It’s nothing...
This sleeve has the perfect combination of pink and green—two girl saturants and the use of recycled materials. Black and fluorescent pink ink have been screen printed onto off-white, textured card. These prints are used to wrap unused covers from Dual Plover albums, which provide the structure for the package. You can peel the black lining off to reveal Spazzmodics or Nora Keys CD covers underneath apparently! The graphics are quirky and fun, with contrary photocopy-esque illustrations of the weep, lady! The type is a cutout font into display fonts, but is playful and hot in the pink. It really does pack a punch with its personality too. You sort of feel like you’re stardust on a prepubescent diary— the love, the hate and the curiosity, (bridge tech quality and all)?

For an outfit whose lyrics are a big part of the appeal, making them into a nine with illustrations and oversized layout is a damn fine way to get people to check them out. All the pictures are cartoons and are obviously heavily influenced by Japanese manga styles. They’re saucy and it’s easy to believe they’re a 14 year old girl’s doodles with works like “Poodle Coat,” angry aliens and disembodied goth girls. The CD itself sports hearts, ice cream cones and goldfish. A little bit of care that was smile maker, was including a piece of black felt where the title, “Feral Media” was printed, was hand printed and adhered to the CD itself. A condensed, gothic, sans-serif typeface was used for the screen print. The graphics are poppy and fun, with contrasting photocopy-esque illustrations of the weep, lady! The type is a cutout font into display fonts, but is playful and hot in the pink. It really does pack a punch with its personality too.
Ida Kelarova – Old Gypsy Songs (Self-released)

My first leap into Romany music; Ida is a legendary singer from the Czech Republic. She identifies as Romany and is half Romany, and is very active in promoting Romany culture. Although she struggled with her Gypsy heritage as her early years, the death of her Romany musician father was a major turning point in accepting her heritage. She never learnt to speak the Romany language, as her grandparents thought that her Romany blood was a liability. Nowadays, Ida is a passionate voice for her people, from organising the annual Gypsy Festival in the Czech Republic to performing traditional gypsy songs all over the world.

I lived in the Czech Republic for three months and saw some great Romany music that inspired me to buy this album. Although I don’t understand the lyrics in the songs, the music makes you feel immediate empathy for the injustices that Romany people have suffered. However, this tone is always contrasted by the frantic celebratory mood that is still able to be conveyed, despite the odds. I also bought another album by an equally legendary Czech singer called Iva Bittova and found this album to be a major turning point in accepting her heritage. She never learnt to speak the Romany language, as her grandparents thought that her Romany blood was a liability. Nowadays, Ida is a passionate voice for her people, from organising the annual Gypsy Festival in the Czech Republic to performing traditional gypsy songs all over the world.

I had just arrived back from China after living there for six months, a few of my friends were raving on about this Australian blues guy that sounded like the albums brother of bluesman blues legend Robert Johnson. I was intrigued as I have a special place in my heart for early blues and jazz. I couldn’t remember his name though, something like C.L. Stonehenge, W.C. Kingston or C.L. Smoothsheng. I went to a friend’s place for dinner and he had the album I was after, however the CD was missing from the case. By this stage I was gagging to hear the damn album. You know that feeling when you hear the album you had been missing from the case. By this stage I was gagging to hear the damn album. You know that feeling when you hear the damn album you had been missing from the case. By this stage I was gagging to hear the damn album. You know that feeling when you hear the damn album you had been missing from the case. By this stage I was gagging to hear the damn album. 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