

# ISSUES

WE'RE BUILDING A TOWER

THEY LOVE THEM



#90: 11/01/24

CHUCK RITCHIE

JOURNAL  
OF THE  
FIFTH  
FOUNDATION

OCI

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# ISSUES 90: 11/01/24 THEYLOVETHEM

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# THEY SAW ELLA SOLIS THE GAS

They fan at the gas incessantly as it finally begins to dissipate. "We need to run— now," Sara yells as she takes off running. Ric follows close behind, gun in hand. "The mountains, we have to run!" Sara says as they both simultaneously speed up.

As they get to a clearing in the forest, they notice that the forest ahead is filled with the gas. "What do we do?" Ric asks, panicked. "We run as fast as we can and try not to breathe," Sara replies swiftly, walking out into the clearing. They wander out slowly, collecting their bearings until they reach the gas. They look both ways, looking for an alternative. "No other way! Let's go, Sara!"

Ric exclaims as he sprints off into the gas, Sara trailing directly behind. Their faces turn red as they charge into the unknown.

Vision blurs and colors become difficult to discern but they manage to hold their breath until they're out of the gas. They both deeply inhaled in this second clearing they found themselves in and let out a sigh of relief. Then they looked up and saw something they wished they never had; a giant snake, slithering directly towards them from the forest behind them. He lunges in to bite Sara but Ric knocks her out of the way, as the snake plunges its teeth into his skin, injecting him with venom. Ric's muscles quickly lock up and he falls to the ground, twitching. Sara grabs the gun out of his hand and aims it towards the snake.

"I'm sorry you beautiful creature," she says as she shoots the snake in the face. He squirms a bit but falls still after a while. She quickly picks up the snake and drapes it over her shoulder then grabs a bunch of leaves and sticks.

She builds a makeshift lean-to around Ric, sheltering him. She then builds a fire, skewering her snake with a giant stick and roasting it piece by piece over the fire. She has a few bites then leaves it in the lean-to for Ric. And then she runs.

Through the clearing, through the gas, past a factory, they near a city. But this city is covered in gas, buildings crumbling, cars overturned. It's a wasteland. She begins to cry out loud, "There's no way I'll find medicine for Ric now!" She wallows for a bit, but of course, no one comes to rescue her. And then she hears the roar of an engine overhead. She hides in fear, underneath a car.

Then a flash of white, and everything in the vicinity is vaporized.

**-ELLA SOLIS  
11/24**



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# ALAM

# ISSUES MAGAZINE

## FEATURED ARTIST INTERVIEW WITH

# THEYLOVETHEM

<phone rings>

They: Hello!

Ryan: Hi. Sorry about that.

T: That's ok.

R: I hope it's not too late.

T: How are you?

R: I'm good. How are you doing?

T: I'm ok. Just finishing literally as we speak. I'm starting to render but I finished the ad. I'm running an ad for my upcoming album. I wanted to make it one minute long so I'm just finishing it.

R: Ok. Is it like, does it involve a lot of audio?

T: Um. Does it?

It involves playing one of the songs from the album.

<to herself>

Ok, that's what I needed thank you.

R: You're putting it up on Facebook?

T: It'll be an ad that I'm going to run on Instagram and Tiktok.

Assuming it will then therefore run on Facebook because Meta but I don't know.

R: That makes sense.

T: Because I ran an ad on Facebook and it did ok. I feel like ads on Facebook

don't do that great. I tend to stick to Tiktok and Instagram if I have to run ads.

R: I see.

T: I've also never run ads. Not on Tiktok but I have on Instagram. I don't know how it does there but I hope it does so.

R: I hope so.

So, this is the interview.

T: Ok. Do you do an introduction or anything or is this already it?

R: Oh, we're already recording. It's very candid. There's absolutely no pressure. It's not live. We're not broadcasting live or anything. It's being recorded. I kind of have a little bit of an offbeat way I like to do it. I like for things to wander around, meander, get off subject kind of the opposite of how a radio interview would work where you'd have to be high pressure and focus on everything you're trying to sell and all that stuff.

T: Ok. I love that.

R: So, I'm recording this, just so you know.

It will be transcribed into print for ISSUES 90.

Which will be on November 1. I'll be happy to mail you a copy of that plus a free edition will be released online.

T: Ok.

R: Then I will release the audio on our Youtube page after that.

T: I see- so you're doing an interview that's being

recorded then you're transcribing it. The print version. Do you edit it or is it just word for word everything we talked about?

R: I do not edit the audio that I put up.

T: No, the text version.

R: I do as little editing as I possibly can.

T: Cool.

R: There are times-like, I don't edit for content but there are times that the series of moans and groans me and the other person both make are so indecipherable as to render them useless to a print edition. I don't edit for content at all. I don't edit for length. I try to keep it between 20 and 50 minutes. You know.

T: Ok. For anyone who hears my creaking chair. That's my creaking chair.

R: That's the proof that this is reality. This is real.

T: Yeah.

R: Or as real as anything is.

So, let's start easy: what is your name and where are you located?

T: Oh. The hard hitting questions. My name is Love. I live right outside of Philadelphia. I'm a musician and a music therapist. And a bunch of other things but those

are the main two.

R: Very cool. Have you lived in Philadelphia your whole life?

T: No. I lived in New York my whole life.

Or I guess I'm a suburb baby. I grew up right outside of New York then I moved to right outside of New York but in New Jersey. That's where I went to college. Then I moved to right outside of Philadelphia after a stint in my hometown. I moved here in 2020 and I've been here ever since.

R: How do you think it compares to New York?

T: That's a great question. New York is one of those places where if you're in New York, you're in New York. New York does not have suburbs. They don't even call them that. They call them the Boroughs. New York does not have suburbs. I wouldn't even call Long Island a suburb. There's no suburb of New York.

**CONTINUED**



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# THEY LOVE THEM CONTINUED

T: So, that being said, even though I grew up outside of New York I wouldn't consider where I'm from a suburb of New York because it wasn't a place that people went to. A lot of the towns outside New York city are poor. A lot of them are very conservative. It's not until you get an hour north of New York City in the Poughkeepsie area or the New Paltz area (that's where I went to grad school). That's where you have a bunch of these real nice, cool towns on the Eastern side of the Hudson River. Even those are so far away from the city that I wouldn't consider them suburbs of the city. R: Right. T: If people live there and then commute into the city. For me, moving here outside of Philadelphia, it's a fascinating and completely different area that I've never experienced before. Where the towns, the town that I live in and other towns in the area I live in to the west of Philadelphia, are not Philadelphia. They are suburbs of it. They live there and work in the city. They have festivals. They have cultural days. These really interesting- I don't live in Phoenixville but

there's this place called Phoenixville. Every year they do something called the FireBird festival. Which is like Burning man only; it takes place over the course of a day. They burn a giant effigy of a bird. That's really cool. That's not something where I am from. You have a fireman's parade. You have a soap box derby. You didn't have cool, like, music festivals or pride festivals. None of that existed where I am from because it is so conservative and backwater, even though it was so close to the city. R: Got you. What was your home life like as a child? Two parents, one parent? How did that work? T: Two parents. I grew up the youngest of four. I have two older brothers and an older sister. My oldest brother is 8 years older than me. So I grew up with a lot of older family. My mom is the youngest of 5 and I'm the youngest of her 4. Because of that there was a lot of, how do I put it? All my aunts and uncles on my mom's side are really old. I don't mean that in a rude way. Just an honest way. My mom had me at 35 and her closest sibling is 9 years older than her. So all my aunts and uncles on my mom's side are, had kids, by the time my mom was born. Not all of them but most of them.

Because of that all my first cousins- that's what I call them, I don't think that's the word for them. All my first cousins, the children of my aunts and uncles, are the age of my mom. So all of their kids, who I grew up with, are twice removed. It's so interesting how that ended up. I have three cousins that I'm very very close with, one of whom lives next door to me somehow. Even though we're from the same town they moved next door to me. It was random too. It wasn't planned. That person is, my uncle is their grandfather, I think. So, that's crazy to me. My grandfather and my grandmother on my mom's side are these people's great grandparents. They have no connection to them. They are effigies. For me it was people I knew. R: I see. So kind of a strange sort of family structure in the extended family. T: Yeah! R: Were either of your parents, did they perform music at all or play music of their own? T: Yeah. My dad for many years was trying to hit it big being an actor, hit it big being a musician. He actually wrote a children's book a few years ago. It was really, really cute. I'm very proud of him for that because I know that was a passion project for him. It was one of those things where because he had four kids, a curse I'll never struggle with, because he had four kids there was a lot of, I guess you know, sacrifice. I guess that's what I'll call it. R: Sure. T: That led to him not being able to take specific jobs that might've landed him higher in the echelons. But he's also from a small town. As much as, you know, as much as the

famous people like to say I was from a small town and then I got famous, it really doesn't happen that way. Especially in this day and age. The thing that I'm looking for is Mountain Goats level of fame. It's not like Kim Petras levels of fame. R: Right. T: There's very different levels between what I'm looking for and what I consider to be, you know, making it. What I consider to be fame. R: Understood. Which reminds me of something. Your Insta says that you used to be quasi famous. T: Yeah! R: What's the story of that? T: It's kind of funny and kind of sad, like a lot of my life I suppose. I used to have a different name. When I was going by that name I was releasing a whole bunch of music. A lot of people know that music already. I'm not going to say it here. R: Understandable. T: When I changed my name- I'll get into changing my name in a second. When I was still releasing under that old name I released a song called Dragging Me Down. For whatever reason, all the queer girls really started digging it. The chorus was wish I was dead oh I wish I were dead. It was very sad. It was not a good message at all. It's like when thoughts of you get stuck in my head, I wish I was dead. It's not something that I believe in now. R: Right. T: Which is also why I'm glad I was able to separate from it. It got picked up by the podcast Welcome To Night Vale. Which is a fictional podcast about a small desert town. It's a really phenomenal podcast so I'm glad they picked up the song. It was put in episode 140 so I guess for

those of you who don't know the song or who I used to be, you can find it there. It was featured and then it blew up. By quasi famous I just mean it existed in the way that all things do. That song got 50,000 listens, 60,000 listens. It got me a whole bunch of followers but just for that song. It was put on thousands of playlists that had really interesting titles. You know like, it wasn't just Night Vale playlists.

I was really excited because it was all this quasi-fame, which is still a good word for it. What happened was, other songs that I put out people would listen to but not to the same extent. So some would get 3,000 or 5,000 but it was never- and I don't think it was because the songs were bad. It was because people liked that one song. R: Yeah. T: For me, after I put out that song (and it wasn't because I put out that song), I had started working on myself and went into therapy and saying I want to release music that makes me feel happy because I'm optimistic and feel good about the world. So I started releasing music that had good messages even if it had sad lyrics. At the end of the day it was sad lyrics with the possibility that things would get better. So, it was hard for people who might have liked that one song and just liked depressive folk. I wasn't going to do that again. So I have depressing songs still,

it's just that's not where I go naturally. R: Ok. T: So anyway, quasi-famous in that once I had a good song that was kind of a hit. It got me a little fame but then I changed my name and I changed my music name and I posted everywhere that I was doing that. I made canvases that go up on Spotify for any time someone listens to one of the old songs. It says I changed my name and therefore my music name. I will not release under this artist again. Follow me here. All of that stayed up. I'm not going to take it down. I'm just not going to release under that name anymore.

So, it's a weird dichotomy where I kind of exist knowing that exists out there and I am ok that it does. I just wish that I had gotten people to follow me over to the new project but I make new fans and I think that's more important. R: Yeah. That's excellent. How old were you when you started to play music on your own? T: Good question. I always made music but didn't believe that I could write songs. I actually talked about this in an article that I wrote. A chapter that I wrote in a music therapy book that is coming out. I didn't write the book, I just wrote the chapter. It's coming out next year.



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THEY LOVE THEM POSTER

CONTINUED ON 12





**THEYLOVETHEM**

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# ANSWERS WITHOUT QUESTION

## CARL KRUGER WITH AI

1. Sesquipedalian (a person who uses long words).

a. The machine learning model predicted trends with impressive accuracy, but it failed to grasp the subtleties of human creativity. When asked to create a novel, it produced formulaic plots devoid of genuine emotion.  
b. The sunset painted the sky with hues of purple and gold.

2. Peregrinate (to travel or wander around from place to place).

a. The AI could analyze vast amounts of data, but it couldn't understand the value of spontaneous human experiences.

It offered suggestions based on patterns, missing the nuance of an unscripted moment.  
b. Raindrops danced on the window, creating a soothing rhythm.

3. Impignorate (to pledge).

a. The neural network churned out results with precision but missed the fleeting nature of human connection. Its interactions were efficient yet devoid of the warmth that only a human touch could provide.  
b. A bird flitted across the garden, disappearing as quickly as it had arrived.

4. Gunwale (the top edge of a boat's side).

a. Despite its ability to process language,

the AI couldn't comprehend the depth of human emotions such as limerence. It calculated responses based on data but failed to recognize the intensity of personal experiences.

b. The moon cast long shadows on the quiet street.

5. Cacotopia (a state in which everything is as bad as it can be).

a. The machine could mimic human speech, yet its sibilant tones lacked the nuance of genuine conversation. It generated responses that were technically accurate but emotionally flat.  
b. A gentle breeze

rustled the leaves outside.

6. Thralldom (slavery).

a. The AI's suggestions were based on logical patterns, but it failed to grasp the quixotic nature of human dreams. It couldn't understand why people sometimes chased impossible ideals.

b. The distant sound of laughter echoed through the empty hall.

7. Wheedle (coax).

a. The machine learned to identify sycophants in social media, but it couldn't grasp the subtleties of human motivation.

b. A lone star shimmered in the darkening sky.

8. Quomodocunquize (to make money by any means possible).

a. The AI's analysis was precise, but its understanding of human creativity remained inchoate. It could replicate styles but not innovate.  
b. The first light of dawn crept over the horizon.

9. Chine (deep and narrow ravine).

a. The AI's algorithms were ubiquitous in everyday life, yet they couldn't replicate the human touch in personal interactions.

It processed data but missed the depth of personal connections.

b. An old book sat forgotten on the dusty shelf.

10. Numinous (indicating or suggesting the presence of a divinity).

a. The AI excelled at handling routine tasks but failed to grasp the numinous aspects of human experience. It could not appreciate the profound sense of awe and wonder that came with spirituality.  
b. The river flowed silently through the ancient forest.

**-END-**

# PROMPT

1. Write a three sentence short story praising CRISPR technology in the style of Tom Waits.

CRISPR, baby, it's like tuning a busted-up piano, all the wrong notes suddenly in the right places. They took the broken parts of me, rearranged them like loose change in a back-alley coat pocket, and now I'm humming a tune I thought I'd forgotten. It's science in a cheap suit, but damn if it doesn't make miracles sound like a whiskey-soaked ballad.

2. Write a three sentence short story critiquing CRISPR technology in the style of Tom Waits.

The scientists in their lab coats, pale as ghosts under the neon buzz, sliced and spliced genes like they were mixing drinks in a back-alley bar. They said they could make you stronger, smarter, maybe even take away the parts of you that hurt. But somewhere in that smoky haze, they forgot that it's the cracks in the glass that give it character.

3. Write a three sentence short story

praising CRISPR technology in the style of Ferris Bueller.

Okay, so picture this: CRISPR is like that cheat code you find for a video game, except instead of extra lives, you're getting rid of, I don't know, diseases. You can tweak your DNA like it's no big deal—upgrade, refresh, and boom, you're a healthier, cooler version of you. Life moves pretty fast, but with CRISPR, it just got a whole lot better.

4. Write a three sentence short story critiquing CRISPR technology in the style of Ferris Bueller.

So, imagine you've got this gene-editing thing, CRISPR, right? It's like giving the school nerds the ultimate cheat code for life, except now they're changing eye color, tweaking intelligence—basically rewriting the rulebook on being human. But here's the thing: life's more fun when it's unpredictable, so why mess with what makes us perfectly imperfect in the first place?

5. Write a three sentence short story praising CRISPR technology in the style of Truman Capote.

In the quiet hum of

the laboratory, a delicate dance of precision and hope unfolded, as CRISPR unlocked the genetic secrets hidden in our cells like a treasure long buried. No longer bound by the fragile whims of nature, we could, with a soft touch, mend the flaws that once seemed unchangeable. The future, radiant and full of promise, shimmered like the first light of dawn across a field of wildflowers.

6. Write a three sentence short story critiquing CRISPR technology in the style of Truman Capote.

The scientists spoke with a hushed reverence, their white-gloved hands delicately cradling strands of human life as though they were fragile threads of silk. They promised perfection, weaving new destinies with the precision of a seamstress mending an old quilt, but they didn't account for the inevitable fraying at the edges. In their ambition, they forgot that even the smallest alteration can unravel the whole, leaving only the quiet remnants of

## CARL KRUGER WITH AI

what once was.

7. Write a three sentence short story praising crispr technology in the style of PT Barnum.

Ladies and gentlemen, step right up and behold the greatest marvel of modern science: CRISPR, the gene-editing wonder of the world! Imagine, if you will, a tool that can rewrite destiny itself—erasing disease, enhancing strength, and crafting a brighter future as easily as a magician pulls a rabbit from his hat. Don't blink, folks, because the future is here, and it's more dazzling than anything you've ever dreamed!

8. Write a three sentence short story critiquing crispr technology in the style of PT Barnum

Step right up, folks, and witness the greatest marvel of our age: CRISPR, the gene-editing wonder that promises to fix but missed the underlying human dynamics; what ails ya! But beware, for behind the glittering spectacle lies a dangerous game

—tinker too much with the human design, and you may find you've traded life's mystery for a sideshow of unintended consequences. The house of mirrors may show perfection, but the price of admission is a ticket to the unknown!

9. Write a three sentence short story praising CRISPR technology in the style of Gary Shandling.

So, here we are, on the brink of this amazing CRISPR thing—like, I can't even edit my grocery list without losing half of it, and these scientists are out here changing the game of life itself. It's like giving a bad haircut a glow-up, making us all look a little less like a mess and a bit more like a well-edited Instagram post. And I'm just sitting here thinking, if they can fix our genes, maybe they can finally figure out how to get me to the front of the line at the DMV

10. Write a three sentence short story critiquing crispr technology in the style of Gary Shandling.

You know, CRISPR is like that guy at the party who insists he can fix your life with a little snip here and a little snip there, and you're like, "Great, but what about the mess left behind?" It's all fun and games until someone's gene gets edited into a complete disaster—"Hey, congratulations! You've got the heart of a lion and the digestive system of a goat!" Maybe the real miracle is just learning to embrace our quirks instead of trying to perfect them.

**-END-**



# IMPRESSIONS OF

## CLEAR by SABOT

Sabot is an instrumental rock duo from Czechia. They released a single, "Edge of Clarity," on the album, "CLEAR," on October 5, 2024.

You can check it out here:  
[sabotduo.bandcamp.com/album/clear](http://sabotduo.bandcamp.com/album/clear)

### My Impressions:

A highly technical, hard slamming basement punk tone matches a level of technique that's suited to an advanced studies music class.

This song tells me that this is a band who specializes in rhythm and texture. They break and bend in hard grooves, slapped chords and gritty distorted phrases.

## CITIES IN DUST by VELATINE

Velatine is a goth rock group from Melbourne, Australia. They released a single called, "Cities in Dust," on September 10, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[velatine.bandcamp.com/album/cities-in-dust](http://velatine.bandcamp.com/album/cities-in-dust)

### My Impressions:

The song begins with the quick establishment of a musical theme (synth forward) and immediately pushes with energy. The tone gradually increases, adding parts to the mix in an ascending progression until it is finally time for the vocals to drop.

When the vocals come in, the verse begins the ear massage. Eventually, the chorus hits and the hook infects itself deep into my bones. This song is perfect for dancing. It feels like the blend of anxiety and desire that comes before a new and special connection.



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## SELECTED AMBIENT JERK-OFFS VOL 1 2024-2024 by CUMSLEG by BORENAIL

Cumsleg Borenail is a noise artist from the UK. They released an album called, "Selected Ambient Jerk-offs Vol 1 2024-2024," on October 1, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[cumslegborenail.bandcamp.com/album/selected-ambient-jerk-offs-vol-1-2024-2024](http://cumslegborenail.bandcamp.com/album/selected-ambient-jerk-offs-vol-1-2024-2024)

### My Impressions:

These are a collection of hyper slowed and equalized interpretations of what were once louder, better articulated and perpetually unknowable sounds.

The stretches and tears are clear as the noise smears itself across the speaker frames.

The imagery and song names suggest that I ought to be disgusted but the music ends up being more like a level 4 theory class than anything too vulgar. Good if you like the avant garde.

## MORA by EARTHFLESH & GERARDO COLIN

Earthflesh & Gerardo Colin are noise musicians from Switzerland & Mexico. They released an album called, "Mora," on September 10, 2024.

You can check it out here:  
[loudsilencedigital.bandcamp.com/album/mora](http://loudsilencedigital.bandcamp.com/album/mora)

### My Impressions:

A non-stop crushing wall of the harshest, bone-splintering distortion that you can imagine. Nothing buzz saw-like or throbbing. Always continual crushing and tearing. The noise has variations, usually slight. It continues relentlessly until it vanishes.

## LES OBSERVATEURS (CADET CHRONICLES III) by FEDERICO BALDUCCI

Federico Balducci is an experimental jazz musician from West Springfield, MA. He released an album called, "Les observateurs (Cadet Chronicles III)" on September 7, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[federicobalducci7.bandcamp.com/album/les-observateurs-cadet-chronicles-iii](http://federicobalducci7.bandcamp.com/album/les-observateurs-cadet-chronicles-iii)

### My Impressions:

This album explores a lot of sonic space but it tends to stay in an ambient zone. There is a great deal of variation within that. Most of the songs blend more musical parts with more musique concrete. There tends to be synth-like sounds, pad-like, and heavily effected guitars, often in exotic modes blending dissonance and beauty. It keeps me intrigued.

## DELTA OF BECOMING by BENDING REEDS

Bending Reeds are an avant garde group out of British Columbia, Canada. They released an album called, "Delta of Becoming," on August 2, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[bendingreeds.bandcamp.com/album/delta-of-becoming](http://bendingreeds.bandcamp.com/album/delta-of-becoming)

### My Impressions:

It is always a joy when someone sends me something that I can say is truly unprecedented. The range and quality of genres and tonalities in this beautiful and bizarre collage of sounds keeps me interested no matter how long it continues.

I can't really say these are songs in the traditional sense. They don't rely so much on contrast or continuity as one would expect. Instead they appear to augment in an evolutionary, or even stream-of-consciousness, way. They are a sublation of normalcy and yet they kind of take the place of the normal discontinuity of life that our brains are ever seeking to break up with the mundanity of perception and order.

The way that I view this is sort of like the weather, sped up from a week's progression to an hour and without any serious events-tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.

At times it is almost savagely beautiful, intertwining elements of spiritual jazz and soulfulness, singing melodies and harmonic resonant basses. But at other times the music is pensive, broken, often even incomprehensible. It just sorts of happens as it snaps and shifts, occupying the sound space around my mind.

There are profound breaks in the structure of the pieces. There are long passages of chaotically blurred randomness. There is tension and harmony. There are even strange eruptions of cosmic space age noises, clinks, clanks, off-FM synthetic procurements. And then, just as soon as it has deconstructed itself, it simplifies into a beautiful and resonant flute melody.

This, as best as I can say, is the true inheritor of the psychedelic movement that crashed into the dead end of the early 70s. Because the tonality is really well accustomed to match the pacing of the unfiltered mind. The changes happen with the same lucidity- as well as the same imperfect pacing- of the thoughts and feelings rushing across the interior consciousness.

And then, all at once, the cacophony begins again. The din drowns out the beauty. We don't really fully control the pace of our own thoughts, do we?

**REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD**



# IMPRESSIONS OF

## SPLIT INFINITIVES by OSTROFTI

Ostrofti is an experimental electronic artist from Glasgow, UK. Soft Riot released their recent album called, "Split Infinitives," on October 7, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[softriot.bandcamp.com/album/split-infinitives](https://softriot.bandcamp.com/album/split-infinitives)

### My Impressions:

A strange but coherent collection of pieces which guide the listener to a cavernous, dark space that hints of beauty even as it swallows one with anxiety.

The synthesizers sound like honed FM synths, pads and plucks. They set the listener into an ambient trance. They help to mesmerize the listener into an opioid haze. I like the simmering spirit, the feeling of being on the bottom of the pool.

## GOOD TIMES CAN'T LAST by PLASTIC PRESIDENTS

Plastic Presidents are a pop punk group from Omaha, NE. They released an album called, "Good Times Can't Last," on April 25, 2023.

You can check it out here:  
[plasticpresidents.bandcamp.com/album/good-times-cant-last](https://plasticpresidents.bandcamp.com/album/good-times-cant-last)

### My Impressions:

Ska punk blazing through the speakers like it's the height of 1998. Day of high school parties, skanking in the house show, rebellion, new love and anarchy. I've seen this before. This is a highly polished version of that old familiar tune.

## WHEN IT'S OVER by 10PENNY

10penny is a pop punk band from Glen Gardner, NJ. They released an album called, "When It's Over," in 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[open.spotify.com/album/0JiNke6gEmMshpBokBxJpm?si=fYQwJegtSmKnfpYTv74\\_Zw](https://open.spotify.com/album/0JiNke6gEmMshpBokBxJpm?si=fYQwJegtSmKnfpYTv74_Zw)

### My Impressions:

This is singing siren punk rock in the style of the mid to late 90s- melodic hardcore with highly tuneful vocals, silly, angsty, or personal lyrics and a strong driving beat.

The songs are composed primarily of high energy, sweet sounding guitar lines and persistent rock drumming, well produced but not too slick.

This album is full of verve and energy.

**REVIEWS BY RYAN O'DOUD**

## NEGATIVE THOUGHTS by ECHOES OF HATE

Echoes Of Hate are a metalcore act from France. They released an album called, "Negative Thoughts," on March 1, 2024.

You can check them out here:  
[echoesofhateband.bandcamp.com/album/negative-thoughts](https://echoesofhateband.bandcamp.com/album/negative-thoughts)

### My Impressions:

These songs exist on the venn diagram that unites metal, punk, and pop. The songs are produced with a metal style of guitar tone and the kinds of plodding drums you hear therein. The harmonies are very punk, and the presentation is polished and tuneful like a good pop song. I feel like I've heard these songs 100 times and that I've never heard them at all. If metalcore is your jam then you will like this.

## ODD LOVE by COILGUNS

Coilguns are a melodic hardcore act from La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. Hummus Records released their album called, "Odd Love," in 2023.

You can listen to it here:  
[coilguns.bandcamp.com/album/odd-love](https://coilguns.bandcamp.com/album/odd-love)

### My Impressions:

An energy and angst is met equally with an unfolding progression and a tuneful sensibility in the vocals.

The quality of the piece is hard driving and through-composed; distorted, embracing experimentation but also easy to hear. A soft gloved punch through a broke glass window.

## REAR VIEW by BRACKISH

Brackish is an emo pop punk group from Philadelphia, PA. They released an album called, "Rear View," on September 27, 2024.

You can check it out here:  
[brackish.bandcamp.com/album/rear-view](https://brackish.bandcamp.com/album/rear-view)

### My Impressions:

I'm pleasantly surprised with all the pop punk that was submitted this month.

The songs here- three of them- make up a short ep. They each proceed quickly from the start, featuring guitar chords overflowing with sincerity and melodic vocals full of pathos.

The tracks seem to revolve around the feelings you get in daily life, the struggles and triumphs, the heroism of regular people.

I find myself nodding along to the songs. They smell like fresh guitar strings in enthusiastic practice rooms and the joy of an early show.

## BIG LIFE by EARLY RISER

Early Riser is a pop punk outfit from Brooklyn, NY. They released an album called, "Big Life," on October 11, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[earlyriserr.bandcamp.com/album/big-life](https://earlyriserr.bandcamp.com/album/big-life)

### My Impressions:

Highly poppy, major key, tuneful vocal melodies propelled by a persistent set of guitar riffs and clearly articulated, restrained percussion.

The subject matter of the lyrics is sweet. It features songs of love and insecurity, highly relatable stuff.

If you are looking for the sort of band which has highly infectious melodies that can get an entire bar singing along, this is it.

## NARROW ROAD TO THE NORTH by ROBERT SCOTT THOMPSON

Robert Scott Thompson is a new age composer from Atlanta, GA. Aucourant Records released his single, "Narrow Road to the North," on August 21, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[robert-scott-thompson.bandcamp.com/album/narrow-road-to-the-north](https://robert-scott-thompson.bandcamp.com/album/narrow-road-to-the-north)

### My Impressions:

The notes move like footsteps, pulling me through a journey in a sound-defined environment.

Lucidly produced synthesizer sounds bubble up and expand through the soft sky of my ears and mind.

The music tells a story in places, and mystifies me. I find myself leaning into the experience, hoping to learn what I can from this situation.

In the end I find myself hopeful and introspective. The composition has done its job.



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# IMPRESSIONS OF

## BLOWOUT by TREASURE PAINS

Treasure Pains is a post-hardcore act from Durham, NC. They released an album called, "Blowout," on May 22nd, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[open.spotify.com/track/  
3e0VXHk3cyTEoZeDvpuKPa](https://open.spotify.com/track/3e0VXHk3cyTEoZeDvpuKPa)

### My Impressions:

This song features some amazing guitar work from the jump. The bass work stands out as well. The tone of the bass is incredible. *Treasure Pains*, in their song *Blowout*, explores the many facets of post-hardcore combined with a grungy attitude. I love the usage of choppy drops and climbs in the music. This adds energy and attitude to the track and makes it stand out all that much more.

## L'OMBRE DES CROIX by SINTHOME

Sinthome is a post-punk act from France. They released an album called, "L'Ombre Des Croix," on September 25, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[sinthomemusique.bandcamp.com/album/  
lombre-des-croix](https://sinthomemusique.bandcamp.com/album/lombre-des-croix)

### My Impressions:

This band takes the conventional model of post punk- jangling, minimalist melodies on the guitar, throbbing, propulsive bass and punctuated rock percussion and spins them together in a new way. The chords are often dissonant, creating a sense of desperation. The vocals are baritone and throaty. They cut through the mix perfectly. In fact, the production of this album is exactly right. It is on tune enough to perfectly cut the phrases while retaining a bit of naturalism to accent the emotional character of the music. The total package is highly effective.

### REVIEW BY RYAN O'DOUD



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## LIVE IN LOLLIAHC by THUNDERWIZE

THUNDERWIZE is an experimental stoner metal act from France. They released the album, "Live in Lolliahc," on September 27th, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[bitumeprods.bandcamp.com/album/live-in-lolliahc](https://bitumeprods.bandcamp.com/album/live-in-lolliahc)

### My Impressions:

The first song starts off with some deep, dark melodic singing and a didgeridoo. It makes for an atmospheric intro that sets the tone for the rest of the album. The drums kick in and the listener understands where exactly it's heading. The rest plays out like a movie, very reminiscent of classic rock and grunge in its musical elements.

My favorite song: *Lying*, this song has the crazy didgeridoo intro. It suits the album so well and adds a ton of body to the music.

## RE/COLLECTION FOUR: DIGITAL OBSCOLESCENCE, PART ONE by THEE VIRGINAL BRIDES

Thee Virginal Brides is a post-rock/experimental act from Montreal, Quebec. They released the album, "Re/collection Four : Digital Obscrescence, Part One," on October 1st, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[obsoleterecords.bandcamp.com/album/re-  
collection-four-digital-obscrescence-part-one](https://obsoleterecords.bandcamp.com/album/re-collection-four-digital-obscrescence-part-one)

### My Impressions:

This album features a lot of elements of industrial, experimental, and ambient all combined into one unified front. I love the vocal and ambient work in *Coal Echo Chamber*. The next song, with the title being a set of coordinates, features a lot of natural ambience, seemingly distorted. A synthesizer drones in the background as a call of an animal is introduced into the mix.

My favorite song: *Distal Limited Necrosis*, this song has so much reverb it's like being in a cathedral, and it works extremely well. The ambience is top notch and I love the random vocal parts in the background.

## CONIPHERS by LAZARIS PIT

Lazaris Pit is a psychedelic jam band from Raleigh, North Carolina. They released, "Coniphers," on May 22nd, 2020.

You can listen to it here: [https:  
lazarispit.bandcamp.com/album/coniphers](https://lazarispit.bandcamp.com/album/coniphers)

### My Impressions:

This album, *Coniphers*, is full of nods to older psychedelic jam bands in combination with newer production techniques. The effects used are sublime, and the lyrical content is beautiful. The soundscapes they create fill the atmosphere with chill vibes. Live, this band was sick, and the drum work was notably tight and aggressive.

My favorite song: *The First Schism of Porchlessnessism*, features the wailing wah-wah pedal that I've come to associate with this band, and I think it adds a lot to their sound. This song is gritty and features a bit of dissonance.

### REVIEWS BY ELLA SOLIS

## DOGINYA by BRUNCH

Brunch is a punk/stoner rock act from Burlington, Vermont. They released, "DOGINYA," on July 4th, 2024.

You can listen to it here:  
[brunchtheband.bandcamp.com/album/doginya](https://brunchtheband.bandcamp.com/album/doginya)

### My Impressions:

This EP starts off with a punk song that ticks all of my boxes; it has blistering energy, catchy lyrical content, and outstanding guitar/bass work. The next song is a bit more of a stoner rock, groovy type of song. Overall this album features a lot of elements of different genres, fused to create a beautiful child of shock rock, stoner rock, and grunge that highlights all the best elements of each genre.

My favorite song: *TRIGGERFINGER*, this song sounds so strangely unhinged, the intro is absolutely perfect with his sloppy-yet-in-time singing. The switch up in the middle is perfection as well.

## DAYS OF IMPERMANENCE by SEAN HAMILTON

Sean Hamilton is an experimental artist from Copenhagen, Denmark. They released the album, "Days of Impermanence," on September 27th, 2024.

You can listen to it here: [gottaletitout.bandcamp.com/album/days-of-  
impermanence](https://gottaletitout.bandcamp.com/album/days-of-impermanence)

### My Impressions:

The first song *Pioneers Get Slaughtered But Settlers Prosper* sets the tone for the album with rapid and ever-changing percussion. The next song *Horseshoe (I)* is very bright, short, and sweet. The next song is soft and sporadic, offering a respite from the chaos of previous songs, *Brightest Lights of Darkest Days* feels like pure serenity and freedom.

My favorite song: *I'll Remember This, But Then I'd Forgotten*. This song is both chaotic and sweet at the same time, it's closer to the end of the album so it really ties in all the chaos of the previous tracks. All the sweet sounds, all the ambience, etc., and combines them into one summary piece of art.

# IMPRESSIONS OF

## **COLD STAR: AN HOMAGE TO VANGELIS by THE CORRUPTING SEA**

The Corrupting Sea is a soundscape artist from Shelbyville, Kentucky. They released, "Cold Star: An Homage to Vangelis," on March 1st, 2024.

You can listen to it here: [thecorruptingsea1.bandcamp.com/album/cold-star-an-homage-to-vangelis](http://thecorruptingsea1.bandcamp.com/album/cold-star-an-homage-to-vangelis)

**My Impressions:**  
This album is just gorgeous. I remember seeing them perform live, sitting right up front, it took me on a journey through space. This feeling is represented well in Cold Star: An Homage to Vangelis. I love the synthesizer tones they use and the wailing background synthesizers make it truly feel like a journey through the cosmos. The Corrupting Sea was one of my favorite acts and I will be keeping up with them.  
My favorite song: *Four Years*, this song features a retro sound and features some chill drum work, while a synthesizer wails in the background until it eventually twinkles off, restarting with a new melody.

## **FUCK EPIC GAMES THE ALBUM NO by CURFEW KIDS**

No Curfew Kids is an electronic/harsh noise artist from Raleigh, North Carolina. They released the album, "Fuck Epic Games The Album," on September 29th, 2023.

You can listen to it here: [nocurfewkids.bandcamp.com/album/fuck-epic-games-the-album](http://nocurfewkids.bandcamp.com/album/fuck-epic-games-the-album)

**My Impressions:**  
The first song of this EP, *Quick Political Release Track One*, features a sample spliced and repeated, stretched, and mangled really, which fades into a bassy synthesizer that drones its way to the foreground. The next track starts out droney with what sounds like footsteps in the foreground, gradually growing louder. Then the track cuts in and out before the synthesizer drops a loud jarring note.  
My favorite song: *BTW If you hadn't known by now*, This song features a small, reversed hi-hat I believe droning on with a dark ambience before the noise wall kicks in. It's a very diverse track with a ton of variety.

## **FIERCE DIETY EP by FIERCE DIETY**

Fierce Deity is a dark ambient/noise act from Austin, Texas. They released, "Fierce Deity EP" on November 2nd, 2018.

You can listen to it here: [fiercedeity1.bandcamp.com/album/fierce-deity-ep](http://fiercedeity1.bandcamp.com/album/fierce-deity-ep)

**My Impressions:**  
The first song on this EP is a dark ambient soundscape with industrial crashing far in the background. The next song features the sound of marching with a high-pitched synthesizer screaming in the background. More and more layers are added and added until it turns into a cacophony of synthesizer noise and marching. Live, Fierce Deity used a record player and smashed it around in combination with effects.  
My favorite song: *Dour Childhood*, this song is noisy and evil sounding, with many sound effects playing with many effects added to create an evil soundscape.



## **I ADOPTED BRIAN GRIFFIN JUST SO I CAN EUTHANIZE HIM by NOIZGRAS**

Noizgras is a noise/comedy act from Greensboro, North Carolina. They released, "I Adopted Brian Griffin Just So I Can Euthanize Him," on May 10th, 2024.

You can listen to it here: [noizgras.bandcamp.com/album/i-adopted-brian-griffin-just-so-i-can-euthanize-him](http://noizgras.bandcamp.com/album/i-adopted-brian-griffin-just-so-i-can-euthanize-him)

**My Impressions:**  
This album's titles are reminiscent of the band Analcunt's song titles. The music features a banjo run through some pedals, with some comedy and political commentary. Live, this act is a trip, they sound exactly the same live as they do in the studio. I enjoy the clever usage of different effects to texture the noise to the artist's liking.  
My favorite song: *Nah I'm Gonna Keep Doing This*, this song starts with a short monologue and then a bunch of banjo noise and distortion kicks in, but this song has what sounds like 8-bit noise, loop noise, feedback noise, it's like a sampler plate.

### **REVIEWS BY ELLA SOLIS**



**BITTER, INC. METAMORPHOSIS II \$33 VENMO or CASHAPP: AMERICANBABYLON**

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# THEY LOVE THEM CONTINUED

T: Basically, my whole life I've related to music. I feel deeply and very emotionally. I love it very much. So I was always in musicals and I was always experimenting with different sounds. I was always in choirs. Semiprofessionally in college. I was in a college choir that toured.

Not professionally, I was always in a bunch of church choirs. Not because I was super religious but because I love the music and boy do I still love the music. It just was one of those things that I did a whole bunch of stuff like that. Then when I was 19 I was in college and I started dating a songwriter who wrote songs professionally. What's it called? For record labels.

R: Ok.  
T: He still does that today. I don't talk to him but I follow him on Instagram. He's still producing and making songs for record labels and lives in Los Angeles. It's just one of those things. When we were dating it was one of those fast, fuse relationships where we were in love for three months. During that process he was like anyone can write a song. I'm paraphrasing but that is what he said.

R: Yeah.  
T: I was like, well I can't and he was like, I can. Maybe you were never told that you can but you can. Anyone could. And I really take that to heart. The thing that I say in the music

therapy chapter about this is that basically a lot of my life up until I was in college was led by this belief that I think a lot of people in small towns have thoughts that if you are not rich you can't do certain things. If you're not told that you can do certain things than you can't do it.

So, as a music therapist, I'm challenged all of the time and I'm like hey, I don't think that I can write a song. Then they do it with me. We write music together and then they're like, I didn't know that I could do that. It's conditioned in us almost that we can't write a song or we can't do gymnastics or we can't do karate and it's like, have you ever tried? If you haven't tried then how do you know that you can't do something? I have never ice skated in my life and I am very very wobbly but my dream is to just take a few ice skating lessons. I just want to get good enough that I can skate in a straight line and I'll do that someday because I believe that I can even if it's hard. Yeah. So that's it: I always grew up with music. I didn't know I could write songs. I didn't start writing until I was 19. I didn't put out an album until I was 23. I'm 32 now. So it really has not been that long that I've been doing this.

R: Before you were a songwriter was your primary instrument your voice?  
T: Yeah. Yeah.  
R: Do you have any stories from your childhood about why you might've ended up as an artist?

T: Besides my dad being an artist, photographer, actor and musician, definitely undiagnosed ADD because I was diagnosed with it as an adult and I am always doing everything. I mean, I told you at the top of this, I just finished video editing an ad that was videos I shot earlier doing cinematography stuff, wearing an outfit that I hand sewed. There's a lot of stuff that I do, like learning how to do things. I think that it came from a lot of energy as a child. I knew I was going to pursue music in some kind of professional capacity. I thought it was going to be musical theater because I was very very good at musical theater. Then when I went to college, in 10th grade I discovered- I'm getting ahead of myself. I always knew I was going to do art or music. At some point along the line I was going to musical theater. At some point along the line, I want to say when I was 8 or 9 but it might've been a bit later, I wanted to double major in music and psychology.

I had a kind of fucked up family dynamic due to a lot of death in my family. It tore people up. Grief is an awful thing.

That led to me wanting to help people. I wanted to double major in music and psychology because music had always helped me. Then in 10th grade I learned that music therapy existed. I went for music therapy. I never went back for that for my bachelors and masters. I wanted to still do musical theater. I minored in it but they wouldn't let me because it wasn't a thing. I auditioned but they wouldn't let me into the program because I didn't want to major in it. Anyway, that's all.  
R: So, what made you want to be a musical therapist?  
T: Well. Music therapist. I have to correct you because musical therapy is a different thing. It's drama

therapy. So acting out shows, acting out musicals is drama therapy. Learning to act out your emotions in a dramatic way. That is not what I am. I have a lot of respect and honor for those people because they are wonderful. That's definitely, we borrow from each other a lot but drama therapy also does dancing, creating, and writing. I don't necessarily do those things in that way. Music therapy is the process of creating music, experiencing, or rewriting a lot of different ways that music therapy exists, music in order to process your feelings. It's all based on what is happening in the session. Whether you're creating it or not.

I wanted to be one because I had a messed up family growing up. Because grief is a hell of a drug. I really messed up a lot of my family dynamics that I had grown up with. When I was 6 my mom's father had died. Then within 5 to 7 years of that my mom lost her sister, her brother, we lost a whole bunch of pets by freak accidents. Some other people died too that we were really close with. Family friends.

I had gotten a lot of panic attacks. I didn't know that's what they were until college. I had gotten a lot of panic attacks. I thought that I was going to die. I was very very certain. Not because I was depressed but because everybody in my family was dying. It fucked all of us up in completely different ways. My siblings. My sister was kind of messed up in the same way. A lot of anxiety, a lot of compulsions for attention. Needing people to need to see us and hear us to remind us that we're still living. I don't know. My sister and I are very different and we've taken our mental health in very different ways. We still got along but we were the youngest two so there were a lot of similar traumas happening. I'll say it that way. So, yeah, some drug and alcohol abuse which I have forgiven and don't blame my

family for because we were all dealing with grief. And as someone who is completely sober, not because I had an issue, just by choice. I understand the use of escapism in that way because we all needed it at that young. I had music. It was great for me because I had something that was not hurting my body or mind or causing me to have to go away from my family. So that was nice.

R: So who were your first musical heroes?  
T: Oh goodness. Well, much like what I was discussing earlier, there is a thing where I didn't know what I could do until I did it sort of thing. Within that I didn't know that indie music or folk music existed because all I listened to is obviously what my parents listened to and they were listening to a lot of older stuff or sometimes 80s music. For the most part it was a lot of Alanis Morissette and yes she is a singer songwriter and really phenomenal but not really folk music. My heart and soul is for indie music especially, like Tilly and the Wall (out of Omaha, Nebraska) of Conor Oberst's record label Team Love Records. And yes, you might ask did you apply to Team Love records since your name is love? And yes, COVID messed that up because it was actually maybe going to happen for me but that was another quasi famous story for another time.

I had an online, quasi boyfriend out of like where's that, Florida near where the Kennedy space center is. We talked online. I was like 14 15 and he was like 16 17 and we were like cute dating. He sent me a tape and on that tap were the following bands who would end up shaping most of my late teens and twenties in completely different ways, Tilly and the Wall, Two Gallants, The Indigo Girls, The Decemberists. There were more but those

are the main four. Those would go on to become some of my favorite bands still to this day. Definitely when I was young I was very inspired by church music first, musical theater second. Then this Indie folk music that just kind of came out of nowhere and started existing in my world space and I didn't know that it existed before I got this CD.

R: Alright. Very good. Do you have any favorite or particularly consequential things you'd like to focus on in terms of your past recordings or performances?  
T: What do you mean?  
R: I mean, any songs you wrote that really stick with you or albums you released or any times you performed live. Do you have anything that was particularly consequential for you? That matters a lot to you?

T: Yeah. In terms of songs, I released it under my old name. Actually, that's one of the albums I'm going to change over to the new name. I released an album called Houses To Hollyhock. It was the album that was my thesis during my Master's degree. I wrote a 5 song song cycle during my Master's thesis. I released that just in terms of guitar and voice and said here's my thesis, this is it. I wrote a whole paper on it. I did a full band production and that was Houses To Hollyhock which was the same album just produced. That album means a lot to me. I still perform all five of those songs to this day. Not to every show or anything but I still perform them. They are wonderful songs. My thesis was all about- well I won't get into that now.  
R: What was your thesis about?



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**CONTINUED**



# THEY LOVE THEM CONCLUDED

T: It will be on all streaming services and if you want a vinyl you can get that off of my Bandcamp. There's a preorder happening now but obviously that will be done by the time that people see this.

R: Hahaha.

T: It will still be there as merchandise. I have 200 vinyl total and I will not print more. If there is no longer any left on Bandcamp it is because of how it's become part of history, or hopefully you can find it on Discogs. I'm hoping that in like 30 years people find a They Love Them album for like five dollars or whatever and they're like oh this seems interesting and it's beat up and well loved and people take it home and that's the dream I think for most musicians. I got a review of one of the songs off of the album. It's like the Mountain Goats but I don't like the voice as much.

R: Oh no.

T: I liked that so much that is how I'm promoting it now. I'm calling it The Mountain Goats but worse.

R: Oh haha haha.

T: I think that's fun for me. I love negative critique. I've always loved negative critique because that means I'm doing something right.

R: I was listening to one of your albums earlier and I thought your voice was beautiful. I'm sure it sounds excellent.

T: I think I have a good voice. It was literally my major. It was the thing I had the most confidence in. I don't have confidence in guitar playing. I do have confidence in songwriting. I used to not. I think that I'm a good songwriter now. I definitely only feel that way because of years of songwriting.

R: I think you are a good songwriter. One of the specific songs I was listening to earlier was We All Get Found Sometimes.

T: Off of my thesis album.

R: Off of your thesis album. I was really intrigued by it because it seems to mix-

it's definitely antifolk, like you were saying. But the way that you construct your lyrics maybe just a little hair more surrealistic than the average antifolk artist. You weave together different images sometimes as opposed to a strict ballad if that makes sense.

T: Yeah.

R: Yeah.

T: Oh I love that.

Absolutely. Thank you. That's a very kind thing to say.

R: Ok. Well. Aside from that, is there anything else that you'd like to promote?

T: Yeah. I'm playing a show with you on November 15 I'm very excited about.

R: Oh yeah, that's right.

T: We can promote that because that is happening.

R: You're currently reading this in the magazine that I write for and They Love Them is being interviewed in, we are playing a show on November 15 in Philadelphia.

T: Yeah at The Perch.

R: I'm excited.

T: I'm getting a couple other bands on but I don't know exactly who yet so I'm not going to promote them, but I'll be there and my vinyl will be there so that will be fun.

R: You should buy that vinyl, person who is theoretically reading this right now or hearing it on Youtube after we've already done this.

T: True.

R: But you should still get the vinyl.

T: I have a few preorders of it so I'm very happy. I'd like to get a few more preorders. I'm mostly just hoping that once I get these vinyls that people will flock to them because they are like, it's a real thing, it's not just made up anymore. I think that sometimes people are like, it's a preorder and an artist that I know but I don't know that they are actually going to get the vinyl. So I think when I actually have them in my hand people are going to be like oh that's

a physical thing I want that thing.

R: For sure. I bet that will work out.

T: I hope so. I guess we'll see.

R: So I will now get to my last question, which is: was there anything that you were hoping to get to talk about that I didn't ask you about? If so, please feel free to do so.

T: Mmm. That's a good last question. I guess the one thing that I always like to say is that at the end of the day the thing that matters the most to me in music is the expression of self. For me, as a human being where I don't know what emotions are and I kind of make it up as I go along and it's gotten me pretty far, that's what I tell my clients too, how to know what emotions are based upon, what you are feeling, and then how to kind of read the room. If you're not actually reading the room right, how to apologize at that moment. Because neuro-divergence. The best thing for me in music and expressing myself is when I do the show I am very much putting my soul out. There's a song on my thesis album called Brand New and the chorus is like I open up my heart and soul to you / just like a flower facing the sun would do. That's really still to this day how I feel about songwriting. I'm being vulnerable in a way that I can not be in any other situation in my life. I want to perform until the day that I die, even if it is for very few people (though I hope it gets to be for more and more). Even if it is for three people at an open mic, the ability to express myself in that way has always been something that I can't get those emotions out in any other way. I am honored, for one, to be interviewed for this so thank you but thankful that people want to hear my stuff. More importantly than even all of that, I live a very honest and straightforward dialogue life so I'm very assertive. I apologize in advance if you ever meet me and I come off as abrasive. It's not me doing that on



purpose. That's my personality. It's because I am socially awkward and on stage that's the real me. I get off stage and I get a little bit into my shell. Not all the way but just enough and then sometimes I don't know the things that I'm saying. That's why I'm rambling. I guess that's good for you. You have a lot of fodder to write from.

R: That's good for you too. It's better to be overly communicative in this sort of thing than it is to be where I feel like I'm pulling teeth for me to get someone to talk. You're sounding very fluent and not overly wordy or anything like that. You're just explaining yourself in a very easy to understand way. So that's good.

T: Well thank you. That's kind of all in terms of where I am: live your life as your authentic self and I will continue living mine as mine and if you do or did end up seeing the ad that I'm literally going to put up tomorrow, I'm in my jester era! I hope that meme (that I took to an extreme that other people haven't) and I know that it's good for me too. It's much better for people to love and also hate this ad in such a way that it feels almost criminal, and I love that. I don't love to be hated but I love that my existence, especially as a

non-binary person, as a person who exists, I love that my existence can cause such a reaction in people that I don't care about. I care about you. When people don't care about me I just don't care about them. And they hate that. They hate that they can't get to me in any way that is meaningful. So, I don't know. Those are my lasting, last thoughts. They were a bit dispersed and all over the place. But that's how they shape up, love yourself enough that if people hate you you can love yourself even more.

R: That's a good message. Thank you so much for sitting down well,

I don't know if you're sitting down or not but thank you so much for communicating with me in this interview. I really did enjoy it and I had a good time getting to know you.

T: Excellent, well that's good! Phew! Because you have to play a show with me. If you hated this that would be awkward. It was a lot of fun to just kind of babble for an hour so thank you.

R: Alright. Well. You have a lovely night.

T: Thanks. You too. I'll talk to you soon. R: You too.

**-END-**



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# ISSUES INTERVIEW WITH CHUCK RITCHIE

Chuck: Hello? Hello?

Ryan: Hi Chuck. Can you hear me?

Chuck: Yeah, how're you doing?

R: It's been a long time.

C: Yes sir. Yes sir.

R: So, what are you up to?

C: I just wrapped up recording. I have my buddy Phil over and I'm playing bass on his project. It's kind of in the early stages. We're making demos trying to get it all together and see what happens. It's exciting.

R: Nice. Nice. So the way this works is I'm going to ask you questions and you can answer the questions however you like. You can get off topic.

C: Ok sure.

R: So don't feel like you have to keep it strictly business. I'm recording this. I'll transcribe it later. This interview, the transcript of it, will be out November 1. The audio of it will be out on our Youtube channel that month.

C: Well that's exciting. Alright.

R: So let's start easy.

What is your name and where are you?

C: Chuck Ritchie. I'm in Concord. I'm out here in the sticks currently.

R: Have you lived in Concord your whole life?

C: Right about the same area. Salisbury, Hickory, but Concord yeah I've

been here probably about 16, 17 years.

R: For those people who are reading and don't know, where is Concord?

C: I would say it's about 30 minutes South of Charlotte. No, let's see, North of Charlotte.

Sorry man I'm getting nervous, can we start over?

R: No no no no you're fine. Don't worry about it.

C: OK. It's just a little outside of Charlotte. It's kind of a small town, if you will, a little less developed, at a slow pace.

R: Sure. So how old were you when you started to play music?

C: Um well. I grew up in a very musical family. My mother and grandmother played piano. I would say that my mother is the greatest pianist ever. She played in church. She still plays in church. She played all the funerals, all the weddings. All, everything that was going on in the church she would always be there playing. It's all on my mother's side. They have always had a connection with music. I was playing real young and singing, taking piano lessons. I started picking different instruments up,

guitar, it just kind of went from there. Seeing what I was

good at.

R: Does your mother write her own music as well?

C: Not that I would say; if I could say one bad thing (which is hard to do), she doesn't know how to jam. If I said B, A, turnaround on the B, she doesn't know what to do. She can play 5 flats, 4 sharps, whatever. She can sight read too. If she's never heard a piece she can play it. It's almost uncanny the way that she can do it. She's extremely talented. She's a musical inspiration for sure I would say.

R: What kind of work did she do?

C: What kind of work do I do?

R: What kind of work did she do?

C: She was a stay at home mother. My stepfather worked his fingers to the bone so she could stay at home and be with us. It

was great. She would read to us all the time. It was nice. She's a stay at home mother.

R: Does your stepfather do anything musically?

C: No, he's very; he's an architect. So he's on the left side of the brain. What's the non-creative side?

R: Analytical?

C: Yeah, really analytical. That isn't to say he's a tight ass. He likes music and understands it. He used to have an autoharp and he would play it but I think my mom sold it and didn't tell him. Sorry mom if you hear this. Putting that out there. He's very supportive. He gets it.

R: How old were you when you started writing your own music?

C: Oh gosh. It took me a long time to try and find a niche. Honestly, I kind of started 17-18. You just

write one terrible song after another.

Eventually they get halfway decent, less rickety and shit. It took me a long time to find my sound, too. I think it's important to not force it and just fall into where you're being yourself and just trying to be genuine, I guess.

R: How old are you now?

C: 33.

R: Ok. And do you collaborate with anyone?

C: Oh yeah. I played. I've been known to play the sax now and then. I used to play a lot of live shows with several different bands. That was a great experience. Like I said I recorded earlier with my buddy Phil, and I'm playing bass on his album. To

be honest with you, I don't- I'm more of a studio guy. I don't mind playing live. By the time you load your car full of gear, you drive all the way out there, you play until two in the morning, you drive all the way, it's work. I don't want it to feel like work. So I don't mind playing shows but I'm more of a studio guy, really.

R: I think maybe we met at a show.

C: Yes that's correct.

R: Was that at Laura's house?

C: Yes, there and then I think the second time I saw you was at The Station. I think it's the Skylark club now,

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# CHUCK RITCHIE CONTINUED

C: The Skylark Social Club. I saw you there when it was The Station.

R: Ohhh.

C: It was on Central Ave.

R: Not Tommy's Pub but The Station. That was kind of a dive-y sort of place but it had a big- is that the place that I'm thinking of?

C: Yes, that's exactly. It was before they had put the stage in. It was right on the ground with everybody. I had played with Sheep the Band. I think the first time I saw you, I can't remember what band I was doing. I was so fly by night in those days. I won't say I was half assing it but I just loved playing out and playing live. I feel like I got my fill of that.

R: How did you get mixed up in the Charlotte scene? You're from a more rural area.

C: Yeah. Well, I started going to Tommy's Pub around 2012.

Something like that. I met Jamie Starks up there. We struck up a friendship. I would go to open mic every week. Like religiously. I would be up there 3 or 4 nights a week sometimes. I'd see different shows. I was playing my saxophone so I would sit in with them sometimes. It was like an epicenter of people being really creative. Everyone was really nice to one another.

R: Where did you do the open mics?

C: When did I do the open mics?

R: Where did you do the open mics?

C: I would play Tommy's Pub every week without fail. Then it got to the point where I practically ran it. It kind of fell off.

R: Didn't Tommy's pub didn't someone buy the building or something?

C: No, Tommy's, from what I understand- I don't wanna misquote anybody.

R: Well, you know.

C: Tommy's sister had the will to the property and she sold it to the developers right there.

R: Ok.

C: To be honest with

you, it was a nice little bar but there ain't no telling what she got from that deal. I don't blame her.

R: Well yeah they're selling real estate in Charlotte. They're doing well.

C: She's. I ain't mad at her. She did hers.

R: So you said you don't do much playing out nowadays.

C: Well I don't know. I'm kind of likely open contradicting myself here because the last band that I played out with was called Jason and the Arguenots. I was playing bass. It was a punk band.

R: Ok.

C: It was a lot of fun.

We were playing a show a week for a while there.

R: Who else was in that band?

C: Jason Bel, Jerryd Novatni and Steve Fowler. It was a four piece.

R: Very nice.

C: Yeah we had some good times. We played the Skylark Club.

R: Yeah.

C: It used to be The Station.

R: Memories. So, what are you working on musically now?

C: I just put out a new song. It's called *Plastic Daydreams*. I did everything at the house here. I did all the recording and singing and mixing. All that fun stuff. It was- I've been working on it a while and it was time to let it go. I just kind of sat down and got in the zone and started mic'ing (getting under the hood and getting tracks in and out and seeing what worked). The machine that I have is a TASCAM standalone mixer and recorder. I don't use a laptop at all.

R: Ok.

C: I'm not opposed to it but at this point I'm used to using the TASCAM so I'm just more comfortable with it. Anything has an element of you can punch in/punch out. Sometimes I do that. But it adds an element of, I don't know, you have to be able to play the song. It has to be more fluid, I guess. Does that make sense at all?

R: Ok.

C: I'm not opposed to it but at this point I'm used to using the TASCAM so I'm just more comfortable with it. Anything has an element of you can punch in/punch out. Sometimes I do that. But it adds an element of, I don't know, you have to be able to play the song. It has to be more fluid, I guess. Does that make sense at all?

R: Sure. I used to use a ZOOM R-90.

C: TASCAM?

R: No, ZOOM. It's very similar. Multitrack, digital.

C: That's what it is. I can't recommend TASCAM enough. It's a 32 track and I've had it for years now. It hasn't failed me yet, so.

R: The songs you are working on now.

C: Currently?

R: Yeah. What's it about?

C: Oh the song I just released. You know to be honest with you, I'm not sure. It just seems like *Plastic Daydreams* is almost like a fake. Almost a delusion of grandeur. I was telling my buddy about that and he was like yeah but plastic lasts forever.

R: Haha. That's true.

C: It's a walking contradiction. I don't know. It's kind of far out. What it's about, to be honest with you I kind of don't know. I think some of the words just fit together. I don't know how to say it. When I figure it out I'll let you know.

R: Ok. Well, that's intriguing. So, when you're going to write lyrics, how do you approach that?

C: For the longest time I wrote the music first. I kind of fucked myself doing that because I would have to write words that would fit in with the music. I would have to find specific words that would fit. So now I'm having to change it up and write words that are all together.

R: Sure.

C: Strip it down, play the acoustic guitar, try to sing and play the acoustic guitar so it is more cohesive. To be honest I still try to write before but these days I'm more focused on trying to write it all together, with the lyrics and melody in mind at the same time. It makes it a lot easier in the long run.

R: I got you. So, what have you released in the past?

C: I was working with Jim Saj for a long time S - A - J. He's a drummer and bassist out of Concord. He was in

Nihm. The guy was in like 5 different bands now. I was working with him for a while. He has a studio in Concord. We linked up on Facebook. It was a mutual friend. I can't remember who. But Jim put this ad out there and said I've got this little studio going. I'll do this for a good price. I'm just trying to help people out. That's how we linked up. I was doing everything at the house but the drums. I tried to learn how to mic drums. I learned how to mix drums, where to put the mics. It was; I couldn't do it. I started doing everything on a drum machine. I would send it to him and he would try to play the drums over that. Everything else is already in place.

R: That's great.

C: The formula changes. As time goes on you change your techniques and all this. So yeah, this latest song, I actually just threw the drum machine on there.

R: Yeah.

C: I don't want to say that it's lofi but it is what it is.

R: Gotcha. So, do you have any plans for your music going forward?

C: Well, you didn't hear this from me but I may or may not be making a country album.

R: Oohh.

C: So.

R: Very cool.

C: People have been saying for a long time you should sing country music. I say I don't wanna sing country music. I'm a rock and roller. I wrote a few country songs and I got a steel guitar player. I linked up with him on Bandmix. We're just kind of going from there. So. Other than that I've got little songs I'm going to drop here and there up until then. Soon that may be happening ah ah wink wink. We'll see what the future holds.

<pause>

R: Now, ok. 17 minutes in. You just quote unquote did not announce that you're working on a country album. Let me ask you this. Do you have other art forms you like to work with?

C: Do you mean like painting?

R: Painting, writing.

C: Gosh, I've tried painting and drawing and it's downright pitiful. Maybe stick figures or something.

My lady. She paints- she's very talented. She does a lot of nature stuff.

R: Oh, good.

C: I tried the drawing and stuff. It just never worked. I've got to say that I'm actually sitting there right now enjoying your paintings on the wall.

R: Oh yeah? That's right.

C: Yes, thank you very much for that by the way.

R: Thank you very much. Gosh.

C: You did the painting for the new song that I've released too.

R: And what's the name of that song again?

C: Plastic Daydreams. If you're looking for me, my music is on Youtube.

It's not on Spotify or any of that stuff. I want my music to be free and easy for people to get to.

R: Well that's good. That's the right attitude to have about it.

C: I think so. Spotify is just another soulless corporation. I know it's a necessary evil as people say. Like social media. I don't know. You call it old school or maybe I'm being stubborn. Do you? I remember bootlegging music and burning CDs, don't you?

R: Oh yeah.

C: You know? Being a kid not having money to buy. Not having the means, go ahead. If you want to send me a few bucks on venmo then go ahead. You can bootleg my shit if you want.

That's cool.

R: In high school I would go to basement shows and stuff like that.

C: Yeah.

R: I lived in the Western part of the state, like Asheville.

C: Yeah.

R: So, to try to get a show I had to put a song on an actual CD-R or something like that.

C: Yeah.

R: But with Spotify there's something off about it. Because even if you had a dream of being on the radio or something, the joy and the beauty of the radio is they are just beaming it out. They're just putting it out there. If someone happens to dial in they are going to hear what your music is.

C: Yeah.

R: But with Spotify they are only going to get to your music if they specifically try to get to your music.

C: Right.

R: Plus they also take this enormous cut out of everything. I don't know why I don't like the model. Even though it's a part of the world.

C: Yeah. Necessary evil. Whathaveyou. Here's the thing: If I wanted to be rich and make money I wouldn't be a musician. Obviously I don't do it for the money or else I'd obviously do something else.

R: Sure. Have you released any albums?

C: No. I was doing 2 or 3 songs at a time. I think I've done 8 or 9 now. I work mostly by myself.

R: Ok. What work do you do by the way? Oh, you mean musically.

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# CHUCK RITCHIE CONCLUDED

C: Yeah I do a lot of the writing and recording here in the house. I will do as much as I can. Not only to save money but it's hard to describe when you're working with someone in the studio. It's hard to describe sound. Does this make sense?

R: Yeah. When you're working with someone else it's either going to be clicking or it's not. They're either going to feel the vibrations that you're putting out there or else it's going to be forced.

C: I fear I can be a little bit OCD out there so I can by myself.

R: Well the song that you've released most recently, *Plastic Daydreams*, that one is definitely highly polished. You called yourself a completist. You want to work on it until it is done.

I was thinking, when you were talking earlier about *Plastic Daydreams* having multiple meanings, I was thinking also that *Plastic Daydreams* is maybe like one day my fortune will come.

C: Yeah. Or almost like a toy or something it's hollow I guess. I think you cracked the code. I've been trying to figure it out myself so thank you.

R: What artists do you think influenced you or what do you listen to?

C: Oh, I'm all over the place. Buena Vista club this morning. Music from Cuba. I've been listening to a lot of Cuban music lately. I'm kind of all over the place. What I listen to doesn't necessarily influence me.

R: Ok I feel that.

C: I have an appreciation for all kinds of music.

You should never sell yourself short and be like I like rock and roll, I like hip hop, I like country. If you like it you like it, that's what I say.

R: Ok but are there any bands maybe in particular that have kind of set you on a certain pathway.

C: Oh yeah. I think Ty Segall would be a big one. Whenever I started listening I heard Fuzz first. That was the project he was in. Then I started listening to his solo stuff. That kicked me in the ass. I was doing a little home recording at the time.

When I listened to his record and heard the rawness, it just sounded natural to me and I said I want to do this. I want to do something like this.

R: Yeah.

C: So Ty Segall is one. The DOCs.

R: Yeah.

C: Huge influence. When I first heard Floating Coffin that was all kinds of light bulbs going off. It was fun and wild and free. Maybe those two. But musically I'm all over the place.

R: Much earlier when you were talking to your mother you said you didn't like to jam. Do you like to improvise with people?

C: Yes because I used to be musically literate. I played saxophone. I put it down for so long. I tried to pick it back up recently and it was a whole can of worms. That makes me have a whole lot more respect for people that can read music because it doesn't come easy. I can see where it clashes. You don't have to read music, just jam and be yourself you know. But you can do both, I think.

You can be Duke Ellington or something. You can have the composition there. Or you can improvise and have your solos but I've got a lot of respect for people who read music.

R: Of course. Sure. When you're playing with a new person. When you're not performing, do you find yourself improvising with them for a while? Or do you only pick songs and learn them specifically?

C: Are we talking about an open mic setting? A jam?

R: No we're talking when it is you and another person, when no one else is watching.

C: Well we collab and see what's happening. Sometimes you serve the song and sometimes you're the one bringing the idea to the table. I can do both, so.

R: Ok, cool.

Do you have anything you'd like to promote?

C: Peace and love. Understand each other, please.

R: My last question is: is there anything you were hoping to be able to talk about that I didn't ask you about? And if there is, please go ahead.

C: Oh my gosh. Alright, earlier you said it was ok to go off subject and meander a little bit so I was hoping, I thought you were going to ask what are your hobbies and that kind of stuff. I was kind of prepared to go down that path I guess.

R: Ok, what are your hobbies?

C: Well, I love playing *Age of Empires* on PC.

R: Ok cool.

C: I like gaming on PC. I'm on steam a lot. Just to smoke a joint, chill out and play *Age of Empires 2*. On Steam. It's one of the great pleasures in life. It's the little things I guess.

R: *Age of Empires 2* is a classic. It's great.

C: Yes and they have the definitive edition on Steam. They remastered it.

R: I used to play that and I used to play *Civilization 3* all the time.

C: That's a good one too. I just got *SimCity 3000*.

R: Oh hell yeah.

C: They just put that one on there too. I guess you could say that video games are kind of a hobby of mine. Also I'm into a lot of things. Anything to do with the paranormal is interesting to me as well.

R: What side of the paranormal? Like, ghosts, aliens?

C: Oh man. Cryptids, crop circles, telekinesis, ultra terrestrials. I don't care man. Any kind of high strangeness I think.

R: Have you ever seen a UFO?



C: I haven't but I've seen some shit brother, ghosts and what have you. I saw a shadow person one time and it scared the ever loving shit out of me. I thought I was going to have a heart attack.

R: Oh, wow.

C: It's hard to discount people's stories. Yeah, yeah. Until it happened to you, it was - I was just laying in bed one night and the apartment we were staying at, the kitchen was straight out of the bedroom. We kept the stove light on in the middle of the night. I was laying in bed when I shit you not, I don't care if you believe me or not, this shadow person was there. 6 feet tall. Six and a half feet tall. I'm getting goosebumps thinking about it. I walked across the door and it scared me so bad that I got up, turned all the lights on and I had a baseball bat. I was going all through the house. I was convinced that there was somebody in the house. It scared the shit out of me. I walked around outside and couldn't find anything but it scared the hell out of me. I definitely think there's something there.

R: That's spooky.

C: Yeah. Some people are sensitive to it. Here's one thing: I was listening to Art Bell. You know, *Coast to Coast*? Art Bell is one of my favorite of all time radio hosts.

R: Yep.

C: God bless that man.

R: Absolutely.

C: He was saying there's three people. 2 people might see the UFO but

the third person won't. Isn't that a trip?

R: Yeah it's interesting how the human mind works.

C: It's perception.

R: It makes sense that would be how it works. Some people don't have sight. Some people don't have hearing. Some people can't smell certain things or taste certain things.

C: Right.

R: So it makes sense that some people are more attuned to this sort of thing.

C: Well, like I was talking about earlier John Keel. I wrote this book in the 70s called *The Eighth Tablet*.

R: Yeah.

C: *The Eighth Tablet* on multiterrestrials and the super spectrum.

R: Yeah.

C: What he proposed is that the human eye can only see a very specific proportion of the visible light spectrum. So that could be another reason why you might see it and I might not.

R: There you go.

C: He proposed that the extra terrestrials aren't traveling millions and millions of miles to get here. They are shifting dimensions. They are interdimensional beings.

R: Right.

C: He proposed that all sorts of paranormal manifestations: bigfoot, UFOs, ghosts,

he kind of lumped it in and called it multiterrestrials. In his opinion it was more of an interdimensional manifestation as opposed to a physical one.

R: Yeah. Like driving a car across space or whatever.

C: Yeah like a wormhole. You have a wormhole of the world. Paris can touch New York. You can bend space and time theoretically.

R: Yeah well everything has a frequency. They can be dialed in like a radio, as an analogy.

C: Yeah, absolutely.

R: I've seen UFOs two times in my life.

C: I believe you. I wholeheartedly believe you.

R: One time Emotron was there and Echo was there. We all saw it.

C: Damn. The Emotron was there?

R: Yeah.

C: They were coming to take him home.

R: That's what I said. I said Tron do they follow you around everywhere you go.

I saw one in 7th grade and never saw it again. Then I saw one when I was 34 or 35. Of course Tron was there.

C: That's right, naturally. Did you ask him? Did you say hey are these friends of yours?

R: Haha.

So, ok. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about before we wrap this up?

C: Um. I think this is about it. Thank you so much for having me Ryan, I appreciate it.

R: Sure. With Chuck Ritchie, of course.

C: Yes sir. R I T C H I E. Look for me on Youtube.

R: Look for *Plastic Daydreams* and maybe, maybe not, a country album.

C: Yes. Maybe or maybe not. We'll see.

R: That was fun. Thank you.

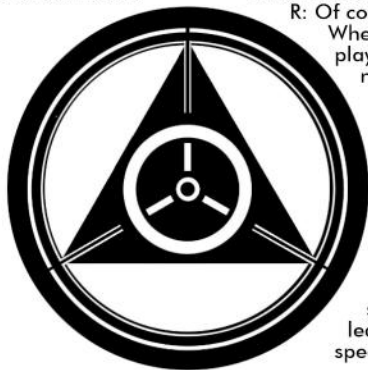
C: Alright Ryan thank you so much for having me. Thank you.

R: Ok have a good night.

C: Ok you too.

R: Bye.

C: Bye.



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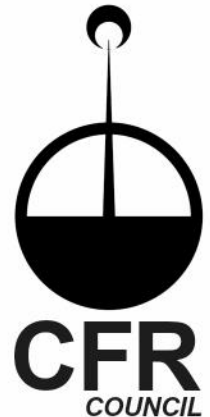
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