

RESONATE

Echoing the Sounds of the City.



Remi Wolf, Mella D, Katy J Pearson, Nelson Navaro
Diz Dice, Big Jeff, Album Reviews + MORE

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Photo by
Thomas Wilson

Editorial.

At long last our second issue has been printed on paper! After months of delay, and an earlier than expected website launch, we are back in print.

In echoing the sounds of the city we have had to put our ears that little bit closer to the ground; the city is much quieter than when *RSN8001* saw the light of day. Rather than dwell on the year that could have been, **Resonate** has taken this chance to find the innovators and the artists that refuse to be held back, and the true creatives who continue no matter the circumstances.

We very much see it as our mission to **amplify the sounds of the city**, so they can be heard over the silence. *RSN8002* is an ode to the resilience of our scenes. When the world looked bleak for musicians, it was our communities that carried the torch, looked out for each other, and made sure when this is all over, the music would not be turned down.

It's good to see you again, let's not leave it so long next time.

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Thanks:

Dylan: Brae, Buddha and Bonsai Trees

Holly: To all the creatives who have fuelled and nurtured my passion

Tom: Jack Wells, Femke Campbell, Jenny Duffy, Jake Applebee

Hope: Those who have supported and inspired me

Abbie: Mum and Dad, BIMM, my dog Bella-boo, the amazing resonate team for their dedication

Ben: Mick, Femke Campbell and Jack Wells, DJ Rashad, Kelsey.

Erica: Everyone positive in my life



The Malarkey.
HUBB Records

Photo by
Thomas Wilson



Prince Fatty partners up with Shniece to serve a dose of the magic that happens when 60s psychedelic rock is twinned with a bump of classic fatty dub. A two song single called *Black Rabbit*, one heavily dubbed and the other more vocally focused, the samples used are mixed with Shniece's vocals that dreamily overlay the Jefferson Airplane guitar lick we know so well. With Horseman's rocksteady drum beats leading the way, Fatty and Shniece take you on a mind-altering journey that revisits the psychedelic realm of Airplane's original, whilst sticking to the signature fatty dub sound.

Prince Fatty



On June 29th this year, Hopsin released his single *Kumbaya* which didn't disappoint. The LA-born rapper brings his quintessential dark-natured verses to this track, with a fire instrumental throughout. The track displays his first-class flow and dominating lyrical barbs, before building in ferocity in the pre-chorus with lyrics that resonate with listeners till the very end. Hopsin exclaims, "Watch me rise to top ten (yeah). You know what I mean? Ain't no one like me" - and it would surprise me immensely if we don't see him doing just that very soon. Don't believe me? Checkout *Kumbaya* for yourself!

Hopsin



Soft Crash is the new music collaboration formed by Hayden Payne, aka Berghain resident Phase Fatale and Pablo Bozzi of Imperial Black Unit. Their debut release *Spiritzkreig* is due for release on BITE Records this December. Combining references such as William S. Burroughs and J.G. Ballard respectively, the project also functions to explore the fetishisation of technology and the body and how the line between those is perpetually blurring. Increasingly, humans are reshaped and controlled by modern technology to an abysmal state; meanwhile, this technologically-made music can reinsert some emotion to try to bring back out a romantic sensibility and connection. The EP is an incredibly energetic blend of techno, EBM, proto-trance and italo with dancefloor detonating potential.

Soft Crash



Brighton based rockers Black Honey got serious attention with their self-titled debut album back in 2018. Two years down the line they're gearing up to leave an even bigger mark on the UK music scene. *I Like the Way You Die* is the latest single released from the upcoming album *Written and Directed*. Keen cinephiles will spot the reference to Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*. Much like Tarantino himself, Black Honey indulge in the spectacular, with fuzzy guitars and a four-to-the-floor kick drum driving the track. The band have a particular flair for the dramatic, be it their ability to write songs that are just waiting for the silver screen, or their cult classic music videos. *I Like the Way You Die* is no different, their very own mini vampire film that Quentin himself would be proud of.

Black Honey



TeeZandos aka "The princess of drill" is making massive waves. This East London born artist is symptomatic of the increasing rise and exposure of female talent in this genre. At only 17-years-old, TeeZandos has already signed with GB records, featured in Kenny Allstar's *Voice Of The Streets* freestyle and has released multiple singles this year alone. You've got to watch out for this fresh talent because TeeZandos is not slowing down anytime soon and in her words it's "Zando way or no way".

TeeZandos

fuck the charts.

An alternative selection giving the spotlight to the latest must-hears that missed the mainstream.

Fuck the charts. Check this.

Curated here at Resonate.

The Ragga Twins

The Ragga Twins, also known as RTC, are a jungle, ragga and DnB duo from Hackney, known to many as veterans of the scene. The duo have always been crucial cogs in the development of UK drum and bass and still continue to pull through with fresh material despite being 30 years in the game. Our favourite recent cut from them was a tune that was released in 2019 in which they featured on Grays' track *Blood*. Check it out for some original raw ragga lyrics against a wobbly, bass heavy beat. This tune hit hard over summer 2019 and there are plenty from these two, so keep an eye out.



TEMPLE OF THE FUZZ WITCH

Temples Of The Fuzz Witch are a band with many facets to their music. Endless gruelling build up, crescendos of drawn out savoured riffs, thick sickening thuds and cracks of kick drum and snare are all blended with the lead-singer's clean, crisp voice. This is a band I am going to be climbing over people to see once the opportunity arises. Lead Single of the album *Cherenkov Light* could conjure illuminating shoots of blue across a steadfast landscape. Other standout track *Red Tide* initially feels unique sounding, but eventually finds itself close to the obligatory Tony lommi guitar worship.



Tomo

Bristol-based Tomo records all his music at his family home in Somerset, which means his sound has an intimate feel. His soft voice complimented by comforting guitar meets poetic and often dark lyricism. The minimal arrangement in his songs transports you another place, somewhere restful and reflective. Tomo said: "The tracks in *Wayward Son* are essentially based around quite personal stories, so I felt that the stripped back arrangement was effective in reflecting the intimate nature of the songs." Recently added to Spotify's much loved *The Moon is Calling* playlist, Tomo is gaining much deserved traction. Drawing influences from Leonard Cohen, Gregory Alan Isakov and Tom Rosenthal, Tomo's strong folk influences carry his music.



Coco Bryce

Despite being a happy hardcore / rave producer and DJ for the best part of 20 years, Netherlands based Coco Bryce (real name: Yoël Bego) has kicked through the front door of UK Jungle & 160 scene, with a string of euphorically genius LP's and presented himself as the sharpest rising star of the moment. Recent EP releases on prestigious jungle and drum & bass labels in 2020 such as RUPTURE, Lobster Thermin and Critical Music has rejuvenated ravers with warm 90s amen breaks and supple RnB vocals, progressively futuristic as they are irresistibly nostalgic. Once you fall down the Coco rabbit hole, you can bear witness the rebirth of purist 90s jungle/ breakbeat. For fans of LTJ Bukem, Sully & L C Y.



Orla Gartland

With her debut album anticipated in 2021, Dublin born singer-songwriter Orla Gartland recently released her new single *Pretending*. The song poetically narrates the internal exhaustion of being at a party and playing a part in the social dynamic of the event. Although parties may be a distant memory, many of us can relate to finding the balance between being true to ourselves and wearing the people-pleaser mask. Originally a song she wrote in 2019, lockdown enabled Gartland to revisit the lyrics and develop this piece, ushering in a mood rich in reflection. Gone are the days of the breakup songs and instead music such as Gartland's, allows for a more potent self-analysis.



Mella Dee.

Mella Dee.

Mella Dee.

Mella Dee.

Words by Dylan Shortridge.

If you had painted a picture of 2020 to me a year ago, I would have scoffed at the events that have transpired. Yet here we are, living in lockdown 2.0 and the major thing missing for music fans as it was the first time around? A distinct lack of parties. Even though we are all itching to put on our dancing shoes and break a sweat, it's just not possible. Some venues, however, have been able to adapt better than others; within the Bristol music scene, the iconic Lakota is one venue that has managed to make it work. Tonight, Lakota Gardens plays host to Ryan Aitchison, better known as **Mella Dee**. I sat down with Ryan before his set to chat about the crazy times we are in, his new releases, and his transformation into a multi-faceted creative.

There is a restlessness to Ryan as we sit down for the interview, understandable considering he's a few hours away from playing two, two-hour sets to the Lakota crowd. Although a world away from playing the all-night-long marathons he was performing aplenty in 2019, it's been a while since he's been behind the decks in front of a full crowd. Clad in all black streetwear, aside from his CircoLoco x Burberry scarf, he is supremely attired and takes pride in the urban designer edge to his garms.



Known for his musical experimentation and ability to pull from a wide range of influences, Ryan has a knack for creating tracks that get crowds moving. Whilst he has been quietly working away producing music for the best part of the last decade, it was his 2017 hit *Techno Disco Tool* that saw him explode into the wider consciousness. While *Techno Disco Tool* might have been the track to get Ryan noticed, he is by no means a one-trick pony and has always pulled from a huge range of reference points to create the variety of sounds in his music. He explains: "I've always kind of done my own thing. The first solo stuff I released as Mella Dee was kind of grime beats (with the joke between friends that the Dee portion of Mella Dee comes from legendary MC, D Double E). In the company of friends, I'll be like 'yeah I'm fucking Mella Dee Double E mate.'" Although nowadays, Ryan's tracks fit under the umbrella of house and techno, his inspirations come from all corners of the musical landscape, from Joy Division and New Order through to his sister's happy hardcore records he would fall asleep to as a kid.

"DMZ, Exodus and big jungle raves, it's all had influence on me, being from South Yorkshire," he explains. His recent release *Sidney Street* pays homage to the bassline scene in Sheffield in the 2000s. "The original Sidney Street I never actually went to, but I went to Niche. It was different, that kind of energy that was around the city at that time. It wasn't specific to Niche, you had pockets all around." With tonight's setting of Lakota also being a club with huge heritage, it begs the question of what exactly makes a club special to Ryan? "I mean it's everything really, a good sound system, good staff, you want the people running it to be into it, I like a really dark club and you can just stick me in the corner. I much prefer that to stages. It's what I love, just going in and getting a dance on."

Though it's likely to be a time before really dark clubs can open up to their full capacities, social-distanced 'sit down raves' have become part of the new normal. Ryan, like everyone, is adjusting to this new dynamic. "I'm just getting used to it, everyone's struggling really, it's not like it's unique to the DJ. It's weird for everyone. One perk of being the DJ is you're not confined to a table, and you can actually dance!"

Other than his proficiency behind the decks, Ryan is also a prolific producer. "I started out as a DJ and learnt backwards," he tells me. Beginning his creations using Ableton, teaching himself and picking up odd tips and tricks from friends and peers, he says, "It's just been an ever-growing process, it's never been like 'this is what you do,' it's been 'OK I've got to figure this shit out,' and that's led me to different methods".

This development has seen Ryan branch out, buying huge amounts of hardware such as a vast array of effects boxes, and analogue production equipment that he collects with a self-proclaimed geekiness. He explains: "I like spending five hours searching eBay to see what there is. I might find an effects box that sounds sick. Whereas I get distracted when I'm just sat in front of a computer." Having such a big selection of equipment can be a blessing and a curse, with a recent move into a new studio throwing up new obstacles as well as new inspirations. "You have to get used to the new room and how it works, you have to get it set up and then I've got to get comfortable with how it all sits and sounds."

To Ryan, the processes of creation are nearly as important as the final products. Over the past year, keen Mella Dee fans may have noticed the ever-growing collection of art Ryan has been sharing via social media.

Having dropped out of art college at around 17, the extent of his artistic output since that time has been "a lot of tiny doodles". Then, at the start of the year, a trip to Thailand became a muse for Ryan to pick up the pen and paper to draw the scenery. With his rediscovered interest in art, the national lockdown posed as a perfect opportunity to get busy with the paintbrush. "I thought, I've got nowt else to do, I'll just paint. I started putting it up (on social media) because I really don't care about showing the process, it's cathartic for me. I get a bit of a release putting it out to the world". Much like his music, he has no interest in copying other people's work and seeks to understand other artist's methods and how they might inspire his own. He explained to me his influences: "I could say, Haring and Basquiat, I'm more interested in how their art has a feeling and maybe channelling that."

As well as a multi-talented creative, Ryan's journey through the music industry has seen him run his own label. Warehouse Music began as a way to cut out the middle-man and allow Ryan to put out music as and when he pleased. The label has now released tracks from, Spencer Parker, Dance System and Haider, and in picking these producers to release, he explained to me he has no interest in scouting people in the more traditional sense. "There's got to be some sort of relationship there so I can have a bit of an understanding of who it is, as well as the music they are making." Running Warehouse Music with his wife Sarah, he says he doesn't want to be the stereotypical tyrannical label boss controlling other people's music, the label having more of a family appeal and the relationships informing the music as well as the releases. He explains: "I don't want it to be about me controlling their creative output. I'm not gonna define what they are." The

mark Ryan has made on the electronic scene and DJ circuit is undeniable, but an interesting statistic that came out of his interview with DJ magazine is that a mere 20% of the music industry comes from a working-class background. Growing up in Doncaster and being proud of his working-class roots, Ryan puts this unfortunate stat down to people not seeing the music industry as an option. "No one in my family went to university, no one played any instruments," he explains. "I think you'd find the splits a bit different when someone comes from being downtrodden, you have a different charge towards what you're trying to say. My options were fitting rolling shutters for the rest of my life, so when I started doing this I decided I was going to keep doing it because I don't want to go back to what I was doing before."

After finishing our conversation, Ryan heads to take his position behind the decks. The restlessness and pre-game nerves visibly subside as the punters begin filling the picnic tables of Lakota Gardens. There is a buzz in the air, and it's one I've personally missed these past few months. The coloured lights come on and the smoke machines start whirring, he starts to spin his first tack; a return to a strange abnormal normality.

Find Mella Dee (Ryan) on socials @melladee_



Mella Dee.
Mella Dee.
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Mella Dee.



Right or Wrong?

Plague Ravers:

Words by Ruby Lawrence.

Resonate discusses the spirit of free parties in a pandemic

Once upon time in a land without Covid-19, our summers consisted of festivals, gigs, pubs and clubs. These events were the driving force of what unites our community and without them, many people's place and purpose has been ripped away. The lack of our beloved festival season has given way to the rise of free parties, which through the tabloid press have been brought into the public's consciousness this summer. The most recent of which was held in Yate, near Bristol on Halloween.

With free parties representing the only chance to dance at the moment, it was perhaps inevitable that there were more attendees and attention on

the event than was anticipated. The degradation of the party in question at one point trending as the top story on BBC News.

"Illegal raves have never stopped since the 90s, but because there are no festivals the free parties are just much more visible now," said an anonymous raver who agreed to speak to us. Although arguably the raves haven't changed, the regulations regarding them have. Due to the pandemic, a party organiser can now be fined a whopping £10,000 on top of their sound system being seized. In some ways, creating laws in an attempt to stop these parties only reinforces their ungovernable characteristics.



"Free parties are a statement against authority," another anonymous attendee stated, "We aren't all sheep in a system and there will always be a way around the rules."

To keep these parties going until morning, the soundsystem owners need to be one step ahead. Looking deeper into their motives, it's more than just a group of irresponsible ravers. "The free party scene has an unbreakable sense of community. We are all in it together and we respect our surroundings. Come Monday there is always a clear up crew," we were told by an attendee.

"There's no better feeling than being off-grid in the beautiful countryside when the sun comes up, listening to some south-west stompers! Surrounded by like-minded, free-spirited party goers, there's a really strong sense of community that I don't feel anywhere else," said an anonymous raver. It seems that for many, free parties give the opportunity to escape from the mundane world of archaic authority.

"It makes me feel alive, especially in a time when we aren't living, just existing".

Considering that gentrification is a controversial topic in the UK, and has been for a while, it's interesting to consider one of Bristol's nightlife treasures. Recently, the Blue Mountain nightclub has been sold and will be knocked-down and transformed into student flats. However, it's far more than just nightclubs, gentrification forces people out of areas in which they have lived for generations. There is an argument that pristine new builds eat away at our nightlife sector and encourage people to party where they can in order get their kicks from nightlife.

Whilst acknowledging that the act of a free-party could be seen as irresponsible, the more important question to consider is, why did it take place?

An anonymous raver spoke to me about why free parties meant so much to them. "For me, the real reason I fell in love with parties is the whole adventure side of things. There is nothing more exciting than being with a group of mates, following vague instructions and travelling the country in the dead of night. All we know is there are tons of like-minded people willing to travel anywhere for the love of underground dance music"



Brighton rapper Nelson Navarro speaks about his roots, progression and unique outlook

Words & Photo by Erica Travis.

Making his own path through the uncertainty of 2020, Brighton rapper **Nelson Navarro** has been in our eye-line for a while. His music is a combination of hip-hop and electronica style beats married with truthful lyrics in order to create an enthralling sound. The inspiring optimism he expresses for life in his music is an attitude we've all needed to hear throughout this year. We caught up with Nelson to chat to him about the unique challenges he's overcome as a rapper, his early life in music, and how his style has been channelled into his new EP *Afrofuturist*, coming out January 2021.

As we sit in a cosy pub in the Brighton Lanes drinking lime and soda, Nelson gifts us an exclusive copy of his latest EP release *Starlord*. As we get chatting, Nelson, whose real name is Elijah, discloses his musical beginnings. The story began with his parents "meeting in bands and playing in the same venues". Growing up on Craig David, reggae, funk, Stevie Wonder and Otis Redding, he was then introduced to The Red Hot Chili Peppers by a friend. Nelson describes this as a switching point for an 8-year-old. "I wanted to be in a band, I wanted to be a rockstar, the live performance of Red Hot Chili Peppers, Rage Against The Machine and Funkadelic is something I will always channel. I like the big show. I love an energetic show."

With spectacle live performances being so key to Nelson's identity as an artist, it made us question how he has coped over the last few months not being able to perform or feel that personal connection. "Obviously I love performing," he exclaims. "It's one of my favourite things ever. When I'm on a stage it's like I turn on, and I ooze energy, so it's been kind of sad." Having put out a live performance video on IGTV during the lockdown period, Nelson opened up to us about how he personally "struggles to pay attention to stuff like that" and it's not what he wants to do. However, he does state he's "pivoted" and his focus during this period shifted towards building his label, IllaFuture Recordings. The name and mission of this new venture being, "to make a better future, an IllaFuture. It's a self-empowerment thing".

As I'm sure we can all identify, the lockdown has given Nelson a huge amount of reflection time. This has really allowed him to realise his priorities and the drive to make his long-term goals a reality. Leaving his job as a studio manager post-lockdown was a big part of this journey to fully commit to his own music. In our interview, he quotes Julius Cesar saying, "If you want to take the island, burn the boats... If you wanna really accomplish something, don't leave yourself with any exits."



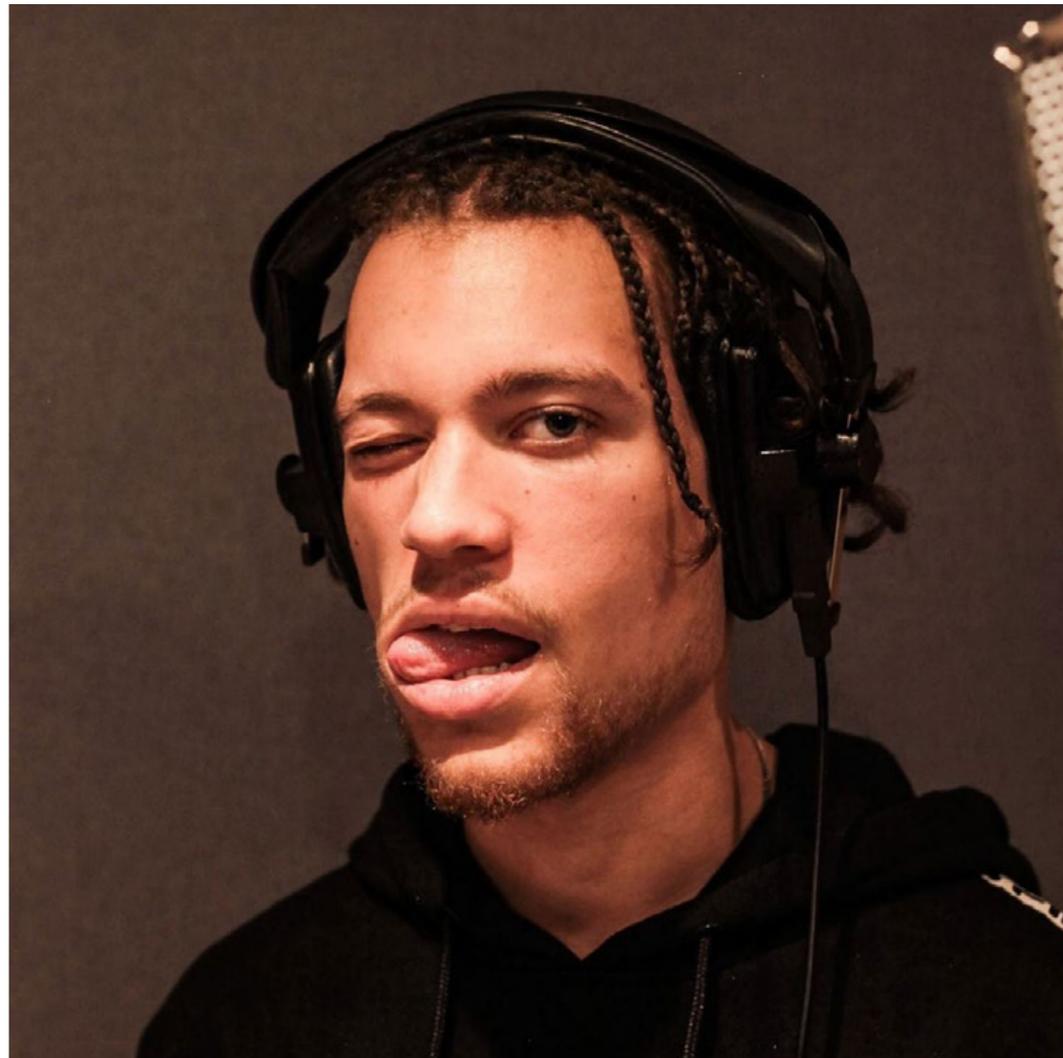
Nelson Navarro.

Nelson Navarro.

Nelson Navarro.

Nelson Navarro.

Nelson Navarro.



One silver lining that Nelson identified was with no live shows happening, there was no distractions or escapes. He explains: "Before we were doing shows all the time, we were out and about and kind of getting a bit carried away". Alongside this, Nelson also emphasises the change in his lifestyle has directly impacted his music. Smoking weed had been a big part of his identity for a long time having smoked for eight years. He discussed how stopping a year and a half ago had changed his outlook on life to "living in the moment, rather than living to be alleviated". Having also quit drinking at the start of this year, this change in values has been extremely important to him. He explained to us, "What you let go of will come back to you in another form so don't be afraid to let go of shit, that's what I'm trying to teach myself."

Having previously made us wait up to three years between releases, Nelson will now be releasing new music every month! He freely admits he became a bit too much of a perfectionist, but

now is comfortable with his position stating, "Perfectionism's best friend is procrastination, and what has really made me overcome this, is I want to be able to share good messages with people and help empower people to make a better future for themselves. I want to do that through music. I just realised I need to release more. So this is my new goal, and I am releasing music every month now."

Nelson's new music will be incorporating lots of other characters. The release in December features collaboration projects with artists such as Ben Rolo, GiwHa, Alfie Hayward and El Train, all before his big EP *Afrofuturist* release in January, which will also see collaboration with Montreal and Wyn!

To wrap up, we had to ask where he got his name Nelson Navarro. He explained the name is an amalgamation between a childhood wish for a brother to be called Nelson and his Jamaican grandfather's middle name, and, in an unintended

but respected coincidence, he also shares the name with the late Cuban singer, Nelson Navarro.

On this enlightening note, our conversation went full circle; past to present and back again. Nelson's focus and drive make him one to very much keep an eye on when things return to a level of normality in 2021.

Find Nelson on Spotify, Apple Music and Bandcamp.



Jodie Mellor &
Charlie Tyrell Smith
Hubb Records

Photos by
Beth Butcher.

The Cribs.
Album review page 50



Remi Wolf.

Words by Hannah White

In a saturated pop universe, **Remi Wolf's** eccentricity is a breath of fresh air, with the essence of a character straight out of a *Dr. Seuss* film. However, she is in fact, very real. Beneath her hyper-reality aesthetic is a 24-year-old Californian girl with a budding musical talent enriched with a vibrant imagination.

Escape is a word that frequently comes up as Wolf tells me over a Zoom call where her visionary style originated. "I wanted it to feel like an escape back to childhood, but with this evil adult irony to it," she explains. Growing up in Palo Alto south of San Francisco, music was deliberated throughout Wolf's childhood, running alongside her 10 year competitive downhill skiing career. With her decision made at 18 to pursue music, Wolf packed up and moved to LA to begin a degree in Contemporary Popular Music at USC's Thornton School of Music.

"We studied ear training, music theory, performance, vocal training, music history and music industry. It was a bit of everything, and then general education classes to which I didn't show up much."

Photos by
Meredith Truax

Yet like many creatives in a more authoritarian environment, the inevitable pressures of music education played out its effects. "To be honest, I hated it," she confesses. "I grew a lot but it felt too academic and it

just didn't lend the right mindset for the music I wanted to be making. It was all too structured, which is like literally the opposite of what I think the music creation process should be!"

Photos by Sophie Hur



In spite of the tedious ebb and flow of higher education, Wolf graduated, eager to take the suppression off her incipient and experimental individualism. Her new found freedom took her to the other end of the spectrum, inspiring colourful, perplexing aesthetics to accompany a lively, funk-infused take on pop music. Instead of letting the conventional studies numb her mind, Wolf metamorphosed like a butterfly, her reformed creative vision painting a big middle-finger to the restraints she once felt. *I'm Allergic to Dogs!* is the name of Wolf's second EP and first release on a major label. It follows up 2019's *You're a Dog!* depicting her infatuation with man's best friend, particularly her French Bulldog, Juno Jameson.

Believe it or not, she really is allergic to dogs. "I just love them so much that I'm willing to pay," she exclaims, "I'm actually thinking about getting allergy shots, where they put dog dander into your skin, and then you get more immune to it." Wolf's commitment is undeniable, and it doesn't end with her dog.

With the future of live music in blind eyed jeopardy, Wolf had an EP to release and was not letting any uncertainty stall her. Pioneering LA's first 'drive-in' concert, Wolf expressed her excitement to me the week before the event took place. "I'm just going to perform like I normally do with my band. It's going to be super cool because there's not gonna be any speakers or anything. They're broadcasting the set into the radios of the cars." Summer 2020 would've seen the performer at a number of international festivals, now instead of a crowded field of people, there was a sea of engines, greeted with nothing less than her usual abundance of energy.

The EP is filled with wit, grooves and vivacity from start to finish and seems almost antonymic with the current social state of the world. From the playful and punchy *Hello Hello Hello*, to the soul-enriched *Disco Man*, every mood is delivered with a splash of positivity so desperately needed right now.

Not one to shy away from talking about mental health, Wolf tells me how her educational experience also taught her about handling depression and managing stress in an industry where your emotions are your work.

She reminisces on the writing process of the chaotically emotion-fuelled second track *Woo*. "The day that I wrote that song, it was such a release for me," she says. "There's just something about it – it was so cathartic!" The song embodies the intensity of youth and self identity. "I just remember that feeling of being on top of the world. I was so depressed before writing it and like 20 minutes later, I was like, 'Oh, this feels great.'"

The majority of *I'm Allergic to Dogs!* was written in collaboration with Wolf's right-hand man, Solomonophonic AKA Jared. The LA-based composer/producer/pianist is behind all of your favourite Solange, Frank Ocean, Harry Styles and Blood Orange tracks, and so his collaboration with Wolf only further proves that she is headed in a star-studded direction. Another one of Wolf's infamous partnerships is with director, editor and all-round artist Agusta Yr. If you're unfamiliar with her work, you're simply missing out. With imagery resembling a millennial acid trip, take any of Wolf's signature music videos and you'll see Yr's ability to chew up reality and spit it back out with an unearthly twist. Combined with Wolf's passion for early 2000 cartoons and Dr Seuss' cinematography, the pair have created a universe that accentuates the musician's songs as much as it showcases her effervescent and bewildering personality.

Their introduction to each other seemed to be fate. "I found her on Instagram. My friend sent me one of her posts, and I thought it was like the sickest thing ever. I'd been looking for a creative partner for my visuals for months, so I immediately hit her up on Instagram and said I loved her stuff." The Icelandic artist is based in London, and miraculously Wolf was performing in London at the time.



She explains: "It was all very surreal and happened so fast. Literally the next day, we met up and got coffee and just talked through creating this visual world and if she was interested in working with me on it. We instantly had very similar references and inspirations and just really connected!"

Any artist with releases over the absurd summer of 2020 would certainly never have imagined dropping music during a pandemic, however, the cancelled shows and festivals have allowed a good amount of time for her, and many others, to look into their identity and experiment.

"I've been doing a lot of exploring with my sound, songwriting, structures and lyrics. So many interesting new avenues have come along. It's just been me and a guitar which I haven't done in a while. It's been very freeing for me." Of course, this still leaves room for a dose of less productive forms of entertainment. She explains, "I'm also obsessed with Tik Tok, I love it. People are so fucking funny and smart – I'm blown away by it!"

As things slowly edge back to some semblance of normality, Wolf offers a undeniably funky soundtrack, whether you're back in the pub gardens or still riding it out in your humble abode. Colourful in every sense of the word, the EP provides an energetic listen, wrapped in honeyed vocals and zany expressionism.

"I would love for people to be able to listen to it in their car while driving around, if you want to take a 25 minute little drive whilst you're in quarantine, that's the best way to enjoy it. Or maybe if you're two glasses of wine in for the night. Start listening to it two glasses in and get loose!"

Since speaking to the endearing pop star in-the-making, she has offered up another gem of a track titled *Monte Carlo*. Plus the opening track of the EP became the sound behind the launch of Snapchat's new music feature. Even a Tik Tok sound of Wolf's tune *Photo ID* is beginning to go viral, much to her delight! Wherever you look, it's difficult not to find Wolf and her kookiness settling comfortably into the music world. She stepped onto the scene and rather than becoming 'one to watch', she simply said: 'watch and learn'. That is exactly what we'll be doing!

I'm Allergic to Dogs! is out now on EMI/Island Records.





Katy J Pearson.

Words Fred Dodgson
Photos by Abbie Humphries

The country is shut again. About a week ago, sporadic fireworks exploded above silent streets on Bonfire night. A sad, insufficient nod towards the warming festivities we are used to. The inevitable grey has arrived, and summer's last remnants have been snatched away. This year, it feels particularly harsh. The chill that begins to blow in as we near Christmas time is biting a little harder, and winter's sinister approach is upon us.

So, where is the hope? If not in the familiar affection of your favourite venue or in the comfort of a pint beside a roaring pub fire, what do we have to spur us through the bleak? Frothy coffee isn't going to cut it, and this time we know for sure our government has no idea what they're doing. We need something to wake us up, someone to force a spring into our mornings and restore the glow in our evenings. We need something to which we can dance, something honest... something real.

Step forward **Katy J Pearson** aka "the West Country Stevie Nicks," armed with a stunning debut LP, a voice for the ages and a set of songs so uplifting in their sincerity they could melt even the most bitter of winter frosts. *Return*, out on November 13 on Heavenly Records may be poised to provide lockdown therapy for all who seek it, but this is an album that will live on long after our cities are full again. I had the pleasure of catching up with Katy on behalf of Resonate to talk about new beginnings, releasing an album during Covid, major label hardships and the South West effect.

"I think I had one day of feeling sorry for myself," explains Katy from an afternoon stroll in Bristol's Castle Park, "I rang my parents and said, 'After all this time, and I'm releasing it in a pandemic!' But then I was like, you know what? This is what it is, it's what's happened, there's nothing I can do about it, so I'm just going to have to accept it." It's this steely positivity that's immediately obvious in Katy, sturdily maintained even after recently being forced to push her headline tour dates back to June. This should come as no surprise however, considering the beaming sunlight that runs through most of her tracks on *Return*. She explains, "People are still going to get to listen to

it and I'm still going to enjoy the feedback. I've gotten over the grieving period of what could've been". This is a refreshing attitude, especially given the seemingly endless setbacks Covid has presented. The platform is there and the songs hold up with or without a tour, so why wait?

After hearing about the previous tumultuous set of industry tripwires Katy encountered in the making of KJP's excellent, West Country-meets-Americana debut, the method behind the confident maturity that oozes through the 24 year-old's songwriting becomes a little clearer. It's the result of an artist being allowed to use, for the first time, the only tool they ever needed... independence.

"There are still times I can get quite protective of what I'm doing because I've had so much less control (than I do now)," explains Katy, referring to her doomed days on a major with ex hype project Ardyn. "Things did get a bit mental," she adds, describing the stereotypical major label beginnings of being sent to America and beyond to "write a hit" with strangers, at an age where most artists have yet to formulate anything close to a sound. Her pleasure in finding out the band had been dropped gives a sign as to the effectiveness. "I was genuinely so happy about it," she reflects, "I'd started writing really leftfield songs just so they'd want to drop me. Considering I'm only going to be 25 next year, I'm still so young and to have gone through that in such a short space of time is quite crazy."

Sonically, the contrast between Ardyn and Pearson's latest body of work is not so far removed, but where the former feels rigid and eerily controlled, the latter is the opposite. Spirited, personal and splendidly loose, these are important differences, and *Return* has all the glister to prove it. As she stands on the doorstep of a potentially momentous first release, have her previous experiences left her with a cautiousness towards the industry? Katy explains, "Now that I'm signed to an indie label it's very different, I don't think I've seen any of the old characters I worked with surface now, which is nice. I feel like I escaped it to an extent."

I was intrigued to know if the outside perception of 'good and evil' existed when comparing an indie label, such as Heavenly, to your typical robotic major fair? "I think it's important to remember that any label, even if they're indie and they love music, is hoping that you're going to be a success and help them get to the next level. It's a business. The people at Heavenly are fantastic, I've got such a good relationship with them, but I think it's always important to have that in the back of your mind because it would be silly not to".

We move on, and begin to brush on how *Return's* fascinating group of songs came to be. Remarkably, given its strength, it began with a hangover of doubt. "It took a while, I was quite under confident after being dropped," she honestly confesses. "I had to shake off those layers of feeling I was shit and that it happened for a reason and not because I wasn't good enough. In the end, I had to calm myself down and realise that I just had to start writing again, as soon as I did things started to make sense. It made me realise what the album was about," she explains, "It was about going back to how I used to write, before I was completely screwed up from what happened (with Ardyn). Returning to an authentic way of doing things, writing purely for myself. I love every song on the album".

The gleaming production behind *Return*, courtesy of Ali Chant and his Bristol studio The Playpen, was another key factor in the crafting of the record. "He was such a good mentor, he approached the new project with sensitivity and just fully got what I was trying to achieve. The studio was only a 15-minute walk from my house and there was something really nice about being able to record in Bristol." Is it safe to say her move to the Somerset capital from London had a positive impact? "It's a great community, the music scene here is eclectic and there's some great venues. The Ardyn stuff all had to be in London, so to get to do all of this in Bristol and sleep in my own bed at night. I don't know, something about that felt very important. I'm also from the West Country, so I love living in the county I come from again".

Having had a similar middle-of-nowhere West Country upbringing to Katy, I tell her how much I believe in *Return* to conjure up imagery of Somerset in its most picturesque form. A golden sun glowing on rolling hills, a cow or six, and a luminously orange pint of cider in the hands of an onlooking farmer. She agrees, "Definitely! Most of the songs were written in Devon, Stroud and Gloucester, so it really feels like it's from this area of the world. Especially with Tonight (lead single) because I did the video for that in Salcombe in Devon which was beautiful. It is quite a summery album, which may have something to do with it. It feels weird to be releasing it near winter, but maybe people need it now!". Katy is well on her way to joining Adge Cutler's Wurzels in the admittedly short list of rural South West's music royalty, although, if *Return* is anything to go by, she can set her heights a little higher than that.

I finish by asking if she has any expectations for *Return* post-release and what we can expect going forward. "I'm working on the second album though I don't have anything to do until June, so I thought I might as well deliver it next year. Besides that, I guess I only hope I can keep making music and be very happy that my albums are out." She won't be the only one. *Return* is a memorable debut that flows with a silk-like clarity and arrives with UV rays all of its own. Perhaps being released just a few days after the positive news of an approaching vaccine, it is landing at the perfect time after all. The hope, somewhere soon, of a return. To normality, to music, to life as we remember it, and after you've heard this album, to a Katy J Pearson show.

Katy J Pearson's Return is out now.

"Returning to an authentic way of doing things purely for myself"





Photo by Abbie Humphries

It's been seven months since COVID-19 swept our nation giving ardent music fans little opportunity for amusement. Many people failed to recognise the full impact of lockdown, and its full impact was arguably only felt after the prolonged starvation of things we had always believed were constants. It's only then did we realise our true loss. When I sat down to ask Bristol's biggest live music enthusiast Jeffrey Johns, AKA **Big Jeff**, about his experiences of lockdown and its effect on both himself and the wider ecosystem, I knew that I was asking for a unique perspective. A man who can be consistently found at the front of any given gig on any given night. Jeff embodies the vitality of the Bristol music scene, and his wisdom and experience is unrivalled. Getting his perspective at this time was an insight into a world we are all missing.

In an interview with *The Bristol Post* in April, you said, "A summer without festivals is a bleak thought". Just how accurate was your prediction?

Jeff: Accurate, but then again inaccurate. It made me reflect on things in a different way. You've got to look at both sides. It's given me the opportunity to do some things I never thought I'd end up doing, such as a conversation series I've been doing with artists for Independent Venue Week.

How did that come about?

J: At the Independent Venue Week launch, Adrian Utley was running late and they needed to fill some time so they asked me, "Would you like to be interviewed by Sean Keaveny?" It all stemmed from that really and then they took me on. The show happens on Thursdays at 5pm.

Is that all you've done to occupy yourself without live music?

J: I've definitely bought more records than last year, and I've been painting a lot. I recently painted an album cover for International Venue Week's compilation.

What are your inspirations for painting?

J: There's a character called Joff Winterhart who's a really amazing graphic novelist. He's an illustrator who I'd see at shows with this little sketch pad and he'd draw the artists lighting quick.

What has been the biggest obstacle of lockdown?

J: One thing I've missed is being able to openly hug people. I've had a couple of hugs, but I didn't need them at the time. I miss sharing the experience, music means a lot to me"

Would you say that music is a dedication for you?

J: It's more of an obsession really. There came a point when my entire diary was planned around gigs I was attending.

Have you been to any gigs since the peeling back of restrictions?

J: Yeah, I've been to a fair few. One thing I've realised is I depend on live music to help me be around people as I still find some social situations quite intimidating. During Covid, places that offered me a safe spot were great, especially places like The Lanes who've been doing fantastic socially distanced shows on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays hosting a variety of great local artists.

Are there any unforeseen challenges you've faced while attending gigs?

J: It's a weird challenge for people who are isolated, but I'm really lucky I have a gig bubble of five or six people who sometimes book a table for me and offer me a seat, so I can know for certainty if I'm going to the gig 100 per-cent yes or 100 per-cent no. I'm a bit cheeky, sometimes they let me in on the side.

Big Jeff.
Big Jeff.
Big Jeff.
Big Jeff.
Big Jeff.
Big Jeff.



Words by Bird Simpson
Photos by Ruby Lawrence

January

Billie's Big Win

You probably saw the brilliant photograph of **Billie Eilish** cradling her Grammy wins in January, right? This year's awards saw the unstoppable 18-year-old take home five of the six awards she was nominated for, and set records including youngest person to receive Song of the Year and 'Album of the Year'! She also became the first person to sweep all four major categories (Best Artist, Song, Album and Record of the year) since Christopher Cross in 1981. Her brother and collaborator FINNEAS even picked up producer of the year for his work on her album.

Eminem Lyrics Backlash

Eminem faced a pretty extensive backlash upon the release of his latest album *Music to be Murdered By*. More particularly in his track *Unaccommodating*, he raps: "I'm contemplating yelling 'bombs away on the game/Like I'm outside of an Ariana Grande concert waiting," followed by the sound of an explosion. Mayor of Manchester Andy Burnham said regarding the lyrics, "This is unnecessarily hurtful and deeply disrespectful to the families and all those affected." Some of Eminem's fans defended him by pointing out that the rapper helped raise more than \$2 million for bomb victims.

February

Shakira & JLo dominate Superbowl LIV

Whether you're a fan of American football or not, the Superbowl halftime show is always much discussed. This year **Jennifer Lopez** and **Shakira** teamed up to give the world an electrifying performance featuring a plethora of their most popular hits and guest appearances from **J Balvin**, **Bad Bunny** and even Lopez's daughter Emme. The game itself drew 102 million viewers, and the halftime show drew an extra 1 million. Afterwards, Shakira's song catalogue saw a 700% increase in downloads with her hit *Whenever*, *Wherever* reaching No.1 on iTunes in America.

Harry Styles robbed at Knifepoint

The pop culture icon was robbed by a group of men at knifepoint on Valentine's Day 2020 in Hampstead. The star recalled the event on *The Howard Stern Show*, telling of how on a walk home from a friend's house, a group of hooded men approached and surrounded him from behind and demanded he handed over his cash and phone. Before they could get a hold of his phone, Styles sprinted away. Though shaken by the event, he still performed at the Brit Awards that weekend.

March

The Month It All Changed

Where to start with March, the month where it all changed. Trying to find something positive to say about March 2020 is a tough one, each day stuck with a new fact or figure of the incoming outbreak. But in distraction from the woes of life we were gifted with some great new music. Pop sensation **Dua Lipa** released her second studio album *Future Nostalgia*, with a title like that we're left to wonder if Dua had a glimpse into what 2020 would bring. *Future Nostalgia* hit No.1 in thirteen countries and peaked at No.1 in the UK Album Chart for four non-consecutive weeks.

Newcomer **Holly Humberstone** released her single *Falling Asleep* at the Wheel' during March, this led to her being added to Apple Music's Up Next program (their monthly initiative to spotlight emerging artists) putting her in a roster with the likes of Billie Eilish. I'm sure you don't need me to remind you of the low points of March, the declaration of the global pandemic on the 11th, announcements from Boris and Trump on the 12th, losing songwriter Bill Withers on the 30th, but we made it through... so cheers to that.

April

The New Normal

The month that brought us stockpiling, panic and the rise of Tik Tok April will be remembered as the month of bingeing. Being stuck inside meant a lot of us turned to Netflix, I found myself deep in the music documentary section on many an occasion watching *Gaga: Five foot Two* and *Miss Americana*, Taylor Swift's 2020 documentary.

April brought struggle, lives were lost and we all felt pain. A new and uncertain territory for even the most powerful meant the distraction of art and music was welcomed. April brought a storm of livestreams with musicians such as **Lady Gaga**, **Alicia Keys** and **Willie Nelson** turning to the screen or should I say slightly dodgy webcam? Streaming, zoom meetings and digital workspaces were a learning curve for us all but a challenge faced head on. April also brought us new music from **Laura Marling**, **Thundercat**, **Tom Misch & Yussef Days** something to soundtrack the 'new normal' our lives had become.

May

Stay At Home, Stay Alert

After weeks of baking banana bread and the weekly religious Zoom quiz, many of us began to feel the impacts of lockdown fatigue; but there was light at the end of the tunnel. The announcement we had all been waiting for finally happened, Boris would finally begin easing restrictions. However, this message left us with more questions than it did answers as 'Stay Home' adapted to 'Stay Alert'...whatever that means. Turns out, it wasn't just the general public confused by BoJo's message, as even his trusted right-hand man didn't know whether he was 'Cumming' or going with his 264-mile trip to Durham.

In other news, **Adele** got everyone talking as she showcased her incredible seven stone weight loss via Instagram and a winner for most unconventional baby name was crowned with **Grimes and Elon Musk** naming their son X Æ A-Xii, or X to his friends.

June

Colston Falls

Following the death George Floyd, protests supporting the BlackLivesMatter movement took place across the country. Despite England still being amid a global pandemic, citizens disregarded social distancing rules and decided to take action to get their voices heard. Bristol, went one step further, pulling down the controversial statue of 17th Century slave trader, Edward Colston. The act received global attention and saw other cities begin to follow suit, such as London, who removed the statue of slaveholder Robert Milligan. Since then, Bristol has undergone a major rebrand, removing Colston's name from the concert hall as well as the school. This moment was ground-breaking and will go down in history, with some people even referring to it as the cultural event of the year.

It's been a big year! Here's *Resonates* lookback at the highs and lowest lows of 2020.





2020 Lookback



July

Another one bites the Dust - Q

July arrived with a small offering of normality, the hospitality industry opened its doors for the first time since March, and for many, faces and friends that had been sorely missed were allowed (with a two-metre distance) back into our line of sight again. For the British music press, however, normality seemed further away than ever. *Q Magazine*, a stalwart of music print since 1986, announced that their issue on July 28 would be the last. Editor, Ted Kessler, summarised the reason for *Q*'s downfall with an eerie bluntness. "The pandemic did for us, and there was nothing more to it than that". The magazine often drew its critics and *Q* were not the only ones to fall on the pandemic's sword, but the abruptness to the exit of a former cornerstone of our music press came as a stark reminder of the challenges we face in the protection of culture at this time. It was sad to see them go.

August

Culture Fund is granted

August brought a small slice of much-needed relief for the music industry with at-risk venues finally receiving £3.36 million of the Government's £1.57 billion **Culture Recovery Fund**. Culture secretary Oliver Dowden remarked that, "this government is here for culture" and assured us the grant would help "create the Adele's and Ed Sheeran's of the future". All with a straight face, apparently.

Van can't find his marbles

Elsewhere, events took a peculiar turn, as **Van Morrison** dismissed social distancing protocols at returning gigs as "pseudo-science", and perhaps most strangely of all, dragged an unassuming Andrew Lloyd Webber into his one man stand, declaring the composer as the "only one" attempting to ensure the safe passage through the pandemic for the music industry. Nothing ever came of 2020's potential power couple, but Van is still strumming the conspiratorial chord with his latest offerings *No More Lockdown* and *Born To Be Free*.

September

Metallica donate \$250,000 to California Wildfire

Aside from being legends of thrash, slowly deteriorating rock stars **Metallica** are also extremely charitable. We remember the devastation caused by the California wildfires; many people lost their homes, many animals lost their habitats, it was all-round bad news. However, the unlikely heroes of the day ended up being Metallica. Donating a quarter of a million dollars to five organisations on the front line of this ecological disaster. I guess they changed their minds and decided something else *does* matter, and that something else was quite rightly the environment.

Bugzy Malone Court Case

The man who put Manny on the map found himself in hot water in September, appearing in court on two counts of wounding to inflict grievous bodily harm, to which he denied all charges. The self-proclaimed King of the North will not have to appear in court again until September 6 next year to attend his provisional trial. O161 **Bugzy's** hoping he can get out of that.

October

CRF Pays Out!

October saw the Conservatives pay out on their promise to help struggling arts institutions. Now, it's not all sunshine and rainbows, there was controversy around who got grants and who didn't, but I think we can all be grateful as many of our favourite venues, publications, and arts-related businesses have been given a lifeline they didn't have before.

Tekashi 6ix 9ine, again

And for October's resident twat, you guessed it, **Tekashi 6ix 9ine!** Now there is something to be said for the fact that this man could have a good case for being resident twat on any given month. However, October 2020 saw the headlines, "Tekashi 6ix 9ine sued for child sexual assault". You'll have to excuse my colourful language but there really is no other word for Tekashi 6ix 9ine as his heinous track record speaks for itself.

November

The Weeknd Calls Out The Grammys

The Weeknd called The Grammy Awards corrupt after failing to pick up any nominations for the awards, despite having the most streamed Spotify song of the year for *Blinded By The Lights*. The artist mentioned the award's perceived historical problem with racism with no hip-hop record having won Album Of The Year since Outkast in 2004, this despite the genre's continued mainstream popularity. Drake went one-step further weighing in with a call for the awards to be replaced with something else.

Traffic Light Campaign Launches

The Music Venue Trust launched their Traffic Light campaign to highlight the venues that are at risk of closure. The interactive map showed the venues in red that were most at risk and required additional support to remain open post-pandemic. The map was specifically launched to highlight those venues that were unsuccessful in receiving the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. The #SaveOurVenues campaign has so far raised over £300,000 to help these struggling spots, so if you are interested in the survival of the spaces that are so vital to us, you know what to do.

December

Breakdancing Becomes an Olympic Sport

It's taken nearly 40-years since the phenomenon of breakdancing became a global dance-floor must for all extroverts, but as of 2024's Paris games, breakdancing will officially take its place alongside all the other sports you'd expect to see at the Olympiad. Expect big soundtracks, new moves you've never seen before saved for the big occasion and lots of bemusement that Squash still can't be classed as an Olympic Sport.

Festivals Start Announcing Line-Ups

Some positive news to end the year, and with the vaccine on the horizon, a number of festivals have started announcing their line-ups for 2021, with licences for a few events on the continent already granted for the summer. End Of The Road was the latest to announce their names for 2020 with Pixies, Big Thief and King Krule headlining and giving us all shivers that a return to the fields of dreams we missed this summer might be closer than we think. With Glastonbury still playing their cards very close to their chest about 2021, it remains to be seen if the biggest party of them all will go ahead, but it's never felt more likely. Bring on 2021.

Mobius Loop.

Words by Holly Bradley

A Mobius Loop is a mathematical object comprising of a one-sided surface with no boundaries. Essentially, an infinite loop. The Mobius Loop is an expression of unity and oneness. This concept was the foundation from which that the band who take its name was grown.

The self-managed, independent philosophical folk band began in Lancashire on 8 August 2008 in reaction to a 950ft crop circle created anonymously on this date. The band have honed their sound over this 12-year journey and while **Mobius Loop** began in Lancashire, they take their music on the road traveling to where their "nomadic hearts could hear the road calling". The band have had an array of members overtime, but currently comprise of singer-songwriter soulmates Alex and Katie Orion and Alex's brother, percussionist, Sean O'Hara. Alex and Katie are currently traveling Europe in their 'Hemp Redemption' van/mobile stage with their son Zaia, playing small shows where possible.

We caught up with Alex and Katie to find out how they were able to make ends meet and continue sharing their music and creativity with the world despite a global pandemic cancelling all their year's bookings.

You've spoken about losing out on a huge amount of shows this year and your income from festivals completely drying up. What was your first thought when shows were cancelled?

Mobius Loop: Our first thought was, we need to record a new album.

I watched and enjoyed your live stream for the Into the Wild Festival, it was clear you put a lot of time and effort into the set up you had. How have you been adapting to the show cancellations? Live streaming, Patreon etc. How much of a struggle has it been... and how successful?

M: Live streaming and setting up our new Patreon Page has been such a lifeline for us and has kept us working full time as a band throughout 2020.

Were you sceptical about festivals being online? Despite being no substitute for real human interaction, have you been surprised by the amount of connection that was possible between you as performers and the audience?

M: We were so surprised to see so many people tune in to watch our online festival performances, we have received so much love and support as a result of these shows.

The van is stunning! How was the journey of converting the van? Do you have lots of plans for it and where you will visit with it next?

M: We began the van conversion with a 30 day crowdfunding project in Nov 2019, and the van conversion was completed by Summer 2020 in time for our first Hemp Redemption Festival. We are currently touring Portugal with the Hemp Redemption Stage hosting live streams and small private gigs and we have lots of exciting plans to tour the UK, Ireland and Europe throughout 2021!

It's clear how important family life is to you, travelling with your son and creating beautiful memories must be so rewarding though not without it's challenges. Do you have any reflections to share about this?

M: Mobius Loop has evolved into a family band, and we feel so blessed to be able to continue our creative journey with our beautiful rainbow baby, Zaia, and our guardian angel, Gemi. Both our sons beam with love and happiness from within our creative family bond and we hope our lifestyle can inspire others.





Photo by Rabbit Trick

You've created many brilliant crowdfunding campaigns for your albums, videos and touring stage. Tell us about the joy generated from giving gifts and lessons directly to the people who've contributed?

M: We always have such a joyful time giving the gifts and lessons to the wonderful people who have supported our crowdfunding campaigns and we feel this has definitely expanded our audience and deepened our connection with them.

Your music has an amazing range of powerful and political messages accompanied by beautiful folk, reggae and a whole other world of sounds. How does the writing process happen between you?

M: We live and breathe every song we write. Songwriting is the soundtrack to our creative journey together; as a couple who have been living and working together for 10 years, we have developed a songwriting flow that is second nature to our relationship, lyrically exploring all the concepts we discuss day to day and musically on a constant journey of revealing new melodies and harmonies to each other that we are inspired to write songs to.

I can see that lockdown had a big effect on your touring, I imagine it has been a difficult time for you, as for many people. Has there been any unexpected beautiful moments that have come to you in this time?

M: Recording our new album, *2020 VISION* was a beautiful way to navigate through a year of gig cancellations. We have received so much love and praise from our online audience for the album, many saying the album has helped them get through a very difficult year too.

The way you are and the music you create is so full of love, it feels clear to me the message and purpose behind your music but I always find it interesting to hear from an artist themselves about why they feel moved to create what they do.

M: We create because we are going to die. Death is our inspiration to live a creatively abundant life. Our 1st son died at 10 months old, he is our greatest teacher; Gemi taught us that any day can be our last so we choose to live the life we feel destined to create.

A beautiful note to end on. Thank you Alex and Katie for sharing your journey with us.

The 2020 Vision album is out 21 December.



Diz Dice
Diz Dice



Words by Ruby Lawrence

Diz Dice is a Bristol-based rapper, songwriter and filmmaker, who carries his determination and confidence into the studio. Whether it's a single or a freestyle, you can hear his eccentric style erupting from his music. His newest single *Run* is the perfect example of when afro-beat meets hip-hop. This vibrant mix of music, combined with consistent switch-ups within his unique flow creates a distinctive sound which has started to find favour with a larger audience. Diz Dice has been repping the Bristol rap scene since he moved here in 2010, and shows his love and involvement within the community through his music.

Senegal was formerly his home and was where his love for hip-hop became established. Dice began releasing music with a crew called YENNEN VIBES and things have only excelled from there, releasing his first single *Nothing Like Me* in 2011, a mixed CD *Dirty Diamond Vol1* in 2012, and EP *Dirty Diamond Vol2* in 2016. Finally, in 2019, he released his first album *This Is Who I Am*, through his own independent Dirty Diamond label to critically acclaimed reviews. I caught up with Dice in his hometown during the lockdown.

What sparked your initial love for music and specifically creating music?

Diz Dice: My love for music started with my family. Mum would always sing back in the day, so I always knew it was within me, but I really started doing music because of the type of lifestyle we were living in Africa – you had to do something. My music came straight out of the ghetto, I would only write things I could see and things I was living at the time. Coming out of Africa was crazy, but it made me who I am today.

Are there any musical influences that stand out?

D: I listened to a lot of Wu-Tang and Redman. I could always relate to Wu-Tang because they portrayed the same lifestyle I was living at that time. Also, Senegal has one of the craziest genres called mala and melody wise that really influenced me, the beats I make carry the same sort of vibe.

Diz Dice.

Did moving to Bristol influence your music and career?

D: Moving from Senegal to Bristol made me become an international artist. It made me see the world is bigger than where I came from. In Africa, you are given the mentality of 'this is it' whether you like it or not, yet when I came to Bristol you see different types of cultures, music and realities. I went from doing music just for me to express myself, to actually having a platform. I feel like I brought something different to Bristol too; I got my own type of accent that sounds crazy. I got my own style here and when I turn up you know there is someone different in the room.

Tell me more about your record label Dirty Diamond?

D: So it's me and the boys – my friends. We don't just do music, we've got a few different platforms within it including music, clothing and podcasts, but something else I have been working on recently is using *Dirty Diamond* to help out back in Africa. Growing up there I saw all these youngsters with talent and nowhere to put it, so I'm gonna get the studio out there, and get the kids off the street so they can start expressing themselves and showing some talent. I wasted too much time in the street as a kid, so we're gonna change that. I was supposed to head there with my home studio in December but Covid stopped that happening. It's 100% still on as soon as it's possible.



Photo by Ruby Lawrence

So your most popular hit is *Spread The Butter On The Bread*. Tell us about it?

D: *Spread The Butter On The Bread* is about spreading love, spreading peace, and letting everyone eat. We shot the music video at St Pauls Carnival and it's just us laughing and chilling. You've got the people cooking food, you've got the people drinking, everyone is united. That video was us expressing ourselves, us being us. You've got to be yourself, that's the key to everything.

And what was your motive for the single *Run*?

D: This single was to show you, "hey we're here now," step aside, because we don't walk, we run.

What does the future look like?

D: Well, life with Covid is crazy and it has changed things for sure. In some ways, it blocked my writing because I wasn't as inspired by experiences, but it brought me closer to people I wouldn't have been as connected with.

The Dirty Diamond EP is out now.



Pallbearer, *Forgotten Days* 9/10

Words by Kris Griffiths

Soaring vocals set to gorgeous guitar-monies; if you have not heard of **Pallbearer** by now, their newest release on Nuclear Blast Records is here to remedy that. *Forgotten Days* is a haunting and transcending record taking influence from prog, while retaining all the doomy authenticity fans worship and respect.

The words of Brett Campbell and Joseph Rowland detail the complex emotions of the human condition with candor and sensitivity. Themes of despair and regret weave themselves tightly into sinister tales of nihilism. The opening cries of dark clouds approaching seem highly apt for *Forgotten Days* is truly a storm of the mind; blustery and ferocious, it lurches between tranquility and calamity. The title track hits mean and hard, thunder and lightning, classic metal riffage drenched in fuzz. It's hard to ignore the personal nature of the lyrics, an agonising questioning of reality and a descent into disassociation.

The epic *Silver Wings* spans 12 minutes and 18 seconds, delivering the harrowing portrayal of a man battling with the irrelevance of his life in the face of the universe's infinity.

Sensitive, well-paced and engrossing, it embodies the essence of Pallbearer, showcasing their wisdom and technical capability through their subtle and calculated output. *The Quicksand of Existence* and *Vengeance & Ruination* however, offer less diverse and more structured arrangements, where brash industrial rhythms fuel menacing grooves.

Rite Of Passage offers much of the cold and expansive atmosphere set by the first tracks and does well to neither under or overwhelm in the face of the finale – *Caledonia*. Eight minutes of sonic mastery, combining dueling guitar with long and winding passages that evolve seamlessly around the rhythm and vocals. A crushing finale for a crushing album. A truly intense and personal experience, *Forgotten Days* is undeniably beautiful; a sorrow romanticised and played out across thought provoking narratives.



AC/DC, *Power Up*

Words by Kris Griffiths

5/10

With their 17th offering coming six years after 2014's *Rock or Bust*, the Australian quintet's hungry following was just about at bursting point with anticipation for a new record. Announced via a photoshoot on 30 September, and teased across October, *Power Up* is definitively **AC/DC** and will satisfy any diehard fan looking for their classic fix. This rock music tour de force has endured many hardships over the last decade, and it would be unfair to expect an offering at the standard set by *Back In Black* or *Flick Of The Switch*, so with that in mind I was free to listen to *Power Up* without any ungodly, misguided expectation.

There is no mistaking the sharp tones of Angus Young's SG, the tight, well-paced strut of Phil Rudd's drums and the crisp raspy voice of Brian Johnson. With the fervour of men many years their junior, the band erupt into opener *Realize* which could hold its own on any previous DC records. Here though, in *Power Up*, it stands as a reminder that while the Aussies are in the twilight of their career, they still helped write the rulebook. Songs like *Realize* and *Witches Spell* really help capture the vitality of a band that have been away for a while, and single *Shot In The Dark*, provides all of that familiar sleaze and riffage,

showcasing the sound that brought the group rock music immortality.

Though *The Mists of Time* is huge and melodic, *Demon Fire* adds a more ferocious nature to the mix. Some may argue that the album is predictable and well-trodden, however I believe AC/DC simply know their audience and remain masters of their formula. *Power Up* oozes wisdom and is sonically sound throughout, a definite improvement on previous efforts *Black Ice* and *Rock or Bust* and a fine way to remind their audience, spanning multiple generations, that AC/DC are still kickin' among us and below us.

Rest in Peace Malcom Young.

Gorillaz, *Song Machine, Season One: Strange Timez*

Words by Finch Evans

7/10

Since I heard news of **Gorillaz** seventh studio album, I was curious to see the results of their new approach to creating music. Far from the expansive, concept-driven experiences of *Demon Days* or *Plastic Beach*, creator Damon Albarn was clear from the beginning that *Song Machine* would function more as a collection of singles. How would this record fair without an overarching concept driving the narrative of the songs?

When I heard *Song Machine* I was greeted by an immaculate set of songs. Synth pop, post punk, dub and grime all play a part in this musical potpourri, all seasoned with crisp, punchy pop production; there wasn't a moment in this album I wasn't nodding my head. The French-language *Désolé* and bouncy and energetic *Momentary Bliss* are some of the highlights in an album naturally punctuated with stellar cameos. Legacy heroes like Robert Smith, Peter Dinklage and even Elton John rub shoulders with contemporary stars Slaves, Slowthai and Kano, as well as relative unknowns such as GLACK and Roxani Arias.

Song Machine does, however, suffer from its concept. The idea of every song being its own individual entity combined with the sheer range of sounds on the album makes the experience more like shuffling through a Spotify playlist than a full cohesive work. On the second listen I found myself discovering entire songs I hadn't heard the first time round as they were buried by their neighbours. The lack of a structured arc present on traditional albums means each song is fighting for your attention and as a result there are little attention grabbing moments to supplement the usual troughs.



Dizzee Rascal, *E3 AF*

Words by Dylan Shortridge

7/10

Dizzee is living out his Hannah Montana dream by getting the best of both worlds. With one foot firmly placed in his grime roots, and the other in the carefree party anthems of his recent years, *E3 AF* is an amalgamation of both these styles.

With accolades such as winning the Mercury Music Prize for the genre defining 2003 album *Boy In Da Corner*, or radio hits such as *Bonkers* and *Dance Wiv Me*, it's understandable Dizzee not only has high expectations for his releases, but also a varied audience demographic that have different entry points to this music. Through his varied musical explorations, he has backed himself into a corner where he cannot please everyone.

So where does he go from here? The answer is, he pleases himself. As opposed to 2017's *Raskit*, where it felt like Dizzee was trying to be the boy in the corner again, *E3 AF* feels a lot more like Dizzee is having fun. 2018 EP, *Don't Gas Me*, saw him return to producing his own tracks and proved that he still has it in him. This release showcases exactly why he should always make his own beats.

As expected from an album referencing Dizzee's East London postcode, he has gathered a number of collaborators from his E3 neighbourhood. *Eastside* with Ghetts and Kano is no doubt one of the highlights, a darker track with deep subs, trap hi hats and all three MCs spitting the hearts out. The album also features the newest track with regular collaborator Ocean Wisdom, *Don't Be Dumb*; as you'd expect from a Dizzee and Wizzy track the chemistry between two is undeniable and the bars come as hard as they come fast.

Tracks such as *Body Loose* and *L.L.L.L (Love Life Live Large)*, both quench that pop-rap thirst. Although the title of the latter wouldn't be out of place painted on the wall of an aspirational living room (above the fake fireplace), both are sure to get your head bobbing and your hips shaking.

The true strengths of this album come from the more grime influenced tracks where Dizzee's production shines, but the more pop leaning tracks certainly scratch a certain itch.





The Cribs, *Night Network* 9/10

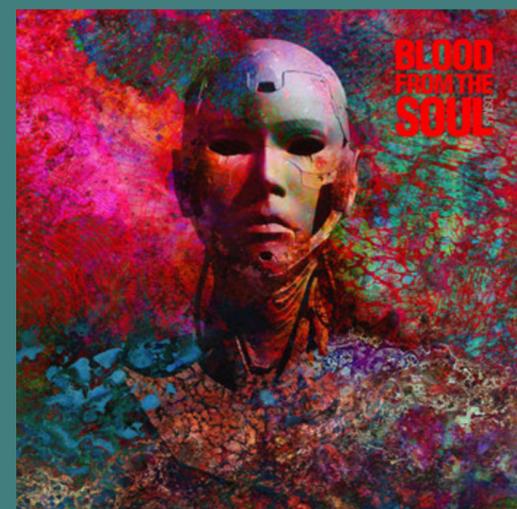
Words by Matt Thomas

For a while we thought we lost this underground indie trio. After defining the guitar-heavy mid-2000s alongside their peers The Libertines, and last seen live in the back end of 2018 – was time up for **The Cribs**? After all, since their last album in 2017, they've parted ways with their management, and been slapped in the face with a 'legal morass' where they couldn't play live and record music. Step-in guitar hero Dave Grohl who invited the Wakefield brothers out to his studio in sunny L.A to record an album, telling them to "forget about that business stuff." They accepted the invitation, and after reuniting in the same garage they were formed in, they flew out in April 2019.

The result of this effort is one of the most cohesive guitar albums of the past couple of years. On a first listen, some of the musical content can sound a bit un-Cribsian. The opening track *Goodbye* starts us off with a soft touch, evoking images of a calm night sky, with smooth melodies in the background – certainly not the kind of indie-powerhouse rock that sounds like it's been recorded in a garage.

We're treated to a more typical Cribs sound on the tracks *Running Into You*, *Screaming In Suburbia*, *Never Thought I'd Feel Again*, and *She's My Style*. However, these tracks still have great twists whether it's the unconventional chorus in *Running Into You*, which has soft vocals paired with screeching guitars, or the retrospective feel of *Screaming In Suburbia*. It might be being away from rainy England, or being in guitar rock's elder statesman bracket, but they haven't gone and made The Cribs part two.

That being said, there's a lot of other musical influences throughout the record. There is a great feature from Lee Ranaldo on the eerie *I Don't Know Who I Am*, whilst the song *In the Neon Night* is paired with pianos, special effects and angelic vocals invoking psychedelic rock tropes. It's this track which is a notable weak spot on the record. It's too busy and it feels like they've just chucked everything at a canvas. Though the final track *Goodbye* says otherwise, it's not a parting from the Cribs as *Night Network* feels like a major stepping stone in their career. Although we can't go into sweaty, dark venues and watch them play, this provides a good alternative until we can.



Blood From The Soul, *DSM-5* 7/10

Words by Louie Kalamaj

Since their debut in 1993, **Blood From The Soul** has remained afloat in a dazed serenity; unknown by many, but revered by those that do. Now 27 years on from their debut release, the supergroup have finally been rejuvenated and have readied their newest release, *DSM-5*. Blood From The Soul's latest is master-minded by the supergroups composite parts; Jacob Bannon (Converge), Shane Embury (Napalm Death), Dirk Verbeuren (Soilwork) and Jesper Liveröd (Burst). Bannon's critically acclaimed ability to reputedly and musically devote an avant-garde dictatorship to a project is omnipresent once again.

With the kneeling support of a titanic backline to inspire his legendary vocal tyranny, the band's sophomore record was able to thematically travel forward to a time in the future to explore the interrelationship between human and android anguish. Poems about the difficulties of self-isolation and mental deterioration in an advanced era of time are not only sonically relatable to our impending future but also the present day. *DSM-5* delineates the days of a global pandemic and isolates ourselves in self-paranoia, meaning the record's futuristic vision is also an accurate representation of today's quandaries.

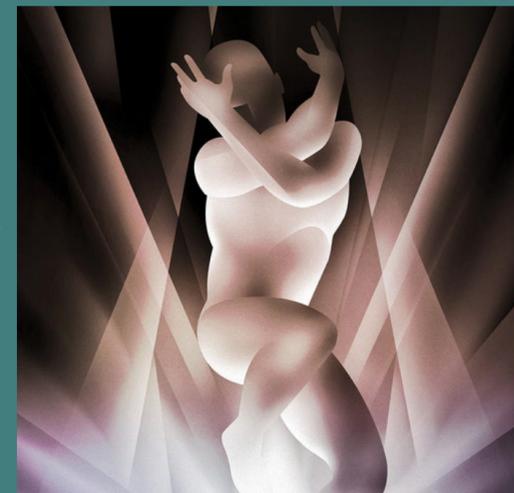
The Smashing Pumpkins, *CYR* 7/10

Words by Bird Stimpson

The reported sequel to *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness* was never tipped to continue the sound of the first album. So, fans hoping for a nostalgia fix look away now. What we've been presented instead is the heavy synth noir of a man not willing to sit still in the web of pre-definition. The 20-track double album is as frustrating as it is brave, neither an improvement nor a decline on previous works. *CYR* stands alone in the **Pumpkins'** discography as a work that transcends the traditional sound fans and critics have come to expect.

The Colour Of Your Love introduces the new flavour of the Pumpkins instantly. Layers upon layers of synth and vocal harmony wrap themselves tightly around Corgan's melodic wails. Dirty and metallic bass drives the song as it does the album, providing the pulse in amongst the musings of atonement and misplaced emotion. The album feels meticulously crafted, each layer carefully sculpted and placed into the soundscape with purpose, and whether the resulting work is to your taste or not, you can't help but respect the labour of love that Billy Corgan undertakes in his creative process. Lyrics such as, "No flower outlives its raindrop / No tower outlives its hilltop," means *CYR* overflows with mysticism and a strong symbolic connection to the passage of time. This is most apparent in *Dulcet in E* and *Birch Grove*, in which Corgan crones of seedlings growing and Sundays coming and going.

For some, *CYR* may be indigestible, for some *CYR* may act as an expansion of the rhetoric that Billy Corgan is merely seeking attention and grasping at the genius of his earlier career by acting in a provocative and difficult way. For me, *CYR* was a confusing and explorative journey, far from my comfort zone. I found myself indulging in the depth and atmosphere of each track, though at times, I found the 73-minute, 20 track double-album to be a bit of a challenge. A lack of dynamism in the pace and excitement of the music really played on my patience for stomaching the epic in one sitting, though by the end, I was grateful for the experience. *CYR* cannot, as some critics have attempted, be disregarded as a genuine and rich work of art. *CYR* is as immersive and as challenging as any of their other records, and although it may be unorthodox and detached from the sound of previous escapades, the Smashing Pumpkins have dared venture into the contemporary and have succeeded.



Nolan The Ninja, *Talk Soon* 6/10

Words by Louie Kalamaj

Hailing from the farming grounds of hip-hop with virtuosos such as Eminem and J Dilla, **Nolan Chapman** (a.k.a Nolan the Ninja) is the newest prodigy from the periphery of Detroit. Fearlessly protean and operating with a flow like an omnipresent control freak, he's hostile to the slobbering status quo of contemporary rap and has come into the game unhinged, with the sole goal of leaving everyone in complete astonishment. Although the jersey-loving emcee contradicts the demographic of a Japanese blade-wielding killer, he prides an arsenal of vocal versatility that proves to be just as deadly.

With his newest drop *TALK SOON*, the poetic ninja disregards his previous practice of 90s nostalgia trips and grandiose sample-flips instead keeping things simple and tight. The lack of fluidity does fall short on some tracks, but if you're looking for absolute rap mastery, then the practice of Nolan's linguistic presence on *TALK SOON* will have you edging to musical euphoria. The hype hanging over Nolan like a lusted, 24-karat gold chain is justified and with this newest joint. Patrons of rap will finally start to unearth this diamond in the rough.



Sucker Management.

Resonate chatted with **Sucker Management** Director **Luke Joynes** about his journey in the industry and what the future holds, both for his company and the notable artists he works with.

Words by Abbie Humphries

Independent businesses and their importance have been making front-page news in the music industry since the repercussions of the global pandemic have put these key businesses in a consistently precarious position. But, the majority of people in the industry haven't stopped to cry about it. They've dusted themselves off, and continue to do what they can to keep the cogs in their respective machines well oiled. One of these machines is Sucker Management, and its founder and director, Luke Joynes.

Joynes, aged just 21, is an incredible self-taught talent. He set-up Sucker in 2019 to provide an all-encompassing development experience for artists. Having started running a fan website to predict headliners for the Isle Of Wight Festival at 13, to promoting gigs at 16, to working for Coalition Agency and eventually running his own company today, Joynes has crammed a lot into his relatively short career span. The summer months in quarantine may have been a slow burn for many, but Sucker was busy organising and hosting an online industry music festival of networking events with talks, quizzes and live stream sets from artists including Airways, Apre, KoolKid and many more! Joynes has worked incredibly hard to be in this position and is the epitome of what can happen when you have passion for what you do.

As this undoubtedly weird year comes to a close, I had a chat with Luke on Zoom about developing his company, the challenges he's faced and overcome, and what exciting things Sucker has got cooking for next year.

You've clearly been in-tune with the industry from a very young age. Is Sucker something you've worked toward setting up, or did the idea start after a moment of inspiration?

Luke: It literally started from nothing. I used to be called Atmos Music and hosted some quite big bands and artists such as Clean Cut Kid, Sarah Close and Marsicans. Since then I have been independently managing bands and promoting artists, so I've never really worked for anyone else. I'm self-taught, never studied music business, or played an instrument, my family don't know where it's come from. I guess I'm pretty relentless, which is why I'm doing okay because I literally don't stop.



Luke Joynes

What's your key role at Sucker?

L: Sucker is literally just me. I have a guy who helps me with PR, and the bands we manage have agents and labels, so there are definitely people I work with, but Sucker itself is just me running everything. I give off this persona online that Sucker is this big company with lots of components, but it's just me sitting behind my computer and on my phone all day. I get lots of emails saying, "hey Sucker team" and it's literally just me!

What do you look for in the artists you represent?

L: The main one is I've gotta like the sound. Attention to detail is also important, so having a brand already kinda set in place with an established social media presence also helps. For example, Skylights, who I took on at the beginning of the year; their brand was a little bit all over the place, but we've started to hone that out now and they're doing really well. It's knowing your foundations, your brand, your music and what direction you're heading. A lot of people assume that music managers take all the work off your shoulders, but that's not the case. The best relationships between bands and managers are the ones who are both putting in the hours equally. Work ethic is important because results don't happen overnight.

How have you and your artists been keeping busy in these unprecedented times?

L: Releasing music hasn't changed at all. Patawawa has been putting out music all year, and have got their debut album ready for next year. Deco hasn't stopped putting music and content out, Riscas signed to Lab Records and put out two singles this year, Skylights released music and have also announced live shows for next year. Nothing has changed except they haven't done gigs, which is a huge part of it all, but it hasn't been the end of the world. It's business as usual, except we're all missing having pints and enjoying live music. This is the shake-up the music industry needed. So many independent agencies are popping up now because people have been made redundant from the bigger ones and are forming their own. It's given opportunities to independents like me who would usually be swallowed up by the bigger boys. There's gonna be more competition, but it's good.

What's been your favourite moment?

L: Definitely Deco supporting Jess Glynn at Scarborough Open Air Theatre last year, and then the following week they played both YNot and Truck festival. They were three incredible gigs.



Patawawa

What's been the biggest challenges in your venture into the industry?

L: The legal stuff is what I find most daunting for sure. Liability insurance, tax returns, accountancy etcetera. I'm alright now because I use an insurance broker and an accountant, so it's sorted by other people. Another different challenge was the first gig I ever put when I was 18 at a local bar. It was majorly overcapacity and shut down by the police. At one point cash flow was awful, so I had to dip into my savings a bit. These things happen, but you just have to work through them.

What are you most looking forward to in 2021? Both yourself and your company?

L: Lots of stuff going on! Deco start their socially-distanced shows in January, Patawawa release their debut album at the start of March, festivals are booked for different bands. I'm just looking forward to the stuff we missed out on this year.

What are you listening to right now?

L: Right - I'm gonna show you! Recently played artists; Girls Aloud, Ava Max, Diana Vickers, Fickle Friends, Riscas, Taylor Swift... I'll listen to anything honestly. Girls Aloud were in my Top Five on my Spotify Wrapped!



Deco Sucker

SUCKER

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