

# TRUST The DOC



## Edition 109: 31st October 2025



## BROUGHT TO YOU BY TRUST THE DOC MEDIA

THE HOTTEST NEWS FROM THE GRASSROOTS SCENE:

- [THE] MUSIC OF SOUND PLAY LAST LIVE SHOW OF 2025
- SHERRY AND NEIL REVIEW FRESH ON THE NET FAVES
- UNDEAD GUITARS: FROM THE ASHES OF RED GUITARS
- REVIEWS OF MULTIPLE INDEPENDENT MUSIC RELEASES
- SHARON KATTA TO PRODUCE [THE] MUSIC OF SOUND
- SHERRY'S MARKETING UPDATE
- TAMARA BARSCHAK @ TEMPLE OF ART & MUSIC
- LINE-UP FOR NEXT BRILLIANT BRENT
- BEHIND THE REVIEWS: HELP US TO HELP YOU
- ACE DISGRACE: CYNICAL EXPLOITATION OF MIGRANTS
- OUR THOUGHTS ON CURRENT MUSIC EVENTS

## INTRODUCTION:

Oh yeah, it's Halloween! So we actually did consider whether this edition should have an associated theme and look. Then we immediately thought better of it! Nothing against Halloween. Whether as kids or parents, it has often been a time for fun. But we feel there are sufficient halloween-themed events, programmes and general media for us not to feel obliged to join in; at least not in relation to Trust The Doc. Phew! That was a long-winded start!

October has been an interesting month for sure. [The] Music Of Sound kicked it off by playing our last gig of 2025 for Brilliant Brent along with the amazing Sharon Katta in front of a lovely, talented and supportive audience. Sherry and Neil jointly wrote the Fresh on the Net *faves* reviews that were published on 30th September and then Neil reviewed them on 20th October. Sherry will be reviewing on 3rd November too. There has been some fantastic new music coming our way [as always] from talented grassroots artists, some of which we have reviewed in this edition. Back up to 63 reviews of new releases this month (or really about 66 given that some reviews mention more than one release by the same artists).

One downside of being part of such a great community is that it is impossible to accommodate everyone who wants airplay into a two-hour weekly show, especially given the important policy of giving rotation to priority tracks. But please feel free to submit your music for the radio show and we will try to play as many as we can. If you do, please ensure track(s) are sent in a playable form (i.e. MP3, WAV etc.) and we don't have to wade through extra pages and passwords to download them. In other words, make it easy for us!. The email address to use is [trustthedoc@demerararecords.com](mailto:trustthedoc@demerararecords.com) and please remember to include the artist name and track title both in the file name *and* the metadata. 01 is not your artist name! We receive hundreds of tracks and, without this information, the next time we see it in a folder, we will not have a clue what it is or who it is from!

**NEIL MARCH & SHERRY SAHAYARAJ**

31st October 2025

[Instagram](#); [BlueSky](#); [Facebook](#); [Threads](#); [TikTok](#); [X](#)

(TTD Logos by **PaulFCook**)



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## PART ONE: NEWS AND INFORMATION: EDITION 107

### [THE] MUSIC OF SOUND: LAST GIG OF 2025 & MORE



[The] Music Of Sound @ Brilliant Brent    Sharon Katta @ Brilliant Brent

**[The] Music Of Sound** played our final live date of 2025 [and only our second in London this year] for Brilliant Brent @ The North London Tavern in the lovely upstairs venue. The gig was opened by the super talented **Sharon Katta** making his live debut for which the purveyor of ambitious cinematic pop decided to surprise everyone by playing a stripped down set with just vocals and guitar. It worked really well and the quality both of Sharon's rangey voice and his sophisticated, dynamic songs were evident throughout. So too was his engaging and thoughtful personality.

Unfortunately, the second scheduled act did not turn up but **[The] Music Of Sound (Sherin - Vocals/Elena Trent - Flute/Neil March - Keyboards & Backing Vocals)** played a slightly longer-than-usual live set with **Sharon Katta** at the desk. We took the chance of using the acoustic piano in the venue and not putting a mic on it because of its ability to resonate within the smaller space and it worked (so good thinking by Sharon). Big thanks to Sharon and also to **Tom Barry** who helped with every aspect of the event too. And big love and thanks to everyone who came along and proved to be such a lovely supportive audience. Lovely to see our former bandmate **Florie Namir** and TTD regular **Pimlican** as well as a group of lovely students, past and present, from ICMP (including **Alex Laertis**) and their friends. That was a thoroughly enjoyable way to sign off the band's live activities for the year.

We are also excited that Sharon will be producing our next single. The band had approached him a few months back about whether he might be prepared to work with us but, at the time, he felt he was too stretched to commit to any new projects. But after engineering the gig at NLT, he told us he had been thinking about this and he loved our music but could also envisage how his production ideas and knowledge of recording and use of sounds etc. could enhance our sound without fundamentally changing it. We made it clear that we would be happy for him to have a free rein if he wanted to produce us. We now need to get the proposed next single together so Sharon can start working on sounds and ideas. Exciting times ahead.

Meanwhile, October has been a good month for our singles. ***We Are Dreamers*** has passed 9,000 streams and, thanks to amazing support from some cool playlist curators led by amazing Polish artist and supporter of grassroots music **Serge Wenus**, we have also seen a load of new streams for other singles including ***Cold Weather Man*** which is now about to pass 32,000. Check out our [Electronic Press Kit \(EPK\)](#). The next single will be ***You Lost Out (Remix)***, out in late November on **Monochrome Motif Records**.


## TRUST THE DOC RADIO: UPDATE



The [Trust The Doc Radio Show](#) goes out to a lovely, lively and engaged audience every Saturday at 5PM UK time and mixes the best current grassroots artists with the best established ones plus some fun features that get the audience involved and enable Neil to play some classics. The two hours always fly by.

If you aren't familiar with the show, come and check it out at 5PM UK Time every Saturday on <https://exilefm> or catch the podcast over the ensuing 7 days on <https://exilefm.com/podcasts/trust-the-doc-radio-47>. Also please


like, follow and stream the [Trust The Doc New Music Playlist](#) on Spotify which we keep updating with tracks that are on our radio show playlist (if available to stream) [here](#).



Public Playlist

# Trust The Doc New Music Playlist

The Trust The Doc New Music Playlist is back starting with all the tracks I can...

 **drneilmarch** • 22 saves • 21 songs, 1 hr 18 min

SHERRY AND NEIL JOINTLY REVIEW THE FAVES !!!

FRESH FAVES: BATCH 582



29  
SEP  
2025



ARTISTS AT A GLANCE

AFRODREAM	LOWLI
ALEXANDRA LEAVING	MT JONES
HELLO MIDLANDS	NADIA SHEIKH
IZZY WH	NOVELTY ISLAND
LOWHOURS	PORCELAIN MOON

These Fresh Faves were picked by our readers over the weekend – and reviewed by Fresh On The Net's **Neil March** and **Sherry Sahayaraj** this week. You can hear all these tracks in a single Soundcloud playlist [here](#).

**A word from Del:**  
Thankyou to everyone who submitted a track to the inbox this week! I now have a radio show on [ExileFM](#)

Over to you Neil and Sherry!

**SHERRY:** It feels like it's been a while since I last wrote a review, but I'm happy to be back. The weather is getting colder every day, and it feels like the right time to listen to music that makes you feel warm inside. After a short break, it's great to hear all the new tracks that have been sent in. I'm glad I get to review them this week. The music is really good, and every track has something different to enjoy.

**NEIL:** Third week back from Fresh on the Net's summer hiatus and Autumn is officially [and visibly] upon us. In the meantime, the high standard of tracks being submitted to us has shown no sign of dropping off. This weekend has seen another high quality Listening Post, something that was especially remarked upon by a great many voters, and it is our privilege to review the ten tracks those same readers have chosen. Sherry and I are rehearsing for a live show this coming Sunday so this gives us a chance to focus on other people's music for a few hours. I have my coffee at the ready so let's get to it!

Mondy 30th September saw the publication of Sherry's and Neil's joint reviews of the [Fresh On The Net Faves](#). It was a lot of fun reviewing them together as always. The readers did us proud by voting for a stellar top 10 that included TTD regulars like **Hello Midlands**, **Alexandra Leaving**, **Nadia Sheikh** and **Porcelain Moon** amid an impressive cast.

You can also see **Neil's** reviews from 20th October [here](#). **Sherry** will be reviewing on 3rd November.



## UNDEAD GUITARS: FROM THE ASHES OF RED GUITARS



This month saw us receive the slightly sad but perhaps unsurprising news that singer **Jerry Kidd** has once again parted company with indie legends **Red Guitars**. We saw Jerry at the last night of the **Music Of Sound** tour when his son and TTD favourite **Adam Kidd** supported the band in Brighton. Neil had a long chat with Jerry but he didn't mention that he had left Red Guitars again. But we had an email from our good friend and Bass Guitarist **Lou Duffy-Howard** in which she explained that the remaining members were now known as **Undead Guitars** and were releasing a new single written and sung by guitarist **Hallam Lewis**.

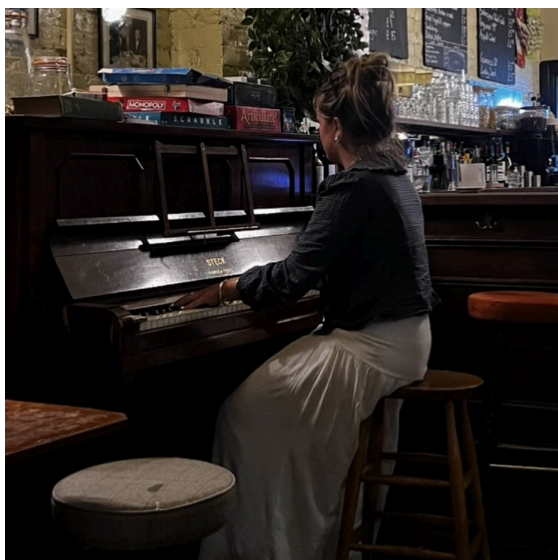
Sadly the split does not appear to be amicable. Jerry has trademarked the band's name and, as things stand, is preventing the remaining members using it. As we do not know the details of what has brought this situation about, we are not passing judgement about this. Obviously, if one person leaves a quintet, they do not usually take the name with them. But Jerry may

have tangible reasons that we are not aware of. It is a sad situation though and one we hope can be satisfactorily resolved.

Jerry had left the band originally after their classic 1984 album ***Slow To Fade*** and was replaced by **Robert Holmes** who appeared on their second album. Neil saw this line-up live in 1985. But it was a great joy to hear that the original band were back together in 2022 and it was very special seeing them live two years running at the 100 Club and reviewing the gigs in this blog and on Fresh on the Net.

In the meantime then, we hope Jerry has new plans. Possibly the decision may have been affected by him living in Brighton on the English South Coast when the band is based in Hull in the North of the country. We also look forward to the evolution of Undead Guitars (see the single review in the Alt Rock & Indie section) and their planned tour for 2026. And we hope agreement can be reached about the use of the name Red Guitars.

## ELLI GLYN TO PLAY BRILLIANT BRENT IN DECEMBER



Popular Welsh singer-songwriter and BBC Radio Wales A-List artist [Elli Glyn](#) has confirmed she will be appearing live at the next **Brilliant Brent @ The North London Tavern** on the afternoon of Sunday 7th December. Elli, who is currently a member of the same MA Music Business class at ICMP that Sherry was in when she first started working with Neil on Trust The Doc Media, will bring her distinctive cinematic Indie Pop and Folk to the Arts Council England supported event. At the time of writing, we are waiting for confirmation about the other two acts. Neil says: 'We are thrilled to have Elli Glyn on the bill for Brilliant Brent. She will bring something we have not yet

experienced at this event. It's going to be another exciting afternoon of live music in a lovely venue'.

## PART TWO: REVIEWS OF NEW MUSIC (by Neil & Sherry)

### ALBUMS & EPs



TTD royalty hailing from the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire borders [The Happy Somethings](#) are keeping up their release-a-month campaign and the latest one is their EP *El Elu Ku*. Their latest blog post is a little vague on the choice of title but, once we hear how important the Ukulele is to the whole work, it is obvious that the title is, in fact, the word Ukulele spelt backwards. Anyway, we get four new tracks, the first of which is *Peccadillo Parade*. Swinging Ukulele chords accompany an octave-apart melody sung, I think, by Joy and Happy while we get horn-like sounds resonating slightly behind the vocals in the mix. It's another Happys surprise and a joyous one. *Jean Rosealynn* instantly grabs our ears with the strummed two-chord Ukulele theme leading us in before Joy's distinctive voice brings an appealing melody and Happy and Jolly add lovely harmonies. The switching between minor and major keys is very effective and the light textured breeziness almost belies a more sophisticated undercurrent.

*Pretty Pathetic Love Song* continues the dominant role of the Ukulele with Joy's voice a little dreamier in the verses while the chords follow a IV - V - IIIIm - VIm figure. This is again quite sparse in texture although the harmonies that come in for the chorus are rich in tone. *Feelings* is the final track, again punctuated by a Ukulele chord figure but quicker tempo and starting with clever vocal harmonic stabs. As the track develops the stabs are played off against more harmonised vocals and there's a cool coda at the end that rounds the whole track and EP off in some style. Somehow they have managed yet again to show us another side to their creativity and this is unquestionably one of our favourites yet from their extensive catalogue.

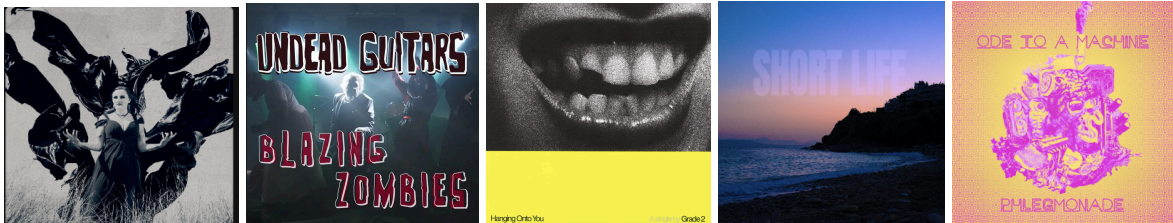


## POP NOODLES



Talented singer-songwriter [Amity](#) is a 'queer, trans and autistic' artist who has taken little time to gather an impressive reputation for extraordinary vocals and a soulful style. This latest offering, released on 7th November, is ***To Make A Man***. It's a slowly building ballad with deep piano notes initially accompanying Amity's distinctive, expressive voice. As piano chords build in a descending motion, the vocal intensifies. Eventually, the vocals are multi-tracked and overlap in emotionally charged style, all the while with the piano as the track's foundation. You have to have real confidence in your singing to produce something like this and Amity clearly and justifiably does.

## ALT ROCK & INDIE



Cardiff's [Catherine Elms](#) is a singer-songwriter who cites Kate Bush, Nick Cave and Tori Amos as influences on her dark Alt Rock. She is also a pianist although guitars dominate the wall-of-soundscape that accompanies her ethereal but teasing vocals on ***Shadowwork***. Imagine a mash-up of Been Stellar, Nick Cave, NewDad and Polly Harvey and you might begin to get the picture. There is a shoegaze sensibility to the kaleidoscopic guitars interweaving around heavy bass and beat, a Kate Bush/Elizabeth Fraser aura to the distinctive and dexterous vocals and a generally dark atmosphere that suits the mood although not in a doomy or depressed manner. Really you should just listen and find your own interpretation.

As explained in Part One, Hull's Post-Punk legends **Red Guitars** have regrouped as [Undead Guitars](#) following the departure, for a second time, of lead singer **Jerry Kidd**. New single ***Blazing Zombies*** sees guitarist **Hallam Lewis** assuming vocal duties on a song he also wrote. The track quickly demonstrates a heady mix of slightly trippy psychedelic influences and cool,

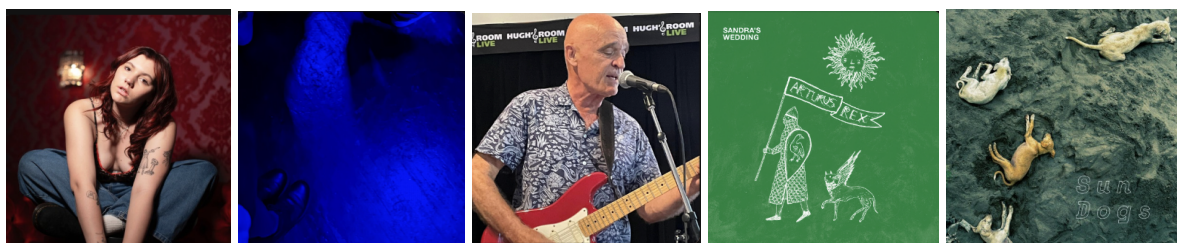


imaginative chord changes with a poppy Post-Punk sensibility. The interplay between the two guitars is snappy and choppy while the bass is busy, fluid but repeating in patterns and the drums hold everyone in check. Hallam's vocals are expressive but with a humorous glint in his eye. It's an impressive statement of who the 2025 incarnation of the band are and what they are about and, just like their material from back in the day, it bristles with positive energy.

The Isle Of Wight is home to Punk band [Grade 2](#) who bring us ***Hanging Onto You***. It starts with a guitar figure that recalls The Only Ones but, when the vocals come in, it is more Undertones in a mash with Chubby & The Gang while The Chisel throw ingredients into the pot. That said, it is not as manic or punky as the latter two names and not only is it catchy, uptempo and energised but, when the hormones arrive, it is almost quite poppy. Certainly a good mix of hard-edged and happily melodic.

Joining the ranks of exciting bands emerging from Liverpool are [Pacifacaze](#) whose track ***Short Life*** blends some exquisite shoegazey guitars with a high register synth figure, all riding atop solid bass and drums while the male vocal is melodic and expressive with shades of Tim Booth (James) and a hint of Been Stellar. The song builds nicely and introduces enough nuances to keep events moving and keep us hooked. Definite one to watch.

Bristol's [Phlemognade](#) hit us with ***Ode To A Machine***. The first half of the song is Contemporary guitar-driven Punk at breakneck speed, albeit the inventive guitars joined by some unidentified ambient sounds. Then suddenly, the tempo changes and we get a Psychedelic Pop thing going on that retains the gruff and intense vocals but with a melody that could be The Soft Boys in a mash with The Teaset albeit with thoroughly modern sounds and production. Full of surprises, cleverly configured and thoroughly enjoyable.



TTD favourite, Suffolk's [Gabby Rivers](#), now residing in Norfolk, returns with ***Leave Me Alone***. From the opening fuzztone guitar riff, this gets right inside my head. Gabby brings an intense, passionate vocal performance and juxtaposes it against some imaginatively configured and deliciously dissonant chords. The hook is irresistible and the little coda at the end is the

perfect way to round off the whole piece. Her finest work to date in my humble opinion.

London's [Pale](#) bring us ***Dreaming***, which I believe is a track from their *Nights EP*. This is uptempo synth and guitar driven Indie Pop with Dream Pop leanings. Spacious, reverberant production and tenor range vocals speed this along with a sense of the epic about it. The melody is striking and the arrangement is smart, single spread chords on the guitar and long legato synth tones in the verse, picking up dynamically into the chorus. Highly recommended.

Hailing from Toronto [in Canada in case you didn't know!], [Chris Birkett](#) brings us ***Socialite***. This is a track that grabbed me for three principal reasons. One is the thoughtful musicianship that underpins a lovely instrumental arrangement and playing. Another is Chris's gritty, expressive tenor range vocals and appealing harmonies. Third is the style of the track which has shades of The Police but is also refreshingly individual and skillfully written so that the chord changes, rhythmic nuances and tight interplay all take it up a notch in standard. He tops it all off with a melody that you cannot hide from. I've just been pointed to his website by Del and can see he has worked with the likes of Quincy Jones, Sinead O'Connor, Alison Moyet and Bob Geldof. That all makes sense. This guy is a proper musician and producer!

The ever-reliable [Sandra's Wedding](#) return with ***Good Morning, England***. Goole's finest are in a somewhat nostalgic mood here. The guitars jingle and jangle against a bassline holding down the I - IV - II - V chord sequence in the verses, locked in with the drums. The vocals are yearning and expressive while the lyrics present an England of weekend swingers, market traders and blushing brides although the message isn't clear. Given the current climate of misplaced patriotism consisting mainly of hate and xenophobia, I would hope that this comes from a more positive place but frustratingly it doesn't mention anything about unity or diversity which makes it hard to tell what their point is or who is included in their vision of 'England'. Perhaps they might give some thought to that point. Nevertheless, it has an agreeable aura, helped by a strong melody and accomplished musicianship. Echoes of bands they name as influences like the Housemartins and the Smiths but Sandra's Wedding have their own sound too that is engaging and fresh.

Oxford's [The August List](#) intriguingly describe themselves as a 'six-piece psych folk rock band' but, if **Sun Dogs** is any indication, they might throw a bit of shoegaze into that definition. Passionate female vocals float atop a wall of slow-paced but busy, fuzzy and reverberant guitars while the bass and drums provide a solid foundation. It's tuneful and big, brash, bold, ready to smash through the speakers and be there in the room with you! Their Instagram account seems to be mainly about two band members but a pic of the sextet reveals a violinist and he is very audible at times, playing in a folk style with familiar flourishes that definitely add something different to the band's sound. Cool track.



The likeable Londoner [Tom O C Wilson](#) can always be relied upon to come up with quirkily original and fresh alternative notions of Pop. Here he teams up with **Duncan Wallis** on **Armchair**. A quick beat and stabbing deep synth notes underpin some fascinating combinations of synth sounds and guitars in a post-psych pop extravaganza including some brilliantly wobbly scrambling of the beat in the mid-section. Full of lovely and unexpected chord changes, great and unusual sounds and a cleverly written song, this ticks all the boxes. Great track and thoroughly individual.

Our friend and former label mate, [Nick Haeffner](#) teams up with another familiar name from the past **Clive Pig** on **The Cat's Pyjamas**. The track, released by Brian O'Neill's wonderful Dimple Discs label, also involves the talented and likeable **Marcus Holdaway** (Cellos), **Ian Hayter** (Percussion), **Ian Mongtague** (Bass) and backing vocalist **Yani Martinelli**. By all accounts, a pretty impressive and accomplished line-up. *The Cat's Pyjamas* is described as 'chamber pop' which is a pretty accurate summary of its blend of intimate Folk, Psychedelia and Classical flavours with shimmering acoustic guitar, goose-bumping Cello, busy percussion and beautifully understated interplay. Clive's and Nick's voices gel perfectly, no surprise given their long-standing partnership and the song is lovingly crafted and lyrically clever. Not so much the start but the continuation of a beautiful friendship.

When he isn't busy supporting fellow grassroots artists; exposing their music to wider audiences via his impressively supported Spotify playlists, Polish artist [Serge Wenus](#) is also gathering a fanbase of his own as his impressive

streaming numbers demonstrate. **Bluebirds** finds Serge in thoughtful, reflective mode, mixing warm instrumental sounds and unusual chord patterns with a very individual approach to melody and construction. This track went down a storm on the Trust The Doc Radio Show. And also check out the livelier, more tongue-in-cheek Halloween-inspired Dark Pop of **Other Side Of The Mirror**. Serge has plenty more where these tracks came from.

Dublin's [Gather The Lost](#) were connected with me via the amazing Michelle Ward, singer-songwriter and Phoenix FM presenter. Their single **Never Home** is a slow burning slice of Alt Rock. It begins with strummed guitar and develops as keyboards, bass and drums add to the weight of the mix and singer Carolyn Dunne's highly distinctive tone and dynamic delivery dominate. There is also some tasty lead guitar play later in the track. Thoughtful production and playing help elevate the track and they deliver it with expertise and intensity.

Welsh singer-songwriter [Hana Lili](#) is becoming a bit of a regular in this blog and her new single **Sick Of Myself** is a joyous slice of fuzztone guitar-driven Punk-Pop with a deliciously 'live' drum sound that is particularly irresistible. Add to that a killa melody, a well-written song and Hana's passionate, distinctive voice and this makes for compelling listening. The mid-section and the ensuing stripped back passage leading back into the main theme is a masterclass in nuanced production. Shades of early Beabadoobee in a jam with Bessie Turner while CIEL add spices. Possibly her best track so far in an ever-expanding and impressive career journey.



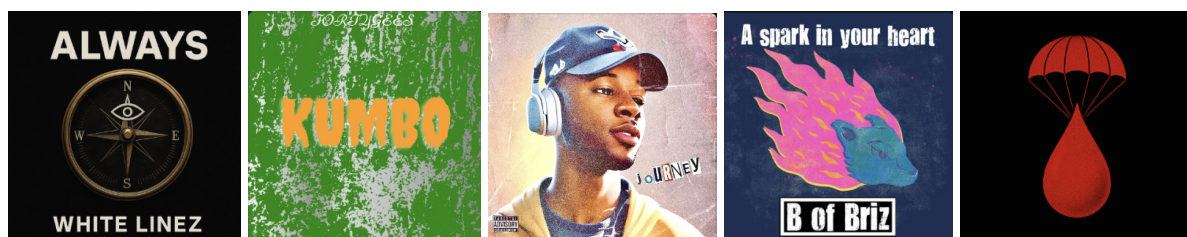
The latest offering from [Hazelene](#) is an intriguing one. **Something Positive** definitely has echoes of early Lush in the way the vocals float dreamily atop an ocean of shoegazy guitars in layers. There are some spine-tingling spread chords, clever breakdowns and strikingly unusual picked tones to contrast the more driving backdrop. It is slightly ethereal, produced with wall-of-sound perfection and the vocals will haunt me for a good while afterwards. Great track.



Once again our favourite prolific Welsh exile [Blokeacola](#) brings us a new track entitled ***Bushwhacker***. This has an interesting mix of his instinctive psychedelic style but set against a choppy Post-Punk direction. The harmonised vocals even suggest a subtle reference to The Who. As the track develops around Blokeacola's distinctive vocals, we get some tasty lead guitar playing too and a light, breezy bit of everything thrown into the pot.

TTD royalty **Nick Woodgate** aka [The Jojo Man Band](#) has taken the bold step of covering the song ***Evergreen***, originally by Caitlin LM. Caitlin's version, which drew lavish praise in this blog a couple of years ago, was a dreamy, ethereal track dominated by layered vocals and keys and still one of the best singles I have heard by a grassroots independent artist. Nick, always striving for originality and distinctiveness, has managed to take the song into his own unique territory, treating it with absolute respect while also lending it a psychedelic edge with cleverly configured and extended guitar chords and a lush instrumental mix. Nick's vocals are expressive and otherworldly and, in the final stretch, we get some gorgeous guitar elaboration to boot. It is a brave move to cover a song as amazing as this by a fellow independent artist but Nick's version is beautiful, imaginative and characteristically accomplished. No surprise that Caitlin has given this her firm seal of approval too. The EP also includes another chance to hear Nick's beautiful cover of the Charles Aznavour classic ***She***. Incidentally Nick tells me he is planning to focus more on his newer project **Go No** so look out for more news soon.

## BEATS, RHYTHMS & RHYMES



Londoners [White Linez](#) bring us some seriously uplifting Hip Hop with ***Always***. It follows a pretty traditional format, male rapper taking the lead in the verses and multi-tracked female vocal responding with an emotionally charged and irresistible hook in the chorus. This is a track about unity, togetherness, facing the truth and not backing down. It has a little of Black Eyed Peas about it (thinking particularly of the way Will.I.Am and Fergie would play off each other in their most inspired moments) but with the strong caveat that this is unmistakably London in sound and style. The kind of track

we need right now with so much hateful, petty-minded bullshit going down in our country.

**Sibajene Chirwa** is [Fortygees](#) and his track ***Kumba*** is a piece of genre-bending ethereal pop that has its fingers in Soul, Afrobeat, Hip Hop and Pop. The reverberant picking guitar and busy deep bass play off against a trebly shuffling beat where Sibajene's voice is like sugar, instantly captivating and then developing the track by demonstrating different aspects and timbres of his vocal talent. The melody is dreamy, engaging and beautiful and there is some laid back rap to contrast the smoothness of the tune. This is a real gem of a track and an artist we look forward to hearing more from.

From the USA comes [SOCALLOUS](#) (produced by **Aris Erth**) with the track ***R2***. This is essentially Old Skool Hip Hop with a laid back beat and appealing reverberant synth chords plus moments where breakdowns and subtle changes keep events flowing. The rapping style is non-stop line after line with barely a pause for breath. Lyrically it follows a slightly overcooked culture of self-congratulation and boasting but not in an offensive way and SOCALLOUS has the sharpness of tone and upper range to make it work. Shades of Kendrick Lamar in a mash with Warren G in terms of the vocal style (though not the track itself). Definitely worth taking time to listen to.

TTD favourite [B Of Briz](#) returns with ***A Spark In Your Heart***. This shows a different side to the Bristol artist's work. Often she is addressing intense socio-political themes but this is the spoken word version of a love song; a series of promises to show love, compassion, support and care for the track's subject set to a fluid backdrop of squeezy, squelchy synths and accordion-like figures dancing nimbly around a crisp beat. The result is the creation of an imaginatively unusual sound world in which B's highly distinctive and expressive voice demands our attention without ever raising her voice.

We usually review Oxford's [The Subtheory](#) in the Synthematic section but Andy Hill and the band are nothing if not versatile and, in collaboration with **Asher Dust**, they now bring us ***A Drop Of Blood***. Essentially, this is electronic Hip Hop with a synth-electronic undercurrent to the beat and sounds that repeat, almost hypnotically, throughout most of the track, while the spoken word/rap conveys a thoughtful view of the current malaise of hate, prejudice and misplaced blame that continues to blight our nation. Good to hear this

and they create an intensity that matches the passion behind the track and its message.

## SOULFUL SENSIBILITIES



London's [Mayah Camara](#) once again teams up with US producer **Sellorekt/LA Dreams** on ***Love Takeover***. In essence it is classic Mayah Camara with a heavy but Disco-infused beat and loud production, the instrumental track providing some extended chords and generally rich electro-pop/soul-funk leanings upon which Mayah's multi-tracked harmonies and agile, commanding vocals dominate, delivering a decent hook in the process.

Melbourne, Australia is home to [Mondo Freaks](#). They bring us ***Bells Are Ringing*** which is a refreshing slice of triplet time Soul-Funk with an old skool vibe but modern production values. Soulful female vocals lead the line while more voices join for an irresistible hook that keeps coming at us with intent. The instrumental arrangement is light-textured and highly musical complete with some Stevie-style synth and popping bass. Impossible not to love.

Sometimes whichever section I choose to review a track in, it isn't really quite right but always for good reasons. So it is with [Ant Thomaz](#) and his track ***Flying***. It is, in essence, quite a traditional hybrid of Pop, Blues, Rock and Soul influences with a dash of Americana thrown in and a spoken word element in the middle too. It follows a popular chord pattern of I - V - II - IV but it works and Ant's bluesy, slightly husky vocals and uplifting lyrical message work well with the organic instrumentation and soulful backing vocals that accompany him. Positive, energetic and full of appealing expression.

Is this a thing with this last week of the month? We had Ant Thomas and now it's the intriguingly named [Kennedy Administration](#) and a similarly uptempo organic bluesy soulful slice of Pop entitled ***Better Way***, in this case also infused with some jazz and a hint of gospel (especially the ending).

Passionate female vocal and another uplifting message. Definitely a theme emerging with these two tracks but love them both.

## CLUB CULTURE



[Nativalien](#) brings us the **Tobias Bergsen Remix** of his track ***On & On***. This is essentially a kind of dreamy Deep House with electro-futurist leanings. The hook is slightly mystical and melancholic but insistent too. And it has a spacy, floating feeling while the sounds are synth-electronic and ethereal but underpinned by a persistent House beat. It's an invigorating, inviting and intriguing combination of timbres and effects that keeps my interest but could be a floor filla in the right kind of chilled club aura.

[Gumshoe](#) brings us ***Floating In Ur Mind***. This is essentially at the poppy-ish end of the Soulful House spectrum. There is a Disco aura about the keyboard chords and corresponding bassline while the beat is crisp, consistent and continually drives the engine of the track. The male vocals are soulful, melodic and expressive, reinforcing the hook with reverberant multi-tracking. Expertly produced, a dreamy delight to dance your arse off to or sit back and enjoy.

Fellow FOTN mod and prolific dance music producer **Geoff Ruby** aka [Grubby](#) is back in Drum'n'Bass mode with ***Safe***. Very occasional voice samples appear in an otherwise instrumental track that mixes a kaleidoscope of synth and electronic colour with a driving beat, broken up with some cool contrasts to keep events moving. A track that works as a highly listenable piece but could also be great gaming background music or a floor filla in the right environment.

[THEWHATIFMIX](#) have a track out called ***Next To Me (Extended Mix)*** which is a light-textured and slightly spaced out slice of Soulful House with a sweet and distinctive female voice repeating the main hook against a fluid backdrop of chunky beat that drops in and out, four-chord piano pattern, various synths and smart production that keeps sounds interchanging in a



kaleidoscopic way that holds my interest and feels invigorating and energising.

After several releases of his new project Liquid 1nc, **John Davis** returns as [Arpraxis](#) with ***Search And Rescue***. Having taken the decision to remove his music from Spotify, you can find this on Bandcamp. In some ways, the track reflects the influences that have characterised Liquid 1nc with some lovely squelchy synths and crisp beat accompanying lower register vocals with shades of Stereo MCs in a jam with Working Mens Club while Hot Chip add ingredients. Melodic, uptempo and driven by positive energy.

## SINGER-SONGWRITERS



[Willie Dowling](#) has been on my radar for some time both through his solo material and his work with The Dowling Poole. The multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter has an impressive CV of producing artists, providing soundtrack music and playing as a session musician for such luminaries as Hot Chocolate, Dr Hook, Shane McGowan, Midge Ure, Quireboys and others. Don't be put off by the cheesy gameshow host image in Willie's profile pic; just another side of his sardonic humour. In a measure of how respected he is for his songwriting skills, Willie has written both for and with Lenny Henry, Steve Coogan, Armstrong & Miller and Reeves & Mortimer. Incidentally, this latest single ***Sadie Goldman*** was on my Trust The Doc Radio Show (Exile FM) on Saturday.

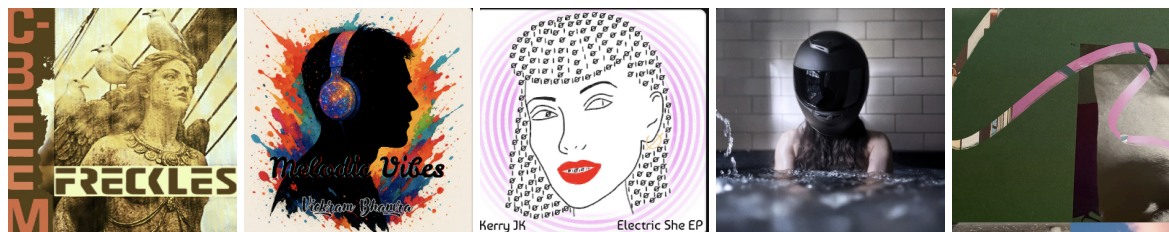
The track begins with the central premise of Willie telling Sadie Goldman's story set to extended and, in the opening bars, modally inflected piano chords accompanying his distinctive tenor range voice. Soon rich instrumentation and cleverly configured chord changes take the song into much more ambitious territory. He pulls out all the stops, utilising his harmonic expertise. Ultimately, Willie delivers a dynamic demonstration of his superb songwriting skills and epic sense of arrangement and colour. A wealth of classic influences come to mind that may or may not include Wings, Hall & Oates, Chicago, Pilot, 10CC, Andrew Gold, Ben Folds, Neil Finn and even Supertramp. But it's how he fuses these influences into the creation of

something so epic and fresh that counts. This might well be listed as Baroque Pop but, however you choose to categorise it, it is sheer quality.

Our talented friend **Alice Hale** aka [With Sun](#) returns with **Shoebox**. Alice has recently given birth to her second little one, Chet, who I had the pleasure of meeting recently so life has been hectic but she and Stu are on good form and getting back out into the live arena. Meantime we have *Shoebox*. Bathed in lush strings as well as Alice's trademark acoustic guitar skills, this could almost be The Carpenters jamming with Laura Marling while The Staves bring the wine. It's in a slow-to-mid tempo triplet time and swings and swans along beautifully, helped by a sweet melody, thoughtful reflective lyrics and Alice's highly distinctive and dexterous vocals. One of her best yet in my opinion.

Danish singer-songwriter **Maria Friis Møller** aka [Airam FM](#) has become a regular on the Trust The Doc Radio show and she returns with **Cold Hearts**. This is a slow minor key track with lyrics that pull no punches in her criticism of those justifying genocide, greed and corrupt double standards. 'Do you only cry when the privileged die' she asks. This is set to an engaging, melancholic track, sung passionately and boosted by close harmonies. Well worth taking time to check out.

## SYNTHEMATIC



Leicestershire's **Chris Mills** is TTD regular [C-Beem](#). The versatile artist returns with **Freckles**. This is an intriguing track that, in essence, looks back to early 1980s Electro-Synthpop. I saw that Chris said it had been compared to A Flock Of Seagulls and I can hear that although, for me, their earlier edgier material. But there is also plenty about this that is contemporary, utilising some sharp modern sonic tools, distinctive production and a deliberate understating of the bass. It is also a reminder that Chris knows how to pen a track with interesting lyrics and a catchy choon.

Los Angeles duo [LUCKYANDLOVE](#) hit us with **Secret Is Out**. A slightly wailing but really effective and compelling female vocal flutters, floats and fluctuates around a tough-as-old-boots electronic beat and bassline, washes

of dark, reverberating and ricocheting synths and big, brash production. The energy of their performance is superbly captured and the tune will get inside your head. Love this to bits.

Ah what a nice surprise to see the return, after so long dealing with other things, of our good friend [Kerry JK](#), Northamptonshire-based former Fresh on the Net mod and participant in the first ever Vanishing Point I put on at the Ivy House back in 2018. Kerry is nothing if not versatile and duly delivers, in ***The Need To Be Amazingly Vainglorious***, an almost swaggering slice of synthpop with cinematic intentions, superbly sardonic lyrics and Kerry's voice adopting a grittiness that suits the drama of the track. Welcome back, KJK. We hope there is plenty more to follow.

The new offering from TTD regulars [Roundtrip To Tiny](#) is ***Riding Black Metal***. It is darker, more fluid and enigmatic than their recent singles. The beat is mainly half time but sometimes switches while the synths swirl, swoop and swan around the characteristically dreamy female vocal, bringing a darker, more interchangeable and unpredictable sense of instability that suits the mood. Within this there is also a subtle Baroque Pop influence intermingling with the synth dream pop intentions. The melody is not instant but it soon grows on you and demands you listen again.

A big surprise this month was that [Roman Joon](#) is, in fact, the alter ego of **Michael Baker**, an artist with a long history with Fresh on the Net (and who has been reviewed in this blog). He is an artist who has an impressive history of interesting projects, support from national radio and festival stages including multiple appearances at Glastonbury. He is also one of two Brighton-based acts in this batch of faves, once again underlining why I call Brighton the Southern Capital of grassroots music.

As Roman Joon, Michael has an album launch organised for late November. ***It's Not Raining Somewhere*** has a tangible warmth to it, helped by Michael's rich, distinctive baritone range vocals and a lush instrumental backdrop of repeating single notes on the piano, a syncopated percussion part and deep legato synths. The arrangement is nuanced, sounds dropping in and out, the deep synths adorned by a subtle ambient rasp and his harmonies and octave-apart melodies adding to the impact. This is individual, inviting and invigorating like a long, refreshing drink (hot or cold) following a hot shower on a cold winter day.



From Imphal in India come [Beom Seok Sailo](#) and **Synthborn**. This is a short but sweet instrumental track that, on the one hand, is a slowish tempo synth-soaked soundtrack-ish cinematic piece but, on the other hand, utilises synth sounds straight from the 90s Trance manual. It works really well and its sense of optimism and major key melody make it warm and satisfying to listen to.

Since dipping her toes in more experimental waters in collaborations with the likes of Paul F Cook and Skinnyboy Tunes a couple of years ago, **Annie James** aka [Machina X](#) has, in subsequent times, nailed her colours firmly to the more familiar mast of Synthwave through her regular collaborations with **Gary** aka [Nature Of Wires](#). Now, after a bit of a break, they return with **Twilight Zone**. This is driving, punchily produced synthpop with big drum sound, lots of classic long synth tones, bits of arpeggio piano and Annie's highly distinctive voice, yearning and passionate, delivering a strong melody. In many ways, it is an unashamedly retro vibe compared to Machina X in the days when it was Annie and Cyrus but she and Gary work to mix that 80s undercurrent with enough contemporary sounds and references to make it fresh and contemporary too.

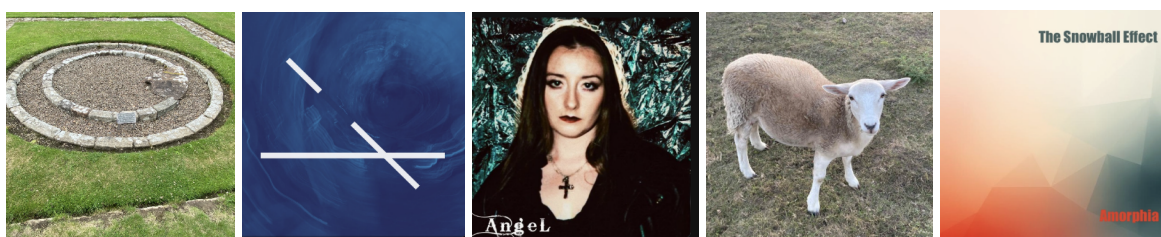
Edinburgh's [Thundermoon](#) return with **The Spirit, The Law**. This is intense, uptempo electronic synthpop with repeating harmonised vocal hook and an oddly detached but effective and echoing beat. The chorus takes little time to burrow into my brain and the clever programming and agreeable melody carry this along with their characteristic blend of sophistication and emotionally charged pop sensibilities.

After several releases of his new project Liquid 1nc, Londoner **John Davis** returns as [Arpraxis](#) with **Search And Rescue**. Having taken the decision to remove his music from Spotify, you can find this on Bandcamp. In some ways, the track reflects the influences that have characterised Liquid 1nc with some lovely squelchy synths and crisp beat accompanying lower register vocals with shades of Stereo MCs in a jam with Working Mens Club while Hot Chip add ingredients. Melodic, uptempo and driven by positive energy.



London artist [Roger Burke](#) is a regular in these pages and on the Trust The Doc Radio Show and he returns with ***Why Don't We Live Together?*** It is a cover of a Pet Shop Boys done in Roger's own House-infused electronic style with a pumping beat on the kick drum (which drops out for a time) and upper register staccato semi-quaver synths accompanying a deep voiced spoken word. The chords switch between major and minor, maintaining an unusual transparency while the voice sounds melancholy and yearning. It is a fascinating and imaginative take on the original and shows another side to Roger's creativity.

## ELECTRONIC & AMBIENT



The latest offering from the versatile fellow FOTN mod and writer-producer **Geoff Ruby** aka [Grubby](#) is ***Running Out***. A slightly disarming spoken word sample is accompanied by a mix of futuristic synths and then a frantic electro drum'n'bass that could have been reviewed in the Club Culture section but feels a little too spacy and electronic for that category. The contrasts of tempo and texture are used to great effect and extended synth chords sit beneath the staccato melodic lines that flicker and flutter across the mix while the beat is punchy and prominent.

Edinburgh's **Gavin McColl** aka [Red Blue Connect](#) will be a familiar name to regular readers of TTD and he hits the spot once again with the enigmatic ***Ergo Circles***. The track is a slow burning build-up of intriguing ambience and chords that have an impressionistic aura before giving way to some spacy noodling on the synth later on in the track. Throughout, the harmonic language is imaginative and has a classical element that draws on interesting modally-inflected approaches. The whole thing is rather beautiful.

The best kinds of Ambient Music tracks are those that build from a clear base and develop both through the skillful use of harmonic language and the management of sounds and textures. All those qualities are highly evident in the latest track from Reading's [Stephen Caulfield](#). ***Blue Currents*** immediately grabs our attention with its bubbling, gurgling synth chords and hints of harsher but smaller sounds spinning around within the mix, achieving

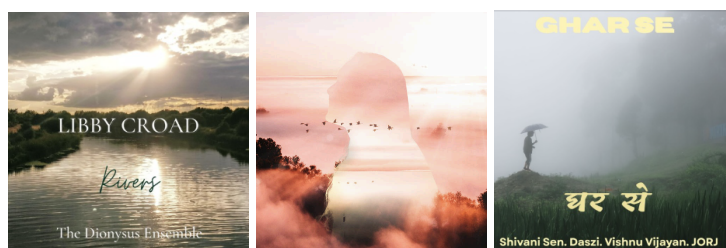
both extended chords and fluctuating ambience that begins to build texturally and dynamically into a strangely static but satisfying whole before disappearing into the ether.

TTD regulars may well be aware of [Lamia](#) who has played some of our gigs and is an artist we rate highly. Her new offering is ***Angel***. It's a clever juxtaposition of rapid synth figures and arpeggios playing against a slowly enveloping mix of deep legato synth tones and mystical ambience so the tempo feels slow and floating despite the frantic activity taking place beneath the surface. Ellie's voice on the track is in her lower range, commanding and compelling without singing a lot of notes. This is intense and yet warm and dreamlike. It's also quite stunning.

We are not sure why the new [Marble Stars](#) track ***Count Rabat*** has a pic of a sheep on the cover (!) but the TTD regular returns with a tidy instrumental track, mainly based around a repeating legato bassline in the synth while a fluid, phased beat and various synth sounds circle around it and a female spoken word comes and goes. Shades of Air in a jam with early Daft Punk maybe (which makes it a little French!). More good stuff anyway from Marble Stars.

From Devon in the English South West comes [The Snowball Effect](#) with ***Amorphia***. TSE's music is described as genre-fluid on the Soundcloud page but this track is definitely ambient and atmospheric with translucent synth chords floating across the mix while pronounced piano tones and other sounds continuously keep events fluid and extended harmonically. The effect is to take the listener on a journey through what feels like observing great plains and clouds of snow from the warmth of a robust vehicle. At the end, the snow seems to melt away as the cloud of synths fades into the distance. Expertly done and thoroughly engaging.

## CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL & SOUND ART



It is always good news when we receive a track by the astonishingly accomplished [Dionysus Ensemble](#). This super talented group of classical strings and woodwind players like to get their teeth into truly contemporary compositions and so it is with ***Rivers***. Beautifully evocative and sophisticated harmonic language, rich textures, cinematic use of dynamics and an air of mystique and melancholy all emanate from this stunning piece. Impressionistic but also quite filmic, this is a must-listen work. I think the composer is **Libby Croad** given the credit on the cover art. If so, I want to hear more of Croad's work. This is a masterpiece. Just over 8 minutes of invention, contrast, expert orchestrating and breathtaking musicianship.

Thanks to my work with Fresh on the Net, I was introduced to the music of Essex-based composer and multi-instrumentalist [Emma Francis](#) and the track ***Surrender To Love***. Built around pedalled triplet arpeggios in a minor tonality, the track demonstrates Emma's command of the clarinet, making use of its full register and dynamic range while the piano is used subtly to control the dynamics, added to by reverberant acoustic guitar and deep legato strings. It builds in sections towards a climatic high about two thirds into the track while Emma lets loose on the clarinet over the final stretch, underlining her considerable musicianship.

London-based Indian composer and artist [ShivaniSen](#) brings us her unique blend of traditional Indian classical vocalising and instrumentation with a sense of the ambient on ***Ghar Se***. The loudly produced spoken word in English at the start sets out her nostalgic paen to her homeland before a beautifully conceived instrumental build-up is eventually joined by her goose-bumping vocals in what Sherry thinks is almost certainly Hindi and some stunning multi-tracked unison figures over the final stretch. What a beautiful track this is.

## JAZZ & INTERNATIONAL JOURNEYS



Versatile Leeds artist [Vickram Bhamra](#) describes *Reminisce* as electronic and the beat is, at least in the sense that it is programmed although also prominent, crisp and appealing. But the lush chords, sweet mild dissonances and laid back picked guitar melody playing off against high register synth all points to more of an after party jazz piece for my mind. Wherever we chose to review it wouldn't alter our opinion that this is a lovely, heartwarming and yet oddly melancholic piece that sticks to the same chord pattern but provides enough fluid instrumental play to make us want to listen and enjoy.

The super talented [David Kofi](#) (erstwhile leader of the amazing Juices & A Drum) returns with another live track called *New Dawn* on which his considerable piano, synth and composing skills are aided and abetted by a top-notch band with some lovely intricate rhythmic play and scorched sax. There is a prog sensibility to some of the playing and this definitely nods back to the heady days of Jazzrock and Fusion while retaining an absolutely contemporary sound and vibe. Beautiful and accomplished as always. Also check out the virtuosic sophistication and innate creativity of the absolutely goose-bumping *Lenikaeru* with shades of Jean-Luc Ponty in a jam with Julian Joseph while Denys Baptiste lurks in the shadows.

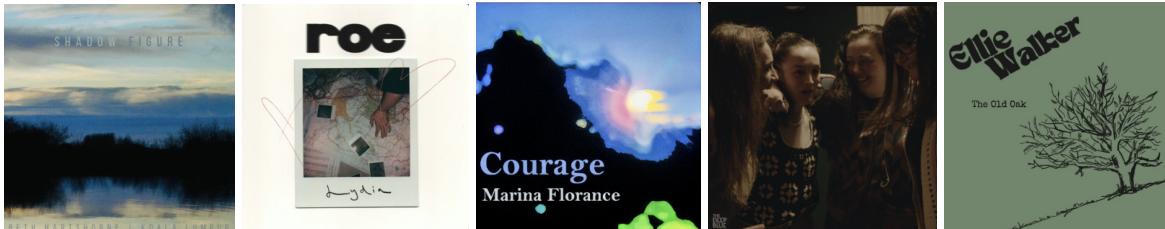
The talented **Marea Carbonell** brings her excellent [Periscopi Invertit](#) once again, this time with *La Ximbomba*. This is less characteristically Latin Jazz infused than some of their tracks with a more hypnotic, repeating instrumental backdrop and solid beat while vocals come and go but melodic, minor key, passionate and sung in a lyrical Spanish style. The musicianship throughout the band is, as ever, of the highest standard and, stylistically, it crosses enough genres to make it hard to categorise. Unique and invigorating.

South London soulster [EDBL](#) demonstrates a different dimension to his style with *Siera Madre*. We usually associate Eddie with soulful funky tunes with expressive vocals (often by collaborating artists) but here he brings us a



mid-tempo Latin-infused jazz instrumental, dominated by attractive acoustic guitar, reverberant and Spanish-sounding, playing against rich chords and a generally smart instrumental backdrop that is light in texture but strong in content. Great to hear this side of his creativity.

## FOLK & COUNTRY FARE



It has been a little while since we had a new track by [Beth Hartshorne](#) and her lovely Mexcian band **Koala Lumpur**. So it was a joy to received ***Shadow Figure***. From the outset, Beth's warm distinctive voice floats dreamily above lush strings and organic instrumental interplay, adorned by harmonies as the track develops and pans out. This is intricate, delicate even too but beautiful both in its innate melodic sensibility and its evocative arrangement. I want to listen to this in a riverside bar in winter with an open fire crackling and flickering. A track to lose yourself in.

It is always good to have new music from Irish Indie Folkster [Roe](#). ***Lydia*** is a mid-tempo track with strummed guitar that is joined by additional layers of instrumentation as the track develops. Roe's distinctive, dexterous voice gets straight into my head, her yearning, expressive tones and insatiable appetite for engaging melody highly evident while harmonies add to the quality of the chorus. Characteristically nuanced, in some strange way it makes me think of what NewDad might sound like with a considerably stronger folk undercurrent. Lovely either way.

TTD's favourite East Anglia-based London Folk artist [Marina Florance](#) returns with ***Courage***. This is a softly, thoughtfully written and performed track that so acutely encapsulates how so many of us are feeling right now. 'Do we have the courage to speak out against the human rights deniers/Against the anti-immigration thugs, against the mobs' she repeatedly asks? These issues have been playing on my mind and emotions day and night for so long that this track ends up being especially moving. Yes, Marina, we DO have that courage and now we need to ensure there are enough of us not only to take on and destroy the likes of Farage, Robinson and their lying, hate-spreading propaganda machine but we apparently need

to take on our own [Labour] Prime Minister on issues I never dreamed a Labour Government would side with the far right on. These are stressful, trying times. Marina has articulated how we feel. Now we need to heed her call for action.

Another TTD favourite is Manchester-based quartet [The Deep Blue](#). They describe new track ***Porcelain*** as ‘Country’ and perhaps, by contemporary definitions, it is. But moreover it is one of their most beautiful and compelling tracks yet with echoes of The Staves in a jam with I SEE RIVERS although not especially like either. The instrumental play is shimmering and attractive, the extended and suspended guitar chords adding to their reverberant jangle while the vocals intertwine delivering both a warm, engaging melody and harmonies so goose-bumping they make me shiver. The Deep Blue prove time and time again that they have something really special and deserve to be playing big venues and festival main stages. Let’s hope 2026 sees that come true.

From the spiritual home of English Folk, Cambridge, comes another TTD regular. [Ellie Walker](#)’s latest single is ***The Old Oak***. This is slowish triplet time Folk with some lovely intertwining of a repeating piano pattern with acoustic guitars, picked and strummed plus a chorus that is big in intent and will grab you by both ears. Ellie is in fine voice and the production complements her unquestionable songwriting skills.

## **PART THREE: OTHER COMMENTARIES**

### **MARKETING UPDATE by Sherry**

A lot of resources, both financial and human, have been going into our marketing efforts in October. So it is nice to be able to share some of that news with our readers.

#### **[THE] MUSIC OF SOUND**

We have been working with external services **YouGrow Promo** and **Musosoup** to keep pitching the band’s music to popular playlists. This helps produce good streaming numbers and monthly listens but, most importantly, exposes us to audiences who are demonstrating their appreciation by saving tracks to their own libraries so they can listen again and adding themselves to our followers lists on Spotify, YouTube and social media. The support of Serge Wenus with his amazing playlists has been especially helpful and

encouraging. That has led another resurgence of interest in ***Cold Weather Man*** and other previous singles as well as contributing to the success of ***We Are Dreamers***.

Meanwhile, we are posting regularly on TikTok, trying to tap into trending items where appropriate and generally looking to keep building interest in our music. With ***You Lost Out (Remix)*** out in late November, we hope to end 2025 on a high and then plan to get out and play live again in the new year.

### **ONLINE COURSES**

We are gearing up for the launch of our new online music business courses which will be affordable short courses, CPD accredited and aimed at people who want to improve their knowledge and understanding of the industry and how it works. The TTD Media account on Instagram is being used exclusively for this purpose now and we will be releasing information soon about how to apply.

### **THE TRUST THE DOC MERCHANDISE SHOP**

We have been adding new items to the shop and clearing out some of those that are no longer relevant (i.e. the Linking Up merchandise). Sanuja has been bringing us some cool designs and we are excited to be able to incorporate her work into the store. Look out for a proper relaunch of the shop in the coming weeks.

### **BRILLIANT BRENT**

The final Brilliant Brent of 2025, upstairs at the North London Tavern, is happening on the afternoon of Sunday 7th December. Exciting Welsh singer-songwriter **Elli Glyn** has been confirmed and we hope to announce the other two acts imminently. Once we do, the posters will be out and we will begin the marketing and ticketing for that event.

### **TRUST THE DOC TV**

We are putting new content together for our YouTube channel and see this as a central plank of our future marketing efforts, shining the light on a lot more grassroots music artists and providing a really good focus for engaging programmes. This year, we have signed up over 7,000 new subscribers to the channel which is great news.

## **TRUST THE DOC RADIO**

The radio show continues to attract healthy audience figures. The last weeks of October saw over 700 people per week either listening live or checking out the podcast. We have been getting the promo about the show out on more groups than ever on Facebook, posting some videos on Instagram, TikTok and Bluesky and generally keeping the show on the radar of fans of new independent music.

Last but not least, I am always studying and researching to learn new ideas and concepts that can be applied to our marketing. I hope that we are able to show that this is yielding some encouraging results. Thanks to everyone who has supported any part of our activities. It is an honour to play my part in promoting grassroots music to as many people as possible.

## **TAMARA BARSCHAK @ TEMPLE OF ART & MUSIC (by Neil)**



Tamara and band on stage



Tamara Barschak Beermat

The last time I visited the Temple of Art & Music (TAM) near Elephant & Castle was when I reviewed a gig by Tomas Doncker & The True Groove All Stars (which also included a set by Sam Huber) in 2024. Sadly, it is one of a number of great grassroots live music venues potentially under threat due to the mundane inability of local politicians and planners to see beyond the end of their noses. The community, here in a socially and economically hard-bitten area of Southwark, needs music and entertainment hubs like this housed in the vibrant Mercato Metropolitana, an extended Box Park adorned with a dazzling array of international street food stalls and bars where music plays at an unobtrusive volume but audible enough to add to the atmosphere.



At this stage, it is unclear whether the bulldozing of the Mercato Metropolitano in 2026 to make way for another skyscraper can somehow be achieved without destroying the venue. The information available online is sketchy to say the least.

Tonight I am here as the guest of talented singer-songwriter and pianist **Tamara Barschak**. Tamara's 2022 album ***Kaleidoscope*** was well received by listeners to my Trust The Doc Radio show and it is exciting to know she has a new single out in late November. Tonight there are two sets but I am only able to cover one due to travel commitments in the morning. It is more than sufficient, though, to experience a robust representation of Tamara's music. We even have Tamara Barschak beer mats complete with QR codes!

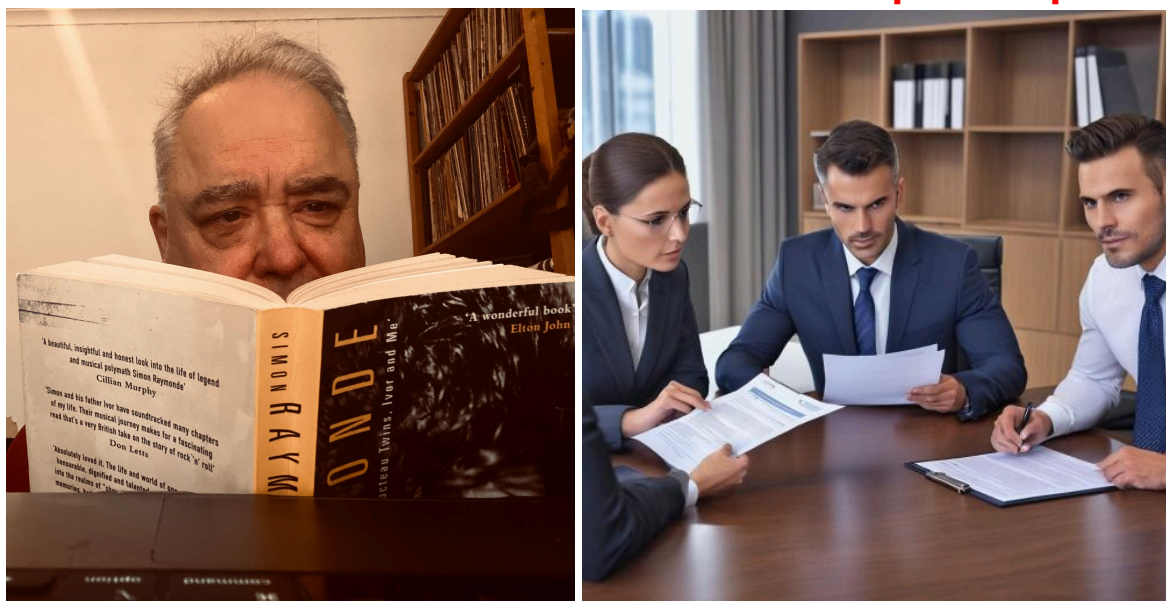
She kicks off tonight with a lively Bossa track sung in Portuguese which she dedicates to 'all the wonderful men in our lives'. Her band consists of Tamara on Electric Piano plus Bass Guitarist, Drummer and Saxophonist. It's the ideal combination for her sophisticated Latin Jazz based songs. ***Moving Up*** follows, based around a bluesy piano figure and corresponding vocal. The rhythm section is tight as anything but also subtly understated in their playing while the sax adds fire and colour. When a Brazilian cover is introduced, the saxophonist switches to flute and provides a highly accomplished solo while Tamara's improv in open fourths and fifths is striking. A track, appropriately dedicated to Joni Mitchell makes room for an impressive Bass solo. Tamara explains these elements in the songs without over-indulging.

The last song in set one is a moving track about 'unconditional love' entitled ***Rivers Of You***. A repeating piano line soon becomes a clever cross rhythm with the bass and drums, lifted further by some exquisite saxophone. Tonight has been a reminder of the sheer joy of hearing superbly written and arranged Jazz and Latin songs played by musicians of such high calibre, topped off by Tamara's rangey, expressive and distinctive vocals.

*This article originally appeared in Fresh On The Net (Sunday 12th October)*

## BEHIND THE REVIEWS !!! (by Neil)

### What Reviewers Need And How Artists Can Help Us Help Them



#### REVIEWERS ARE RESEARCHERS TOO

When I first took on the amazing privilege of being a moderator and reviews writer for Fresh on the Net, our founder and music legend Tom Robinson gave me some clear and careful advice. Writing up the 'Fresh Faves' reviews was about more than just expressing an opinion about the tracks. It was just as important to take the time to research the background and history of each band or artist and highlight their story and key achievements as part of each review.

So we are, in that sense, researchers as well as being reviews writers. Fortunately, we live in an era where there has never been more nor quicker access to information even about the lesser known artists. If we are able to access their Linktree (if they have one), that invariably provides all or most of the links we need to build that brief but important pen picture of the people we are writing about. It also enables us to provide our leader and editor Del with all the social media links for the article so that he isn't always having to dig that information out himself.

#### ARTISTS CAN HELP THEMSELVES AND US

This is where artists can not only help us out but, more importantly, can help themselves. Since Soundcloud is, and always has been, the vehicle through which submissions to the Fresh on the Net in-box are made, it stands to reason that it is also the first place we look for the links that help us inform our readers about the artists they have voted for. Soundcloud makes it very easy to add up to 10 links to a page. So it is somewhat frustrating when we click onto the artist's page only to discover there is not a single link we can use.

Having links on your Soundcloud page is obviously logical and important when people might be looking you up and considering writing about you or offering some form of support - a gig, a radio play etc. Not just us Fresh on the Net moderators. We are going to review your track regardless because our readers have voted you into the faves. But what if someone else has heard your music and decided to look you up? Shouldn't you be making it easy for them to find you and find out more about your history?

My advice to any aspiring band or artist would always be to set up a Linktree account. It provides a highly convenient central point for everything a journalist, blogger or some other interested party needs - streaming and download links, ticket links for upcoming live shows, website, social media links, videos, artwork, reviews, interviews etc. Put the Linktree in your social media profiles and then the favourite cliché of 'link in bio' does apply.

It also means us reviewers now have everything we need in one accessible place. From there, we can find out what your big achievements have been, any festivals you have played, what national radio support you have had, whether you have been touring and so on. Bear in mind that this kind of information is also what national radio programmers and music industry executives are looking for when weighing up whether to take a chance on supporting you. So it's simple. Make it as easy as possible for them to find it.

### **SELF-IMPOSING STANDARDS**

So what about us reviews writers? How do we make sure we are able to provide the best information we can about the artists? Time is limited and the longer we have to spend searching for information online, the more sketchy the data we have to rely on. Nevertheless, we still have to try. There is nothing more soul-destroying than having to give up and accept we are simply not going to find much of interest to share with our readers about someone they have voted for. But it happens.

Nevertheless, giving up is not an option. And perhaps, in a slightly perverse way, there is a certain thrill and subsequent sense of satisfaction in chasing the links down and being able to uncover the information. Not only does this enable us to share our findings with the readers. It also enables us to provide every artist or band that makes the faves with a review of some substance that they can go on using as part of their own important PR and promotion efforts. It always makes us smile when we see quotes from Fresh on the Net faves reviews on the web and social media pages of artists we have written about (albeit it is quite irritating when reviews are wrongly attributed to Tom Robinson when the actual name of the author is clearly displayed at the top of the article!). Trust me when I tell you that Tom also really does not want reviews he had no part in writing, and which do not reflect his distinctive style, being attributed to him! So credit the actual author when you are posting about it on your socials etc.

## **PAY ATTENTION .... WHATEVER YOUR ROLE**

That brings me to another point; one that should be heeded by artists and reviews writers alike. Quite simply 'Pay Attention'. If you receive a notification that you have been tagged on Instagram or some other platform, don't simply ignore it. Look and see what it is. Because rest assured, if someone has bothered to play your track on a radio show, write a glowing review etc. and you cannot even be bothered to hit the 'like' button, they probably won't bother again.

Never make the mistake of thinking you are too big to acknowledge support from a grassroots radio show, blog, journal etc. because you are only interested in the big ones. You are potentially snubbing people who have loyal, engaged followings that you could be reaching out to if you made the smallest of efforts. And even if they don't have much of a following, it costs nothing to thank someone or 'like' their post when they are trying to support you. Being nakedly entitled and up your own backside is never a good look!

The same 'Pay Attention' advice applies to us writers too. I have often had to correct small errors in reviews I have written and which have been published because I overlooked or misunderstood information about the artist(s). We all make mistakes but it is nevertheless better to be as vigilant as possible about getting individuals' roles right, citing information about their activities correctly and providing up to date biographical data.

It cuts both ways though. I have known artists to moan about information I have shared because they had failed to update their own pages. We can only go by what their own biographies and histories tell us. We are not mind readers! We are all working, in one sense or another, in a fluid, volatile industry where change is constant. So whatever your role, try to ensure the information you have published about yourself is up-to-date and accurate.

## **GUEST MODERATORS AND REVIEWS WRITERS**

We understand that not everyone who shares our passion for grassroots music has the time available to become a Fresh on the Net moderator and, likewise, we can only accommodate a limited number of people at any one time being on the team. But Del is always on the lookout for guest moderators and guest writers. As a guest moderator, you would just be agreeing to participate for one or more week(s) in listening to the 170 - 200 tracks that come into our in-box and picking your favourites so that you contribute to the moderators' vote that week and influence which tracks make it onto the Listening Post. Quite a few of our current team first dipped their toes in the water by being guest mods.

As a guest writer, you would agree to write the reviews of the ten winning tracks at the Listening Post that become our 'fresh faves'. You would need to



follow some of the advice reflected by this article. In other words, you would have to do some background research about each of the ten bands or artists and include a summary of the key information in your review as well as talking about the tracks. We do have a firm rule that, if our readers have voted a track into the faves, we would never be critical. Fresh on the Net is about positively supporting grassroots music and the reviews should echo that ethos.

So, if you are interested in being a guest mod or reviewer, drop Del a message and let him know.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

So to summarise briefly - if you are an artist, ensure your links are on your Soundcloud page and our advice would be to use Linktree to put all the links in one convenient place that can be clicked onto via your profiles (i.e. 'link in bio!'). Keep the information about your activities and achievements up to date and remember you may not know who is checking you out and what opportunities you may miss out on by making it too hard for them to access the key information. Always acknowledge your notifications and show people who are supporting you that you appreciate their efforts. And it should go without saying but try not to behave like an entitled so and so whose head is where your buttocks should be!

If you are a reviews writer, do the research that enables you to talk about more than just the track you are reviewing but also informs readers about the story and history behind the artist(s). Try to pay attention to detail so that you are not having to correct errors post-publication. And be positive. We are all in this crazy industry together. There are enough sharks, snakes and spin doctors out there without us squabbling amongst ourselves! Last but not least, if you want to get involved, get in touch.

***NB: This article appeared on Fresh On The Net on Sunday 19th October***

## **ACE DISGRACE !!! MIGRANTS MISTREATED**

The Arts Council of England (ACE) has disgraced itself this month. Despite knowing that extended student visas mostly expire in November, they have left foreign nationals who have applied for Global Talent Visas waiting over three months for decisions, causing huge stress and upset and leaving those who are unsuccessful no time to pursue alternative options or appeal the decisions.

They charge over £500 per application for this process too and do not refund the unsuccessful candidates. So this is little more than a money-making machine for the Arts Council, exploiting desperate and vulnerable foreign

nationals, taking money they cannot really afford to spend and keeping them waiting months on end for shoddily explained rejections.

This cynical treatment of hard working migrants reflects the government's own quasi-Farage racist agenda and brings shame on an organisation that purports to put diversity and inclusion high on its priority list. Ever since Starmer decided to demonise all hard working migrants and wrongly accuse them of doing 'incalculable damage' to the economy before following this up with his deeply shocking and offensive Enoch Powell-like 'Island Of Strangers' diatribe, we have seen public services, one after another, echoing the new racist version of Labour in how they treat migrants regardless of their situation or of any context.

It is sad to see ACE behaving so callously against these good people but it is a reflection of the general mood in government now. Farage and his cronies have a monopoly on the UK media and now they are making the government dance to their ugly, disgusting tune.

## **AND FINALLY ..... (by Neil & Sherry)**

### **A ROLLER COASTER RIDE!!**

It is one of the many well-worn clichés to talk about a 'roller coaster ride' but that is what October has been for the two of us. Sherry has had to endure the most cynical, shoddy and money-grabbing antics of the Arts Council England in relation to her global promise visa application. Old fashioned fleecing and abuse of foreign nationals from the old British Colonies. Not a good look for the Arts Council but who is going to stop them?

Neil has had to chase HMRC for a significant sum of money owed to him which, were it the other way around, they would be sending the heavy mob out to collect. In the meantime, there has been disruptive change at ICMP following their merger with SAE that has caused a lot of additional work and stress. Fortunately, the positives of teaching at such a vibrant university far outweigh the negatives.

### **WHERE THE WORLD HAS GOT TO IN 2025!!**

All this and waking up every day to more evidence that Farage and his racist mob have control of every conceivable corner of the UK government and media including the BBC and the so-called 'Labour' Government. Meanwhile, Trump's much celebrated 'peace deal' in Gaza lasted about half a day before Israel were back to committing further genocide. A bit like his previous 'deals' with the likes of North Korea and Russia. But he will be presented as

the hero by FBC (Farage Broadcasting Corporation), the Reform Light (previously known as Labour) Prime Minister and on the social media platforms collectively owned by the far right's billionaire allies (Musk, Zuckerberg etc.). If you want a metaphor for what a crazy, corrupt and vile world we live in, take a look at how heads of State in leading governments are lining up to nominate Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize!! Maybe they could posthumously nominate Hitler, Stalin and Botha too! Anyone remember democracy? Us neither; or just vaguely perhaps.

### **DISUNITED KINGDOM**

While the [Dis]United Kingdom continues to fall apart as ill-informed white van conspiracist from Idiot Fuckwit in deepest Nowhereshire becomes the only opinion that counts for the government and media, some of us are still trying to spread positive, unifying and educated alternatives to this far right narrative (can far right supporters spell or even say narrative?). We are also trying to keep shining the light on all the exciting and diverse music out there. Most particularly, that which is made by real humans.

### **BRILLIANT BRENT**

Our latest Brilliant Brent was supposed to have three Asian/Asian-fronted artists on the bill except one, sadly, failed to show and then attempted to deliver notice of non-attendance via time machine! But it was still a lovely occasion supported by a vibrant and unusually [for a grassroots gig] young audience. Farage would have been foaming at the mouth to see such unity between people of different ethnic and national backgrounds sharing their love of music. We are stoked to have Welsh singer-songwriter Elli Glyn playing the next one (on 7th December). We were already aware of Elli through her music featuring on BBC Introducing in Wales so it was amazing when she turned up as a student in Neil's MA Music Business class. Look out for imminent news about who will be joining her on the bill.

### **OH WELL, IT ISN'T ALL BAD NEWS!!**

In the meantime, we are stoked about how well things have been going for our little band [The] Music Of Sound. The support of Serge Wenus, YouGrow Promo, Fresh On TheNet and our amazing label Monochrome Motif Records has been vitally important. After ten months of trying out different marketing mixes, social media campaigns and targeted google and meta ads, we are beginning to see tangible benefits. Hopefully we can end 2025 with substantially more genuine followers than we started with and continue building our profile across all platforms.

We are also excited to be getting ready to launch our online music business education programme. We have so much to share with our potential students. Could you be one of them and what areas of the industry would you be interested in studying? Let us know so we can make sure we are providing what people want and need.

So that is about it for the October edition. As ever, thanks so much for reading this and continuing to support grassroots music.

**NEIL & SHERRY xxxx**