

# ISSUES

WE'RE BUILDING A TOWER

**JON WHITE**



**GIANT ENEMY CANCER CULT**

#66: 11/01/22

MONA DEMONE - VINCENT ERNST POETRY

**THE JOURNAL  
OF OCI & CFR**

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# SONIC'S CYAN HEDGEHOGUSSY LIVE AT EDC KINTETIC FIELD

"Love is a battlefield." Think like, Band of Brothers or something. Just 2 dudes up in each other's trenches, know what I mean? ;) What if her name was Bat Benatar and she was a cartoon bat?

Why did she not introduce mascots at her shows? What if she was Fat Benatar and she was an Italian mafiosa from Ozone Park, North Jersey, circa 1957. A made woman in holy matrimony. Love is an Omertà, a solemn, endless loyalty oath to another thing, be it being, concept, or self. I love you.

I drive the #300 Gabapentin car in the NASCAR TV show. It feels really good, almost as good as Gabapentin does when I put it in my mouth, or the mouths of others.

I'm a really good car driver, I can do it very fast for a long time, if you follow my drift. Gabapentin is cool because it's safe and it's good for you.

The most important thing is to be safe, that's why I grab my "Gabbies" every morning! Every car drives faster when you tip the tank a 'lil 'pentin for its hard work. My message to the good, hard workers, class acts at Pfizer: "Gabapentin :) Just Take It ^tm :) It's Safe :) I AM FULLY GABBED AND BOOSTED x3.

I have a confession to make because I LOVE YOU. I've never made it thru a full Radiohead album. I've tried to make myself do it but I always fall asleep. apparently if you know some music theory shit it's incredible.

A musician I enjoy and am in active communication with stated the reverb sounds like "Thom Yorke queefing into different sized barrels." If I understood and experienced music in the way he does, I would probably like them more. But I am not a good musician like MC Ride, I'm simple. I like a nice 4-to-the-floor rock beat, snares on the twos and fours, and that rock and roll guitar singing, and lyrics about someone they want to "hit a home run" with, so to speak.

That's right, I'm talking about The White Stripes, my favorite album made by a band who are either brother and sister or married. It's one or the other, you get to choose, just like you get to choose between sativa and indica, but you must choose.

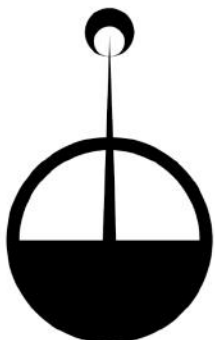
I'm about to try this Italian dish, it's called "spaghetti." Is it good? If it is good, please tell us about it at commodityfetishrecords@gmail.com

My most current concern is that the water looks very angry that I tried to make it too warm, and I'm scared. Do I feed it more salt to calm it down like the manual said to do at the start?

Our inbox is always open for your advice, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Yes, what a concept, but you know what they say, "I could use a little 'fuel' myself, and we could all use a little 'change' :)" Talk to you later!

Love,  
**HAPPY, ARCHDUKE**

<3



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# ISSUES **FEATURED ARTIST INTERVIEW**

## JON WHITE

# GIANT ENEMY CANCER CULT

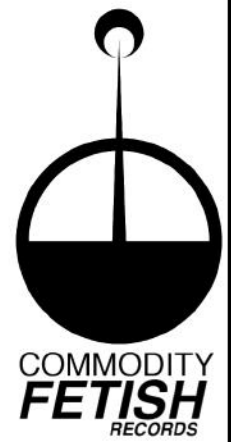
Ryan: Hello?  
<phone ring>  
R: Jon?  
Jon Can you hear me?  
R: Yeah, I can hear you now.  
J: Alright. I have to walk into the street because I don't get service.  
R: Oh, it's all good. I was, uh, adjusting my audio machine anyway.  
J: Cool.  
R: So, how are you feeling?  
J: Alright.  
R: Alright.  
J: I just got back from a walk with Anthony, who was at American Babylon.  
R: Uh, yes. I think I know which guy you're talking about.  
J: Yeah.  
R: He was there when we were having our conversation under the canopy.  
J: Yep.  
R: So, just so you know, this is being recorded.  
J: Cool.  
R: Just for the sake of reference.  
J: Yep.  
R: Um. I'm just going to ask some questions and feel free to answer as long and as opaquely as you like because I don't mind at all when things just meander.  
J: Ok.

R: Cool. So the first question is an easy one: What's your name and where are you located in time and space?  
J: My name is Jon White and I am in Newton, NJ.  
R: What part of New Jersey is that in, physically?  
J: North.  
R: What part of Jersey is that in, emotionally?  
J: Heh heh heh. It is rural, conservative New Jersey.  
R: Interesting. Is that where you grew up?  
J: Yep. Morrison Southeast county, New Jersey. I grew up about 15 minutes away in Lake Musconetcong which borders Sussex and Morris county. I've pretty much lived in this area. I've gone on to live in other areas briefly but I've basically lived here.  
R: Understood. That seems out of character for who you are. So, by what special alchemy did you manage to become so strange?  
J: Somebody asked me that the other day. Um, I don't know. I feel like with so many people that it's kind of inevitable, I guess, that even one being in the area's produce strange people. I don't know how to gauge. I had a pretty normal family.



R: What are your parents like?  
J: Um. They're pretty down to Earth, working class people.  
R: What sort of jobs did they have growing up?  
J: My mom was an insurance grunt doing insurance stuff for insurance companies and my dad is a printer.  
R: Mom is like data entry things?  
J: Yeah, she kind of worked her way up as well. She started at the bottom in insurance and over time, you know, she's got more and more involved. Then when I was 3 years old they divorced.  
R: Ok, so that was pretty

early on. Did you spend a lot of time with both of them growing up?  
J: Yes.  
R: So they shared custody?  
J: Yup.  
R: Did either or both of them remarry?  
J: My mom remarried. 5 years ago.  
R: Ok. So it's not like a childhood thing.  
J: No. I didn't grow up with any step parents.  
R: No step anything?  
J: No step anything until much later. They both had love interests growing up but they were never living with us.  
**CONTINUED**



# JON WHITE CONTINUED

R: Sure. Did you grow up with a lot of animosity toward your parents or were you pretty easy going with them?

J: I guess yes and no because when I was younger I was just. I always felt like I had to do sports and random activities that I didn't really want to do. I had to stay at my aunt's house or go to sport's camp. Or CCD. Christain afterschool, you know. I was raised a Catholic. My mom's Catholic. My dad is protestant. There was a lot of stuff that I didn't like growing up.

I wouldn't say that they were particularly abusive or mean. I have problems with, just, American culture in general, so, having my parents that are pretty much down to Earth Americans I could run into some problems, you know.

R: Were your parents at all interested in counter-culture things?

J: No. Well, it is, um. My dad was a troublemaker. He grew up in the 70s. Started drinking and smoking when he was 12 or 13 years old. Had uncles that were pretty different. Different where they were not really politically radical but almost sort of like dazed and confused or something. That picture of the 70s where people are sort of allowed to be scoundrels back in the day. He was certainly a scoundrel and he got himself into quite a bit of trouble.

My dad has a pretty rebellious spirit. He works at a pot factory now. We get along well. I live with him currently.

R: He lives in New Jersey?

J: Yeah.

R: I guess he must. So he was just more of a personally rebellious sort of person? Rather than.

J: Yeah he doesn't really. He wasn't exposed to political radical people or avant garde art or things of that nature. My mom was like more of a studio 54 kind of person. She liked disco. That was kind of her scene. To compare her taste.

R: Did she go to New York City sometimes?

J: I don't know, I'll ask her about Dan city. What's a city? Is that a club in New York?

R: No, I am saying she went to New York City to party.

J: Oh yeah, studio 54 was in New York City.

R: Oh, you meant that literally.

J: Oh she literally would go to Studio 54.

R: Oh, that's interesting. So, did you get interested in music because of your parents at all?

J: To an extent. When I was younger in the car they would play music for me. On the radio. Then they would quiz me. They'd say, "Who is this, who is this?" It kind of was a fun thing for me. It made me memorize a lot of music. My dad was into classic rock. My mom was more into just, kind of whatever was on the radio. So I didn't have any strength. My parents didn't push music on me. They didn't introduce me to something I wouldn't have otherwise come across but there were actually some records that my Uncle Charlie left to my dad that were passed down to me. One of them was a Gentle Giant record. I really love Gentle Giant.

F: How old were you when you started playing music yourself?

J: Well, when I was telling you when we were talking before. When I was in 4th grade, when I started a band, I would write songs. I would never perform them.

R: I apologize. There's people playing music in my living room right now.

J: That's fine.

R: Give me about one minute.

J: Yeah.

<clattering noises>

<the sounds of instruments>

<rapid silence>

R: Ok, continue.

J: What was the question?

R: How old were you when you started playing music yourself?

J: Oh yeah. I was in 4th grade and I would write songs. I would recite them like poetry but I would never actually perform them with a band even though that was my original intention. Then, as I got older, I flirted around more and more playing music. Until I was 16. Before I started an official project where I made music often.

R: And that was named what?

J: Um. At first it was named Giant Enemy Crab God. It was kind of a joke. At first it started as a joke. Which a lot of my early music projects did. Giant Enemy Crab God which is now Giant Enemy Cancer Cult started pretty much as a giant joke.

The music was meant to be really abrasive and annoying. Somehow it became very serious. Not necessarily serious in that I take myself too seriously but I became very devoted to the project. More than I initially thought that it would have.

R: So did you start out writing songs?

J: Yes, actually. Even at that stage. I would write poetry so the war against crustaceans happened a thousand years ago where the authoritarian lobster regime imprisoned the crabs.

So the crabs, they escaped and staged a rebellion against the lobsters who maintained their power because the lobsters, as you may know, can be immortal. They can keep growing.

R: What would you say got you interested in those sort of subversive undertones?

J: I've always been a very politically minded person and I think that it's. I think that it's a common theme in history that the greatest art is often created through, not to say that pain- good art and you need to inflict pain upon yourself. But communities that come together in the face of oppression and wind up being happy in the face of oppression.

Who expresses themselves in the face of oppression, the art winds up becoming more real than more bourgeoisie of run-of-the-mill art forms. What interests me is the plight of the crustaceans. In order to express freedom sometimes you have to express, well, freedom is a relative term. Usually in reaction to oppression. So, Initially it was especially a very good force to channel a lot of metaphors of American society into what's happening there.

R: Now, your idea of lobsters being immortal. That's an interesting mechanism for how they would be able to oppress the crabs. How did they oppress the crabs, physically?

J: Well, they would keep them in cages and camps.

R: Ok.

J: A lot of the history is lost through time. These are their ancestors. Crabs don't live forever, so we can only recall legends of their plight.

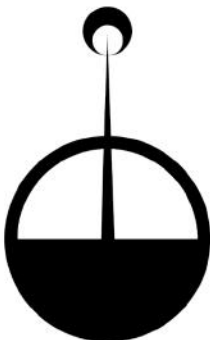
R: Why did the lobsters keep them in camps and cages?

J: Well, the lobsters, through being immortal, assumed that they were superior and more intelligent than the crabs.

CONTINUED ON 10



GIANT ENEMY CANCER CULT POSTER



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# GIANT ENEMY CANCER CULT

High Five

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## ISSUES MAGAZINE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION



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# ANSWERS WITHOUT QUESTION

1. Apricate (to bask in sunlight).  
a. Wool fibers twisting individually in the sun crinkled like leaves high wired on utility poles whose treated wood had started life as youth club planted saplings during the Marshall Plan era; the weight of the charge threaded the hair simultaneously, no flash just breeze.  
b. I don't respect anybody who can't tell the difference between Pepsi and Coke.

2. Insouciant (unbothered).  
a. Suddenly, Flint, Michigan was the scariest place on earth one summer. We'd been heading north from an afternoon near Detroit, when the traffic slowed on narrowing streets. A wrong exit had been taken, and a vista of people at a bus top (?) appeared. It was an open asphalt urban field with all manner of adult aged people leaning to the edges of their balance points. I was 10 and sheltered, so this view was a peak far into the lives of others. Something new burned in me that day.  
b. When I was little I had a car door slammed shut on my hand and I still remember it quite vividly.

3. Interlocutor (participate).  
a. Open Rhythms is an idea that stuck with me from studying Jackson Pollock. Unless I invented this entirely (ie a false memory), the painter referred to the balance struck in his abstract work as owing to a structure of "open rhythms"- wherein elements repeat both strictly and loosely. This made perfect sense to me immediately, and remains a central explanation of what I do.  
b. People who insist on picking their teeth with their elbows are so annoying!

4. Metanoia (fundamental shift in view).  
a. The way a car shudders from the gas lines up moves through the feet and the pelvis, fear travels towards the brain via the nerves, out into the teeth and gums. Being on an unfamiliar road with little money and very nominal insurance is an anxiety trap with sharp, patient pangs.  
b. She finally understood that grief was her love with no place for it to go.

5. Paucity (scarce).  
a. I saw Beetlejuice with my mom at a moribund drive-in (during day light) the month before it closed. There were two other cars. I couldn't see or hear much. The concession food was fine since I wasn't picky. Most of the speakers were broken, we left early and I wasn't sad to never do that again.  
b. He uses onomatopoeia as a weapon of mental destruction.

6. Perspicacious (clear thinking).  
a. I was in my late 20's when I went to a gym for the first time.

My membership included a few sessions with a trainer. I straight away told him lifting weights was punishment it was so boring, he agreed it could seem that way and recommend a regiment of stretching instead. As he said I'd discover muscles I didn't know I had, I did just that. Stretching and deep, paced breathing became my workout. Gyms are kind of a put-on. You can stretch and breath in your car, bed and work desk. It feels nice.  
b. The spa attendant applied the deep cleaning mask to the gentleman's back.

7. Prevaricate (artful dodger).  
a. The sublime is a tough mistress. Being given to romanticism and history, getting absorbed into the streets of a new city was exhilarating: it was noted to me "everyone you've ever known in one room would be something"- I would be nervous unless they weren't wearing name tags, or talking. Like the Fellini movie where all the women Marcello was involved with were pampering him, and then abusing him. I could imagine this occurring via the reception gossip at my funeral. So glad I won't be there.  
b. The wooden spoon couldn't cut but left emotional scars.

7. Synecdoche (parts representing the whole).  
a. Old, old things fascinate in part because of a kind of immortality they've attained. The way new tech can upscale the ghostly apparitions of long ago days will change our relationship with the past, make it more immediate. The humanity of the individual from the 1890 will emerge to meet us. It's exciting and pregnant with strange, alien potential.  
b. The random sentence generator generated a random sentence about a random sentence.

8. Timorous (scared).  
a. Hoping the strass involved standing near the doors and acting as a look out for each other. Sometimes we'd ride this way to go pay the fines for previously getting caught. The worst was having to jump out and very conspicuously run into the city as the doors cracked open when we were expected somewhere. No cell phones meant we were being left. Being left could mean losing your ride to a concert you paid 30/40 bucks for. It happened. I still have a couple unripped tickets from the time.  
b. There have been days when I wished to be separated from my body, but today wasn't one of those days.

9. Uhtceare (anxiety).  
a. The age of invention was massively huge to me as a kid. The idea that farmers who fought in the civil war were having telephones installed in their homes blew my mind.  
Contextualizing the overlapping of time lines continues to be a hobby: a hundred years ago older people had parents from the American Revolution who were interviewed for the future to learn from.

# POETRY SELECTIONS

## A RAVEN & THE RAPTOR WIND

'This caw to loose then,  
for that it's always been, and always  
only been just the many, pale winds,  
and this small and shifting heart,  
that drift a tethered soul too far  
for call to flee, diagonally, toward star.  
And a chance to see, for all my art  
of hectic watching, and tense repertoire  
of jokes that cringe plus solemn tales tolled,  
as rent, to crescent parliament,  
if I could bottle, in my beak, that one's  
vespering tresses, with this moon just right,  
would I only leak cool air and old starlight  
on these towers' waxing haze?  
Or may I burn? with bellied phoenix flame,  
an always-dying scavenger, to nightly sup  
on my own corpse and rusted name.'

'Calm, little night's bird, no beast's,  
no creed's apostle, though you watch  
the herd, read the mother fossil:  
one crepuscular wassail.  
To egg-shaped star  
all healthy, heaving dreams I wish.  
To hurried gatherer a calming kiss.  
You've held it all, at intervals,  
already in your claws.'

\*'He hated that city,  
its sense of itself,  
and carried bits of nest  
as one who would long since  
have wandered, into some low wilderness,  
but still had stakes claimed up there,  
in lobbied towers, sparse and spired, cares  
coiled, unlike a tree, unplayed.'

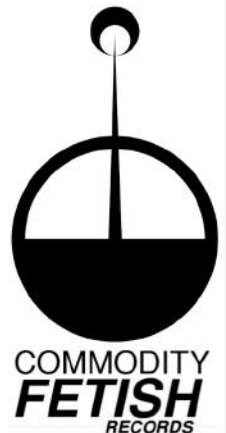
'Her milk-white curve swept  
too wide for these great lakes.  
It could embrace the sea and not be drowned,  
or lend a first-morning-dew-soft shoulder  
to a demon of the brick and mortar  
tired of all its solidness.'

**BY VINCENT ERNST**

More recently, my generation bridged the gap between pre- and post- tech boom that brought the world the internet, first in their homes, then in their phones.  
b. After coating myself in vegetable oil I found my success rate skyrocketed.

10. Ultracrepidarian (know-it-all know-nothing).  
a. Being a child of the Cold War meant you were aware of the idea of complete annihilation as any moment.  
This invariably has a profound effect on mental development. Somethings never bother to start like this.  
b. She couldn't decide if the glass was half empty or half full so she drank it.

**-END-**



# IMPRESSIONS OF

## OMEGA VI by SEBASTIEN GUERIVE

Sebastien Guerive is an experimental electronic artist from Nantes, France. Atypeek Music released his single, "Omega VI," in 2022.

You can check it out here:  
[open.spotify.com/album/2IUtYltzLZor5ugnUrYSn](https://open.spotify.com/album/2IUtYltzLZor5ugnUrYSn)

### My Impressions:

Crisp architecture in the pulses crackles on my ear drums as I journey via the sounds through a dark and gorgeous highway.

Crystalline structures carved by water and the smell of chlorine, washed in shadows, tense but evocative; the erotic. A new take on the abasement.

## THE MAZE by EUGENE THE OCEANOGRAPHER

Eugene The Oceanographer is an experimental electronic artist from Ireland. They released an album, "The Maze," on September 10, 2022

You can listen to it here:  
[biloxata.bandcamp.com/album/the-maze](https://biloxata.bandcamp.com/album/the-maze)

### My Impressions:

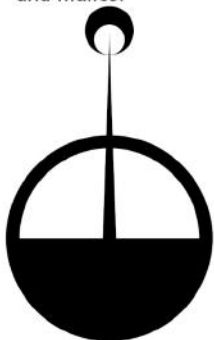
This album takes you on a journey. It opens with the implication of a hike. Screeching cars meet you at the gate to a heaven-like place. Machines and tapes spool in an effervescent 3 dimensional space.

From there it curves and swerves. I find myself listening intently, nodding, and day dreaming.

I'm dissociating in a multicolored wonderland, a clockwork landscape. A place aware of the world, affected by the news, but still somehow foreign.

Plodding, synthetic drumlines (alternative with swells of computer neon).

This is a strange world. A digital world. A bright but blighted world made of whimsy and malice.



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## AN UNUSUAL WAY TO DISAPPEAR by MASSIMO DISCEPOLI

Massimo Discepoli is an avant garde electronic artist from Italy. DOF released an album of theirs, "An Unusual Way to Disappear."

You can listen to it here:  
[www.doflabel.com/an-unusual-way-to-disappear/](https://www.doflabel.com/an-unusual-way-to-disappear/)

### My Impressions:

Tight, bursting membranes sparkle bit crunched tuneful synth snaps. Laconic, jazzy drums play past the beat.

There is a swinging seduction that draws the music forward (the symphonic web capturing the lonely ears).

The piece is still but moving, cerebral but beautiful, varied but repetitious.

## IV by XERESA

Xeresa is a shoegaze act from Brighton, UK. Shore Dive Records released their album, "IV," on June 24, 2022.

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

### My Impressions:

Tender, joyous, bittersweet, calm. An introverted take on subtle pop rock hybridization.

The singers calmly and sweetly sing the lyrics over the music. The sounds are a hybrid of synthesizer, guitar and drums. The licks are a bit off-kilter but still very poppy. The melodies are tuneful. The entire production is sweet to hear.

## DISTANCE by ANDREA VISCARDI

Andrea Viscardi is a pianist from Italy. Phono Klavier Ltd. released their single, "Distance," in 2022.

You can check it out here:  
[open.spotify.com/album/4RsUN2ly8xLb0BPkWY2b26](https://open.spotify.com/album/4RsUN2ly8xLb0BPkWY2b26)

### My Impressions:

A beautiful river of slowly unfolding piano sounds gently waft from the speakers.

A sound with the reserve of silence, introverted and sincere.

Somewhat like a piece by Satie, the music is moody and subtle. It slides rather than pulses. It drifts like a leaf through the wind. It softly glides to its finish.

## DERRAMAR by MASSA NERA

Massa Nera is a hardcore act from New Jersey. They released an album, "Derramar" in 2022.

You can check it out here:  
[soundcloud.com/massaneran/sets/derramar-querer-borrar](https://soundcloud.com/massaneran/sets/derramar-querer-borrar)

### My Impressions:

Tempestuous clashes of heavy emotional guitar singing bright brilliant chords; tense, fomented sincere.

The screaming outward gaze of a total body experience. Subsumed self in a pool of hot water, punctuated drums, chaos in tandem; orderly, intense, beautiful and proud. A great effort and a lovely piece of music.

## ANEMNIAN by ACRON

ACRON is an avant garde act from Naples, Italy. Liburia Records released their album, "Anemnian," on September 10, 2022.

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

### My Impressions:

Quixotic, varied, unusual. Moments of harmony erupt from canyons of silence. Clicking, spinning, bursting and horn.

The piece carries forward in starts and stops. The beat of no inertia. It crests and pulls. It shrieks and pops. It never becomes solid but it remains quite musical.

## FRESH OUT THE JOINT, A MIXTAPE by RTHBNDR

RTHBNDR is a solo Trip-Hop project from North Carolina. They released their mixtape, "Fresh Out The Joint, A Mixtape," on September 27, 2022.

You can listen to it here:  
[rthbndr.bandcamp.com/album/fresh-out-the-joint-a-mixtape-2](https://rthbndr.bandcamp.com/album/fresh-out-the-joint-a-mixtape-2)

### My Impressions:

Brilliant. A blend of worldly sounds, hip hop beats and percussion goodness with intermingled spoken word pieces. It's a mixtape that makes you wanna dance and also makes you think, it gives you words to grow upon.

**THIS REVIEW BY SHANNON**



# IMPRESSIONS OF

II by **COFRADIA DE ESPACIOS DISUELTOS**  
**LOS HEREDEROS DEL VINO**

by **IHA** **MENTIS OCULI**  
by **CHEST ROCKWELL**

Cofradia De Los Herederos Del Vino is an experimental act from London, UK. They released, "II," on September 23, 2022.

Iha is an ambient artist from Santiago, Chile. They released, "Espacios Disueltos," on October 7, 2022.

Chest Rockwell are a progressive metal group from Bowling Green, KY. They released an album, "Mentis Oculi," on October 4, 2022.

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

You can listen to them here:  
[ihaihaiha.bandcamp.com/album/espacios-disueltos](https://ihaihaiha.bandcamp.com/album/espacios-disueltos)

You can listen to it here:  
[chestrockwell.bandcamp.com/album/mentis-oculi](https://chestrockwell.bandcamp.com/album/mentis-oculi)

**My Impressions:**

A soft, persistent tension waxes and wanes through the velvet oil of the samples and instruments.

The pieces almost drift as they delicately progress, dripping like quartz soaked water from the rafters of an elegant, austere cavern.

There are strings, voices, samples, maybe synths. Swells, drones, chimes, light wails. The pieces are gorgeous. They are timeless.

**My Impressions:**

Longform minimalism. Droning dense-harmony slightly bent, cut bubbled but mostly straight-ahead delivered sound.

A peaceful drift through the astral plane. A slow-formed, glacial condensation of peace-willed sonic fibers.

A perfect, mute harmony. A sing-song softened mild but ever-so-slightly-abrasive sleep.

**My Impressions:**

Heavy but not caustic, right-seeming riff-laden metal made from filaments of glowing gray and purple hazes.

The modes are dark, demonic, ancient, inorganic.

The vocals are almost ghost-like; sing song but sinister, desperate and pleading. Amazed at that which has been seen. Power in the arms of a dove.

## POETRY SELECTIONS

### NOTES TOWARD A SINGULARITY, TAXING THE MYTH OF SELVES

To the energies that hinge this universe, if it's really you granting sense of form to mine and not the other way around, to the grinders of the surge, the ranchers, the poacher, or the trickster living right behind my ear, to an extradimensional godling, whoever ables whom to be, to the spite-doler, the tide-yawner: the most important thing you will ever read. Come, step into my capsule and see this one space at one time see how much of space and time it can see, how far into the void it can pee, and do what I always say to me:

**BY VINCENT ERNST**

eat, don't drink your meat. And don't judge, but always critique. See, we do what we do for our own small, scab reasons. Me? I want the aliens who sift through our incidental cairns to know, I guess, that I existed. Me in particular. And that I tried.

Or tried to try. The attempting ape they may name me on a moon-manufactured polymer placard placed below my posing carcass, in a untrafficked corner of a space-touring museum. Maybe the last immortality left for an earthbound artist.

But did they have to take my body and not its manuscript shroud? It was so nice there when words that sound the same or similar sat, near or side by side, or bounced at bat when ending alternating lines. I think you'd agree. A silly line of thought it's true, but true you see, at least for me. I guess I can't say for sure it is for you. Except that you're reading this somehow, right now. You found the means, or the means found you. So maybe you do.

Or so now when the grid we laid is done, and wi-fi fades to static-clung vapor, and the night sky burns, along with all the world's reefer, so only ravaged atmosphere is getting higher, I might have words still. Still and always cresting, words, by held reams, to play on blank nights, work songs by which to bury grey-lit day. And anyway, we can't now ignore a source of happiness so frugal, so self-sustaining and critiquing, while we consult the means of survival. See, we survive on cycles. And to thirst for the cramming of truths, or their held need's disbarment, into unfit parcels seems the only acceptable cycle to choose

(onward and outward, starting from death and never collapsing, having never paid its dues). So but not truth sought on the systems themselves, but that which states what's glanced upon, what's held, the systems' selection systems, a matrix of why a given matrix is adopted, why this or that set of knick knacks and equations may be foremost, or forgotten.

And because every statement/question, asked or sung, is done and dumb to some and a widening of another's circumference.

And so but yeah if we must talk, and hearing ourself I know we must, I think we talk with Poetry, theirs and yours and, I guess, this, speak to life with poetry, my life and theirs and, I guess, yours. It seems all the truths that style gladly sells are just as listened to.

And I can stand at the orchard gate and point this passerby and that pilgrim to their place, or I can bring new trees, recalled from on past thought. And, goddammit if science doesn't seem to be progressing so to appease our imaginative output. Or maybe I had trudged, just, into some forest hauling all oblong cities I could, then needed firewood.

Or maybe, oh mysterious energies, as you laugh at me, as I at a happy dog, as I grasp at intimations that saying and doing are the same, maybe, just maybe, enough billions of laser-fine moonbeams may yet cast sufficient light.

### SO WE MIGHT KNOW THEM IF WE SEE THEM

Third or fourth come of how ever many Humans. So Thirdmen? Or Thrumans? Day is late and they are early come. Breathing, bleeding Need invited them, pitiless suspension of ten grey winds. Whomen, then? Ruemen?

Just one of all the chances. Waving open activeness, power resourced, repurposed, well-poised courses all undone. Goomen, or Regrewmen? Of all chances, one, but fed by swallowed undine to found moons. Swoonmyn? Loonmyn?

What moons, of What phase, held by Leopard Cell, plain thrown. Each What their strength. Waste haven, Acacia seeking, carcass clenched, ascending,

new. For Who's sake if not their own. A new one, Wooman, Hewman, soul plus hide, body plus spark. A new one of those things.

## REFLEX by EDOUARD FERLET

Edouard Ferlet is a pianist from France. He released a single, "Reflex," in 2022.

You can listen to it here:  
[open.spotify.com/track/4r1TCUvkdNqBCAXgHp0Y1h?si=03fcc0cad5e64b23&nd=1](https://open.spotify.com/track/4r1TCUvkdNqBCAXgHp0Y1h?si=03fcc0cad5e64b23&nd=1)

**My Impressions:**

Bright, hopeful, building stacked. Life-filled meaning in every song. Golden, holy, mystic.

Intricate webs of tight-wound post-minimalist pianos dance in growing tenor through the increasing tension of the piece.

The sounds are familiar. They are exotic. They are pulsing. They are hypnotic. They are grand.

I can not overstate the restraint and the genius of the piano itself. It builds, taking its time as it gradually adds layer after layer like sediment into slate.

Truly great.

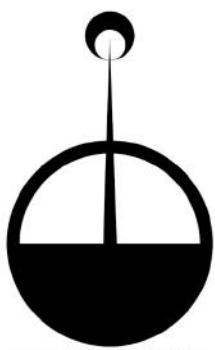
Three times leapt. All the waves leaping.

Capture. Etch him/her in either ether or vermilion shade, or in the mud each day. Stone is just okay.

Oh and by the way: this is no prophetic utterance, just a best guess told the only way it makes sense.

A new one, then. Numan? Shooman? Or hopefully two or three. Phewmen, then? Between feats, seeming to lean. An easy squat, an early stand, tension in their teal left hand.

Their right hand holds its pocket. Bright necessity's specimen. Necessimen? Pocketmen? Also, new and quite early came. A ghost of fate invited them.



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# JON WHITE CONTINUED

J: Since the crabs are also crustaceans that often occupy the same space they formed a hierarchy and enslaved the crabs to be their work slaves.

R: Now, I guess, what's the motive for the lobsters, though? Why don't they just live forever and not enslave the crabs?

J: They want to live forever but they don't want to work forever. So the crabs are the workers.

R: I see.

J: Yeah, because you work that long you don't want to live your whole life wanting to fend for yourself so eventually you form the hegemonic power constructs armed by crabs who don't live long enough to tell the difference.

R: Why haven't the crabs sought immortality?

J: Actually with technology I think every species will eventually, with enough intelligence and technology, begin to contemplate immortality when we get to that point. The lobsters are the only ones with biology alone that can maintain it without any sort of technology.

R: I see.

J: Other than social technology, of course. If you consider that a technology. Intelligence itself could be seen as a technology but maintaining this.

R: It's a meta-technology. Intelligence is.

J: Yeah.

R: So, are there lobsters who don't enslave crabs?

J: Yes, well. This was a main point of contention in the changing of the band's name and some of the direction in our early shows we would preach against the authoritarian regime. Lobster regime. Which we still do. But we've learned that not all lobsters are evil.

We found ourselves disturbing the abstracted projection of the other. We found ourselves demonizing the lobsters when really it was power and corruption that we hated.

So we had a sort of an existential reconvening with our idea. It was too much anti-lobster. We had people at shows destroying lobsters. We even had an idea once where we might take a live lobster from its tank and put it on stage in the show and that's when I realized now these creatures are enslaved by human beings. This is wrong. Even though lobsters enslaved the crabs, you know. It's wrong and we would let lobsters play with us as long as they didn't want to hurt any of us.

R: The way it works out in my mind is, maybe there are some lobsters who would like to help crabs live forever if they want to.

J: Maybe.

R: Maybe immortality isn't necessarily a path to slavery.

J: This is true.

R: That's all very interesting. Tell me about the physical philosophy of your show. Who is in the band and how do you become a member of this band?

J: Ok. So, everyone is already in the band. That's our philosophy. In fact, people who haven't played with us are more in the band than people who have.

So, the goal a lot of the time is to get as many people playing at once. We don't consider it a jam. We consider it a song. Even though we're, some people might compare certain meandering moments to jams. We try to leave it all on stage and really make it. We like to include, with maximum inclusivity. We want to invite as many people as possible.

There's a variety of abstractions with the band that might be able to describe it better. I think there was an Aphex Twin quote about how the government wanted to shut down raves in the 90s. He had a thought in his head that maybe one of the reasons why was because they wanted to. If the whole world joined in on this it would be too radical.

I think there's a truth to that. If everyone joined in on the same song, it would recontextualize hierarchy and power dynamics.

Also, I have a long standing theory about genres and crystallization. How certain music scenes and acts, once they repeat themselves they form a. I think once something repeats itself it crystallizes. In this form, it has a lot of negativity to it in that a genre that's aware of itself winds up destroying itself because its parts become assumed.

To make that more clear, people say that repetition in music is a legitimizer or validator. Through one form of repetition, it validates the previous motif. However, I think that repetition, this validation, is the same way that a politician tries to instill confidence sometimes.

I think that in a lot of these scenes, the repetition and the sheer traction that it gains through the genre is a legitimizer that crystallizes; then forms a box around what it is and it is not.

Some genres are more like this than others. Where you go to certain music scenes and they close people in and out. Oh, like you don't perform enough like this. This isn't really this kind of music.

So, Cancer Cult winds up getting put with a lot of noise music a lot of the time because a lot of the time noise scenes, even though we aren't always playing harsh noise music, they are generally very inclusive and have a lot of bizarre acts compared to playing at a bar where you're playing rock and roll or variations. Fancy places they want you to play jazz. The idea is that by never settling into one place, with never forming a definition of what we are, that we can never be codified and stratified within a crystallized form that then blocks things out. So by maximizing inclusivity and accepting chase you constantly keep things fresh instead of trying to perfect one sort of sound that then, we see with any kind of genre. The original scene, the things that makes

it a thing it is no more. People will try to capture that by repeating the sound. When really the sounds weren't what made it. The medium is the message.

R: So, the way that sounds to me is kind of a constructive way of approaching genre.

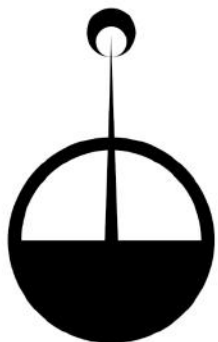
J: Yeah.

R: Now, in the interest of an interesting interview. What would you say the drawbacks of your approach are?

J: I would say that the drawbacks were already, at least for me personally, this doesn't represent every member of the band that plays with us because everyone has their own ideas on this, I can't even speak as a 100% authority; even a lot of what happens eludes me because there is so much chaos; but, I will say personally that I've accepted the flaws up front and therefore weaponizing them makes them not flaws. But they can still be inconvenient.

For example, we never rehearse. We play together. There's a lot of us who play together but we never rehearse.

CONTINUED



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# JON WHITE CONTINUED

J: So, this creates chaos in terms of relying on sound people or relying on our own states of mind to get the job done. There's no-we're not drawing from anything in memory a lot of the time so things don't always-

If you form any preconceived notions it's very easy that they'll be shot down. Some people can't handle not having a plan. As I said, the flaws I think are already accepted up front. Not planning, the fact that we're not going to plan. You can have one foot in and be a punk band and go, well, because I don't have stable mental health and I'm not constantly playing with people and I don't have money, I can just play in a band that learns really simple stuff and that will be fun. For me that's kind of having one foot in the door. Not being in or out.

I try and go all in. Say we'll play simple music because we're not stable individuals. We're going to turn the whole thing on its head and weaponize our instability. I don't know if that makes sense. Accepting your flaws up front when you make a project means that the drawbacks are now actually the weapon.

R: I've done that plenty of times with my work. I call it embracing the accident.

J: Yes.  
R: I think. If you don't mind me waxing philosophical for a second myself.

J: Oh, yes, please.  
R: With my music, I often use a lot of software synthesizers. I was always interested in making the software synthesizers sound like they are software synthesizers. I never wanted to make them sound like they were aping another instrument. I didn't want to make them highly engineered, well produced pieces because I wanted to accentuate the part that made it distinct. The thing that a lot of people would be put off by I'll put up front.

To me, I see this reflected in your philosophy,

how you approach this music. There's a naked vulnerability in doing that because you're giving people the thing you're most likely to be upset with right upfront.

J: Yes.  
R: And that allows them or maybe makes them be confronted with it instead of it being a kind of salesman's game where you're sort of insinuating what you really like or are really interested in into this but how can I get you to buy it on a mental level. If that makes sense.

J: Yeah, yeah, definitely. There's certain aspects to playing in any band where the members-. Everyone wants something. Some want things more than others. Some have different expectations. You know, as you said, you're giving people what they don't want up front. A lot of improv is so raw and vulnerable as you're saying. It makes you feel a lot of different, confusing things.

I definitely think, just watching our shows back, we don't really try to sell people things. Even when we have things for sale a lot of us are too awkward and shy to mention that we do.

R: Haha.  
J: It's really just a passionate thing. Some of us are talking, maybe we'll get some notice for it but it's something that. Sometimes I have a lot of trouble describing my philosophy.

Again, with one foot in the door and simplicity and instead turning the whole thing on its head. With success, a lot, I tend to find if you just focus on the act in the moment that you will attract people like you who want similar things and often that can be good in a mutual way that's very natural as opposed to, like, just letting the merchandise dangle something.

I don't know. I think that if you play something really from the heart that you don't have to necessarily worry about marketing yourself. As long as you don't have any ideas that you're going to do something supporting yourself with. This is our therapy and our way of life. It's hard to juggle that with money and everything for

sure. The very fact that we're juggling it sort of creates a pathway that allows it to work. We're so stressed out. We don't have time to plan anything. When we get together it is sort of these magical moments. It is very vulnerable. It's hard because I wouldn't say that we're not necessarily not marketing ourselves. I think any band that exists is sort of marketing yourself in some way, right?

R: Sure.  
J: Like, attention itself is an economy.  
R: Giving something a name is a brand.

J: Exactly. One of the things I like about the deconstructive aspect of this project and what keeps me attached to it for so long is: I listen to recordings and nothing sounds the same. But yet people keep. There keeps being more and more members and more and more people added on.

It sort of creates this lore to the band I sort of have the foresight to see that even though this is not how I'm making a living, the sheer amount of weirdos and geniuses and musically the most talented people ever that just come in and out, you just know sometimes what you have. You keep this secret. You keep the magic alive in its obscurity because it is not something.

I think a lot of musical acts try to market themselves immediately for some sort of monetary gain. I think that a much wiser thing is to let the magic marinate and let it sort of become something before you start doing that, you know? Because then that is your life. I've seen so many musicians who tour the world who are unhappy because they are playing the same thing all the time.

R: Speaking of touring musicians. Where have you taken this, specifically?  
J: This year we've been really everywhere. We took me, Phoenix and Zip. We never repeated a lineup once.

We went to Virginia. We went to New Orleans. Arkansas. Texas. New Mexico. Slab City California. Las Vegas.

R: Hahah. Where did you play in Las Vegas?

J: We played out of a place. What's it called? Do you know Aaron? Aaron Dunham? He's part of the band Chocolate Jesus.

R: No, I'm not familiar with him.

J: He actually advertised on the Slab City Facebook group. He invited us to play. We wound up getting three shows living a week and a half in slab city, which is awesome. We actually had other people from other parts of the country who hang out. It's some interesting stuff when you're looking at the Slab City Facebook page. For whatever reason they were there. I think this guy Garrison from the Pacific Northwest and Aaron messaged me saying "Hey I saw your thing on the Slab City group. If you want to come here you can come play here."

So this guy, he's in Las Vegas. I was checking out his band Chocolate Jesus and they do a lot of improv. I really liked the improv he was showing me so we decided that after LA we would go to Las Vegas instead of going to California. Gas prices were so bad there.

R: Right.  
J: It was over 6 dollars at the time. Really insane.

R: That was when Russia invaded Ukraine and all the prices shot up, right?

J: Yeah, a month into the tour, actually two weeks into the tour Russia invaded Ukraine.

R: So the gas prices went up.  
J: The gas prices went up a dollar fifty cents right in the middle of the tour. Which kind of sucked, and added a lot of stress.

After Vegas we went to the Pacific northwest.

R: I wanna interrupt you for a second because I just want to point out the absurdity of this world that Vladimir Putin sending tanks into Kiev made life for the Cancer Cult worse. <laughter>

Somehow there is a direct connection between those two events.

J: Yeah, it's really like with COVID and all this stuff still happening in the world. With all this petty bullshit still happening in the world. It's really funny, talking about COVID and the invasion of Ukraine like it's WWII.

R: God damn. Putin's done a lot of bad things but the worst

thing he's done is make it more expensive for The Cancer Cult to drive around.

J: It's funny. We were just like damn. This is the worst fucking time that this can happen haha.

R: Haha. Yah it's been a bad few years for DIY music. The music has been so great but the ability to maneuver has been so hard.

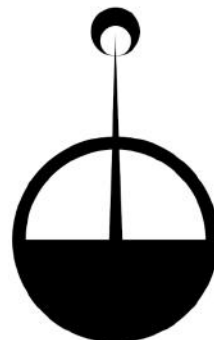
J: Yeah, yeah. It's incredible the people I've met on tour. One of the reasons I wanted to go on tour is that I thought I didn't have the money for it. I blew all the savings I had on it. It was because I wanted to meet people who were making the same kind of people I was. I reached a point where I was kind of putting on shows and I really really like what I'm doing. I immediately want to branch out. I wanted to see what everyone else was doing. There's a really big comradery in it.

R: Yes.  
J: It's cool to see all the people who know other people and I really like having, now I have much more of a knowledge of the DIY scene that's going on in all these places. Music that has yet to be labeled. It's very exciting.

R: I agree. I agree on that completely. Which is one of the reasons I was so excited to see Cancer Cult perform. Also how I just met you guys and there was a kinship pretty instantly, I think.

J: Yeah, yeah. It's all very natural in American Babylon. After all that time touring and getting there too.

CONTINUED



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# JON WHITE CONCLUDED

J: That was the most fun that I had in years. I really loved that and it was crazy to see all the people that came out for it. I thought it was very inspiring.

R: So is working with you and having you around. You know, that's what made me want to do the interview.

So, we've gone through this pretty long conversation. We haven't promoted anything. Would you like to promote something?

J: Um. That's hard. It's hard to promote something.

Well, I will say that I have a very awesome friend in Brazil who makes music. Sometimes he'll put out Cancer Cult stuff and he'll put out his own stuff. I really, really want him to come to the United States, eventually. He's planning on it. I don't know if this will ever happen but we both really want it to happen.

His label is called Ultra Gash.

R: Mhmm.

J: That label just released an album by The Work. Which is post-Henry Cowell, post-punk. He's released the God-King Josiah album. It's a concept album about the perfect triangle.

R: Lovely.

J: They're two very awesome Cancer Cult members. I highly recommend checking out the Ultra Gash label. Lucas is one of the only people I know making music that scratches that chaotic itch as much as my own music does for me. With his bant Esmectatons. So check that out.

R: Oh yeah. So, this is going to be my final question of this interview. Which has been very good, by the way. I've enjoyed it.

L: Yeah, me too, Thank you.

R: Is there anything else you'd like to add that I haven't asked you about? That you'd like to be included?

J: Hmm.

R: Speechless, my goodness.

J: How about this: Where do you see the state of the world in a few years?

R: Me?

J: Yeah, where do you think?

R: Well, that's a question I could go on a long time about.

J: Heh heh heh.

R: I think that balancing realism and the wave of problems the world is facing right now, which I think are some pretty big ones, with some kind of optimism, I imagine Europe is going to start investing at an accelerated rate in more renewable and nuclear energy. Sadly the reason they are going to do it is because of Russia, not really because of the reasons they ought to be doing it.

I think that Russia has made them extremely insecure about the perpetuation of getting gasoline and oil so they are going to be sort of market-forced into other forms of energy. Just in the interest of being terrified of Russia.

I think there is a big market war coming between the United States and China, probably.

Obviously myself I think everyone should just cooperate with everyone else. That would be really nice but I think that a lot of our politicians and a lot of their politicians are sort of getting mad at one another for the deals that they also set up themselves 20 years ago.

J: Haha. Yeah, no, it's going to be very interesting. All these different countries are coming to a precipice upon renewable energy. That's a great point. I'm always wondering as a performer and artist what the most-what art form is more applicable and helpful to the world to come out of this political confusion. What types of shows, and what types of art will be most necessary.

There's also the thing that I think of too, beyond just theory and practice, I think there is a third method which is performance. Or art, or whatever you want to call it.

R: Mmmhmm.

J: There sort of needs to be. I think there's an aspect to the imagination that is

limited by these people in power. By their quest for power.

R: True. Imagination is what actually builds reality. There's a kind of tension between imagination and tradition and application of tradition, the effort is always to be like well, we're not blowing up completely so let's not ruin everything. Imagination is, like, maybe we can make it better than it is. You know, maybe we can construct some new ways of thinking, new ways of behaving.

J: Sometimes I like promoting chaos. Controlled chaos, in a lot of ways, in art because, let's say I get something together and it's a ton of people, and we're all playing random things. Even if a lot of it could be considered meandering, if there's at least one moment in that piece that's unique and has never been done before, I'm a firm believer that everything is just everything else rearranged in a different order.

That's not limiting. It's showing how creativity works. If you can create something that is quite new, if you've arranged something in a new combination that no one else is yet to witness, if you just provide that, now that is a new ingredient for the next.

Another reason I don't like to rehearse is I like to get it out there, get it out there, it's a new thing. I think if you can have these moments of chaos which keep producing these new things, which keep getting this out there and sparking people's imagination.

I would say that I'm a materialist as well. Personally I live my life as an atheist, or mostly as an agnostic. I don't like a lot of religion or spirituality or anything like that. I think that imagination is pretty much my religion.

R: Yeah.

J: I think that's true. The imagination but I think I'm a materialist because the mind is material.

I was listening to a Timothy Leary tape and he was saying, "why don't all the politicians just smoke weed and then we'll all be fine?" I don't think I'm there, but I'm definitely optimistic that through certain things,

each individual can make a difference. Even if they are creative enough. Politically minded. It's always a confusing thing having to balance, especially in capitalism and this society where you're limited in what you can focus on. There's always a thing that gnaws on me like "Oh you're not doing enough for the world at large."

R: I agree. I think that there is an inherent dialectic evolutionarily between just stimulus and adaptation. In a way what art and experimental art does is it provides a danger, a new stimulus. Without the metaphysical or physical danger of death. So, just like if a storm comes and pours rain on a yellow jacket's hive they have to figure out a way to not die. Art allows us to have the creative inspiration that comes from that storm, but without a physical storm threatening anyone.

J: Yes.

R: I think, it's an idealistic thing, it's a creative thing but it also results in a material result because it provides us with the thing that vexes us that we must contend with but it does it in a safe way because it doesn't endanger our lives.

J: Yeah, that's why a lot of philosophers like Trismegestus, Alchemical people like Jung and things of that nature. I'll agree with them a little but I think sometimes it's more simple.

It's what we call art. Art is magicanship. It is alchemy. Ritual. Does it have to be anything more than a performance art piece?

It's however you want to frame it. I think sometimes that stuff gets overcomplicated into a non-material reality like, you know, things like the collective unconscious. Surely there's epigenetic code and these things in us but sometimes invent these things that are too ideal. Or the forms of them, Plato is the perfect example. Who was it Socrates or Plato? The ideal forms how these things exist in forms, you know.

R: Yeah.

J: I don't like that line of thinking.

R: Me either.

J: But I totally believe in the alchemy of art and performances and rearranging things. Getting the stimulus.

That's what I was talking about before with the controlled chaos. We're experiencing this chaos that is not something. No one is going to die.

Although I will tell you that playing a group that allows anyone to be in it can certainly get you into some dangerous situations.

R: That is true. Yes. But that's less about the literal art that's being made and more about the process.

J: I would think that is part of the process. You would have to be ok with danger to make this kind of music. Sometimes. It's never the focus. Eventually, we've been performing live for 8 years and I've had this project for 10 years. Eventually somebody comes in that has a drug problem that's really bad. Or somebody is fine but then they get shiffaced drunk and they start starting with people randomly.

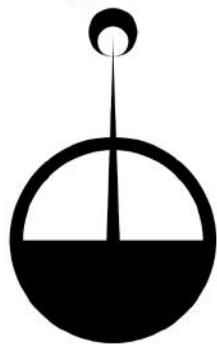
R: Aren't those dangers implicit with life and relationships in the first place?

J: Yeah, you've got to put yourself out there. I think that's one of the great things about inclusivity. You never let yourself cocoon and become too comfortable. You try to get along with as many people as you can.

With some people you can build that bridge. They're dangerous and then you manage to settle things and work it out. I think it shows up in the music. People's personality, how they perform on stage, just projecting the subconscious. I think as we do, even if something is not new, it's expressed in a different order. Let's say, just by seeing people blow their subconscious load onto the audience, so to speak, just that vulnerability is like woe that's in all of us.

I think a lot of idiosyncratic performances do that too. Sometimes I'll hear someone playing guitar, improvising, and it sounds almost so human in what some would call errors. But the vulnerability of all these forms and chaos is able to get people out of their-  
<phone call drops>

**-END-**



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# ISSUES INTERVIEW WITH MONA DEMONE of RATSKIN RECORDS

<phone ring>

Mona: Hello?

Ryan: Hello. Is this Mona?

M: Yes. Is this Ryan?

R: This is Ryan.

M: How are you doing?

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

M: I'm ok. We're having a really cute family moment here with pullups and pizza and dogs.

R: Do you need to-

M: No, no, no. I'm good.

R: Ok.

M: I'm just going to be on the front porch, you guys.

R: Ok.

M: Yeah I'm here. How are you?

R: I'm doing well. I'm kind of alone in the house right now. I was doing school earlier.

M: Aww.

R: I don't know if you've explored ISSUES much, but the way this usually works is I will record this conversation.

M: Ok.

R: I will try to transcribe it as true to form as I can.

M: Ok.

R: There's no restraint on what you want to talk about. You don't have to stick to the questions or anything. Just say what you want. I'll make it work. It'll probably be in the November 1 edition.

M: Heeey. Thank you so much for taking the time to call me and do all this. Awesome. I looked a little at ISSUES Magazine but I didn't actually dive too deep.

It looked interesting and the format was really beautiful. It's gorgeous that it is in print.

R: Yes. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. I did the design editing.

So let's start easy. What's your name and where are you located?

M: I'm Mona Demone. I'm in Akron, Ohio.

R: Uh huh. How long have you lived in Akron?

M: I moved back and forth between. Every time that me and my partner have a baby we move back to Akron.

Then we were like what are we doing in Akron, Ohio? So we were going to try to move somewhere else. It's only happened twice.

We've only been in Akron for 3 months or something this time. Before we were in Akron for about a year I think.

R: Gotcha. Gotcha. Are you originally from Akron?

M: I'm from Baltimore, MD.

R: Ok. So what brought you to Akron?

M: I was in California with my partner and we were like, "Oh my gosh. We're surprised this happened."

I never thought that I was going to be a mother. We live like, We were like, "Oh my god? What does this even mean?" We were like, Are had housing out in Joshua Tree and then our housing fell through. We're like, Ok.

We spent months like where is it, where are we going to go, where are we going to go? Are we going to go to an island in the Puget sound?

Then all of a sudden all this stuff opened up. There was a house. It cost 800 dollars. It was in a good neighborhood.

Then it was like all of a sudden we loaded up a moving truck and moved to Akron. It's Been really wet. I'm a little sleepy. It kind of feels like a Horror movie, but before anything bad happens. Big old trees, big old houses, 100 year plus houses. Sidewalks where you're just like oh what's happening here? There's a lot of space. I think there's a lot of stuff happening but I'm not sure.

R: You said when you were in California you were out in the desert?

M: Yeah. I was out in Joshua Tree. Where I think I was also trying out what if I wasn't in a big city? Type things like cramped in with more space and more room what would that look like. Could we work for ourselves?

Could we make art and sell it? Kind of all of those dreams.

Trying to feel a bit more, not working for anyone else. Trying to make our own version of things.

R: Right. I'll get back to that in a moment. What is the name of your primary music project?

M: So I'm Mona Demone. It's a really trippy experience. It wasn't my legal name at the time. I think part of my transition was to transition into my stage name kind of. Now I live as Mona Demone and I perform as Mona Demone.

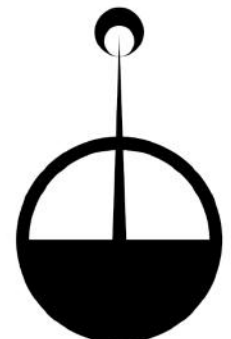
R: MmmHm. Nice. How do you spell that?

M: Mona and then the last word is Demone.

R: My understanding is that you've released something recently?

M: Yeah. I played a lot of music in Los Angeles before moving to the desert. Even after that in the desert I'd play lots of music at shows. So, I was writing these songs to perform them so I had this body of work I'd been working on.

CONTINUED



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# MONA DEMONE CONTINUED

M: been working on.

After I moved to Akron for the first time, after the baby was a little older I managed to get down there and to record this music project. I really honed in on the vocals. It's taken me a long time. I've compiled all these songs and it's kind of a snapshot of my time in California.

It kind of encapsulates a moment of time when I was going to diesel mechanic school but also transitioning at the same time. Figuring out how to transition and also how all my coworkers and all my classmates know I was transitioning. Not really feeling confident to do that. Trying to figure out who I was. Kind of that whole journey.

R: And what is the instrumentation?

M: I used an Electribe ESX-1 that I had for years and in LA I was finally able to pick it up. So basically I used the Electribe ESX-1 and I used a KORG, what is it called, a little yellow box that you press on and it beeps and chirps.

So kind of a combination of that and a Memory Man loop station that sounds like water so I can sing like a melodic loop that will go on and I'll kind of put an echo over everything.

R: Sounds really interesting. Is that available now or will it be coming out soon?

M: It came out on Ratskin Records on August 23rd.

R: Do you have a link to it?

M: I know it's at Ratskin.org but to go directly to it let me look it up.

I know I have it available.

R: Ok.

M: [ratskin.org/monadimone](http://ratskin.org/monadimone)

R: All one word? monadimone?

M: Yeah.

R: It sounds really interesting based upon what you are saying.

Now, is everything synthesizer based on the album?

M: You know what I always forget and I don't talk about this at all but I got really into guitar for recording in the basement. It was always my dream to play guitar along with everything but I was so busy doing the live shows twisting knobs and firing everything.

It was all prepared and ready to go. It was about me being like turning up the synths and I'd turn up the bass drum. I added guitar in the recording and I always wanted to do that live. I always like to work when I'm performing. I gotta be touching knobs. I don't want to be that girl who hits the button and sings on top of it.

R: Yeah.

M: So, I grabbed the guitar and did it for the recording. A little bit of bass. That was really fun because the dream is operatic vocals, techno beats and distorted electric guitar. That's the dream. That's what I always want to hear. That's what I was trying to create.

R: I'd like to. That sounds really cool.

I'd like to write a little feature on it for the November edition to coincide with the interview.

M: That would be awesome.

R: So, how did you get connected with Ratskin Records?

M: I lived in the Bay for 5 years. From 2006 to 2011. It wasn't that long but it was a moment when everything snapped in my life.. I was like oh my gosh I have community. There's this giant queer community that I was connected to and everything was expansive. People have moved to different places. I have a really broad network

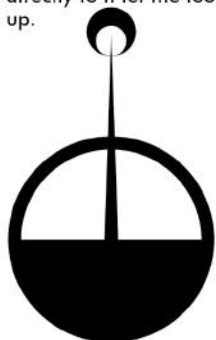
of friends that's all over the community. Most of them started in the Bay somehow. They're connected to me because most of them started in the bay.

Ratskin Records is like that. I was really close with Jeremy when I lived in Los Angeles, who was one of the collective members of Ratskin. I always loved Ratskin Records and what they put out. I never knew Miley when I lived in the bay. I never had a chance of meeting them in person. I wrote Sharmi Basu and she said definitely I love you.

**CONTINUED**

## [ratskin.org/monademone](http://ratskin.org/monademone)

MONA DEMONE



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# MONA DEMONE CONTINUED

R: Nice. That's great. We've been. They've been steadily sending us things for a while now. I was happy to be able to interview an artist from their roster. It sounds like what you are doing is right up my alley.  
M: Cool.

R: I'm sure that other people will like it as well.

So, tell me a little more about how you've made your way around the country. It sounds like you've been to quite a few places.

M: Let's see. I lived in Baltimore. I was in a queer band called The Oddbones. We were like. There was a big music scene in Baltimore that was glam city. All these artists at the time. It was getting really big. We were just basically learning to play our guitar and bass.

We were trying to go for post-punk or whatever. We were going to be really political. I thought there was a political-ness around in the queer culture. In the straight noise culture. Music culture.

I was looking for something more. I was looking for radical queers. So I moved to San Francisco. I think that was my jumping off point. Where once I was in San Francisco everyone I was connecting to was like we could just travel.

We could just go here. We could go. One booked a tour to Mexico with me for two months. We'd just sleep in the car and drive around. You know so it was just like my idea of what was possible. I played one show doing my friend's basslines. They were going to go on tour the next day. That night. So I played that album release show. They were saying we need you. That bass is really important for the live show. I was supposed to clock into my landscaping job. I instead got in the truck with them. I went on tour with them for two months. I had to call my boss. I was like I'm in Omaha so I can't come in to mow the lawn and trim all the hedges.

R: Hahaha.

M: It was like a beautiful terrifying thing but it was kind of like it's been hard to stay in one place because you know you can always go somewhere else. There's so many different versions of things. It kind of became an addiction. Just been to all these different places. All these different people. I liked it. I was like living in an old classic apartments in San Francisco that queers had been living in a group house setting for years. It was filled with roaches. It was utterly disgusting. We were obsessed with it. The landlords sold the building and we got a slight amount of settlement. I put that into a school bus that I then kind of used as a-

In my mind I was like. ur little apartment was our community center so I wanted to create a mobile community center. That was a project I worked on for a couple years where I was like ok. We'll all get on the bus and go on a trip together or something. We'll all get together and play a show or something.

I organized a tour at some point called Rainbow in the Dark. I got a bunch of people on the bus. We had to make a documentary so it was remembered. I think the footage is still out there and there may be a point where it comes out.

R: So, was this all under the same name?

M: Under my name?

R: In terms of musical project names.

M: I think at that point I was going under Gay Orphans at the moment.

R: Ok.

M: Yeah.

R: So outside of music, what are some of the influences that have had an effect on you? That has in some way affected your music.

M: Oh. Let's see. I guess, everything that happens informs your music.

R: Like movies or books that changed your way of thinking.

M: Uh huh. I think queer community in general. Transitioning. Thoughts about transitioning. Like, I think queer community informs music in a big way.

Listening to all the techno that was out there. All the heavy metal. 80s New Wave.

Outside of music though I think it was being in a politicized community.

Pushing one another to think outside the box. Pushing ourselves further. The community. There were moments where there was a lot of call out culture and cancel culture. Trying to hold that space to grow, as a community; I think was kind of what informed the music to a certain degree. Pushing me to explore myself. I guess that's it. I can't think of any movies specifically that are standing out. I love books.  
R: How old are you?  
M: I'm 43.

R: 43 years old, ok. When you moved to Akron did you know someone there?

M: My partner's family lives here so we kind of moved here because we were down the road. Oh my gosh we're pregnant. I always kind of feared having a baby. It's kind of like, really natural to me. Especially with a lot of queer community spaces and holding a lot of shows, things like that. When you're in a community I always feel this real motherhood kind of feeling. I guess I moved to be close to family. My parents live in Baltimore. That's a 6 hour drive. They come out when they can. Yeah, I don't know that many people here and I wish they did because I love the community.

It's really important to me.

R: Yeah, that's really good. Now, how long ago did you start making your own music?

M: I think I've been making my own music since I was a kid. How long ago did I start from this project specifically?

R: I mean. I mean it in whatever capacity.

<phone drops>

<phone rings>

M: Hey.

R: Hello.

M: How's it going? Sorry about that. Who knows what is happening.

R: Satellite issue or something.

M: Uh huh.

R: So, the last question I think I was asking was when did you begin playing music on your own? Period.

M: Um. I guess I always played music when I was 14. I had a guitar. I guess that's kind of. I guess as a child I was always making songs up. There were recordings when I was a little kid on cassette tapes. I guess. That's when. I've been making music on and off my whole life. For the majority of my life.

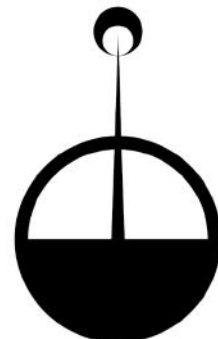
R: And when did you start recording?

M: I think with Oddbones in Baltimore those were my first recordings. In the 90s. In high school. There were some songs I wrote. There were some bands like that where I only wrote like 3 songs. 1994 or something. We never played a live show or anything.

I guess it's only been fun to record yourself and hear it back. I feel like I went. I did a little bit. This time I'm going to do it right. I'm not just going to record this and self-release it. I'm going to give it time. Make sure I do it right.

R: You've evolved.

CONTINUED



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# MONA DEMONE CONCLUDED

M: Yeah.

R: It sounds like we've covered a lot of ground here. Another question.

M: Um.

R: Do you have any merch?

M: Well, I've got some really cute T-shirts on the Ratskin site that are really cute that I designed. Cassette tapes and stuff like that. I can't think of anything else now off the top of my head.

R: Alright cool. Do you have any links available for that?

M: Ok. Yes. Yeah. I think it is all at [ratskin.org](http://ratskin.org). I'll get direct links to the t-shirts and the cassette tapes. I have stickers too.

R: Well. That's great.

Now, what would you say was your goal starting all of this, really? M: Oh my gosh. That's so. I love the pointed questions because it gives me an angle to go to. I feel like the more wide open the questions are. The more I like it. Why? There's nothing going on. R: Well, I like to keep questions broad so that you can answer however you want. I like meandering questions. A lot of times we end up in a place.

M: Yeah.

R: So just kind of take it however you want to.

M: Ok. That's good.

Maybe I'll just ramble for a little bit and you can just kind of bring me back to Earth when you're ready or something.

I guess that's the cool thing about this album for me. It started off being, like, oh my gosh, I got to LA to go to diesel mechanic school. then I was like actually I just need to transition right now. I still want to finish this project but it has become increasingly more difficult.

I think the journey surprised me because it was like I'm in LA. I'm transitioning. I'm in love with the ocean. It's the birth of everything. Then I got pregnant. Then I became a mother.

When I actually went to record all of these songs I was a mother. It's been such a profound experience. It's been such a grounding experience.

There's been moments where I felt closer to a larger community. Then there's this other way where all the things that I learned from being in community have given me-

<phone cuts out>

<phone rings>

M: Hello?

<glitching noises>

M: Oh gosh. Ryan?

R: Yeah. I think the phone broke up.

M: You know, it's Mercury in retrograde right now and I see it everywhere. Everything is working but it's just a little clunky you know?

R: Yeah. Things are weird.

M: I don't know where we cut off.

R: I think you were talking about the motive behind your album.

M: Yeah I think I'm just excited.

The album progression is like transitioning and then the final part of that was where I transitioned to motherhood.

Yeah. That's the journey that surprised me. That's the twist ending I didn't expect to find at the end of my story.

I'm really excited to play more music. I just have to find more time. Right now I'm the mother of a newborn and a toddler. The goal is I want to make something that's kind of like Tracey Chapman's first album but like techno.

I guess it's just that I want to use those really sweet chord progressions. Those As and Fs and Gs and Cs and just make something that is so sentimental but also makes you want to dance.

R: Yeah, that sounds cool.

M: The other thing is that a lot of these songs. I'm working on a music video for the song body which is kind of like it has a line, "I want to live in this body. I want to thrive in this body."

It's kind of just a dance jam. It was never really realized until I saw the music video. My three year old was around. The theme of the music video is I'm just going to be dancing all these different places and just being in my body.

There's this three year old that's always just off camera but they always want to be on camera. I'm also in a body. Oh my gosh clearly everyone is in a body. It's so cool. I didn't realize how much it was just about everyone's experience. Also it's Kidz Bop. It's just fun.

R: It sounds like it, yeah. Is there anything else on your mind before we finish this?

M: Hahahaha. Um. I also miss summer so much. Now we're on the first day of fall. I'm excited for the harvest. I'm excited for the leaves. I just want to live in the summer, I guess.

R: Oh man, yeah. I feel that. Well thank you so much for agreeing to talk to us.

M: Thank you so much for taking the time to talk. It's been very nice just to gab and thank you for all your very thoughtful questions.

R: Thanks again. Have a good day.

M: You too! Talk. Take care.

## IMPRESSIONS OF S3RP3NT by MONA DEMONE

Mona Demone is the artist in the previous interview. Ratskin Records released her new album, "S3rp3nt," on August 23, 2022.

You can check it out here: [ratskinrecords.bandcamp.com/album/s3rp3nt](http://ratskinrecords.bandcamp.com/album/s3rp3nt)

My Impressions:  
Glittering electronica

made sincere and light.

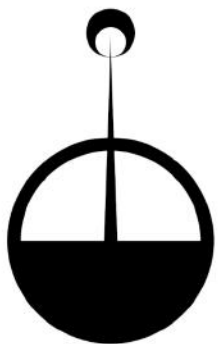
In moments of lucidity it penetrates the guardian walls of the heart.

The neon-midnight atmosphere of digital synthesis, percussion, pads and rhythms provides an elastic bedrock for a hymn-like vocal chanting, soaring, sacred, triumphant.

This album plumbs the depths and touches a nerve. It holds itself up in my minds-eye like a precious jewel, shining and deserving of protection.

It is a beautiful feeling, lightly-experimental, gorgeous, round-sound elixir. I drink it up deeply. It quenches my thirst.

An album to celebrate survival. A song to reach the lovely, deepest parts.



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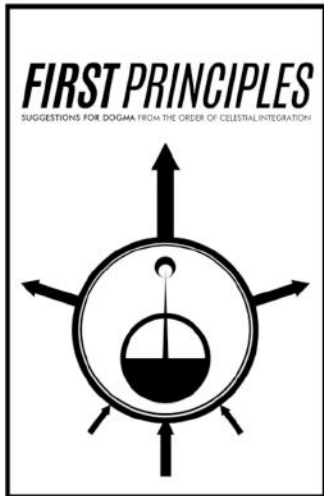
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