



ALDORA BRITAIN RECORDS

The Global Independent & Underground Music E-Zine
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“Tomorrow’s Music Today”

ABR’S TOP PICKS...

ASTROïD, Fernando’s Eyes,
and Sophie Wren!

Live Spotlight: THE ZUTONS with The
Covasettes at Rock City, Nottingham,
England!

Also... The Top 10 Most Influential Records
of 2007 as voted for by our featured artists!

(Pictured artist: Fernando’s Eyes)

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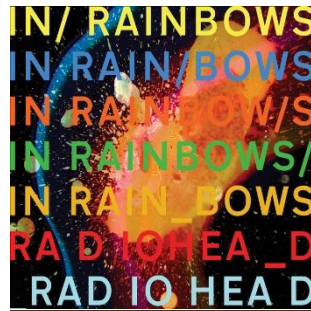


The Zutons photo credit: Jonathan Turton.

The Top 10 Most Influential Records of 2007 as voted for by our featured artists!

Aldora Britain Records has had the immense privilege of talking to thousands of talented artists over the years, from a variety of backgrounds and from every continent on the planet. With each interview, we ask these musicians some of their favourite things in a segment we call the 'Quickfire Round'. In 2025, we thought it might be fun to present some of these answers in specially curated lists, like this one, 'The Top 10 Most Influential Records of 2007'. It is sure to generate conversation, opinion, and maybe even outrage! But here it is, some of the indisputable favourites from the *ABR Community*, enjoy!

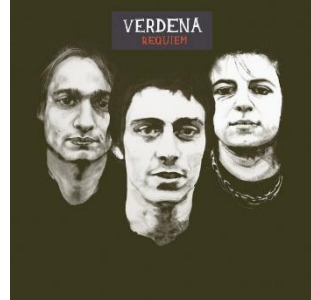
1
Radiohead
In Rainbows
2007



2
Bon Iver
For Emma, Forever Ago
2007



3
Verdena
Requiem
2007



4
Feist
The Reminder
2007



5
PJ Harvey
White Chalk
2007



6
Robert Plant and Alison
Krauss
Raising Sand
2007



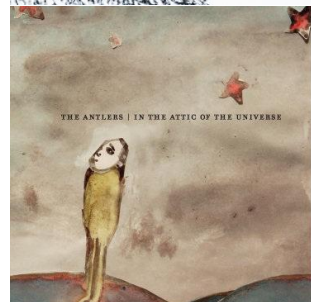
7
Wilco
Sky Blue Sky
2007



8
Alcest
*Souvenirs d'un autre
monde*
2007



9
The Antlers
*In the Attic of the
Universe*
2007



10
Arcade Fire
Neon Bible
2007



Je suis inadapté

France has long had a hard-hitting underbelly of heavy rock and roll bliss, and this is exactly the space that the powerhouse **ASTROiD** tap into. With a fierce and direct abandon, this Lille based combo explode with raw energy and primal instinct, fusing together the sensational worlds of punk and alternative rock with brilliantly abrasive grungy undertones. This one-two punch has been seamlessly highlighted throughout 2024's *L'as des astres (Vol. 1)* and 2025's follow-up *L'as des astres (Vol. 2)*. This superb couplet of records snapshots the power and intent of ASTROiD flawlessly. And taking a break from these musical endeavours, bandmember Loran sat down for a chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about his artistic adventures so far. We discussed formative creative memories from his adolescence, the beginnings and early days of ASTROiD, a selection of their recorded output to date, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

Keep up to date with ASTROiD [HERE](#). Listen to ASTROiD [HERE](#).

And please don't forget to send a magazine-sized donation to Aldora Britain Records [HERE](#).



Aldora Britain Records: Hello Loran, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic band from over in France. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Loran: First of all, thank you for your interest in a French band, it's quite rare, especially when the lyrics are written entirely in our language. As you so rightly say, music sometimes creates unexpected encounters, this is a fine example of that. My earliest musical memories go back more than thirty-five years. Like many teenagers, I was searching for myself, exploring the worlds that would shape me. Unlike England, France has never really been a rock music country. However, in the 1980s, a wave of rock and new wave music swept across the country.

I listened to a lot of The Cure, Anne Clark, Nina Hagen, The Police, The Clash, Public Enemy, Beastie Boys, etcetera. On the French side, I turned to alternative rock, which was very popular at the time and often tinged with a punk spirit. Among the notable bands were OTH, La Souris Déglinguée, Bérurier Noir, Oberkampf, Téléphone, Chihuahua, Les Cadavres, PKRK, Les Rats, and many others.

The punk spirit of the 80s and 90s was above all a desire for independence, not to depend on the state or on structures dominated by capital. It was total freedom of expression, whether musical, graphic, or aesthetic, a breath of fresh air in a society that was a little too comfortable. Those years were explosive, a multitude of bands emerged, from radical punk to reggae, including all forms of rock. This eclecticism deeply nourished and shaped me. For creative people, it was a fertile period, and for us rock fans, a real feast. We were a bunch of passionate teenagers. We decided that we too wanted to start a band, create, party, channel our discontent, hit the road to play, denounce social injustices, and criticise politicians who were often out of touch with the people. At that age, you don't always understand why some men or women have authority over others, and for some, including me, that question still hasn't gone away. We fell into this pot, and I never really got out.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to the present day and a brilliant project of yours out of Lille. The beginnings of ASTROiD must have been an exciting, invigorating time. How did it all come to be? How did you first meet each other and what was the initial spark that brought you together on this creative, musical level?

“We were a bunch of passionate teenagers. We decided that we too wanted to start a band, create, party, channel our discontent, hit the road to play, denounce social injustices, and criticise politicians who were often out of touch with the people.”

Loran: Originally, ASTROÏD wasn't really a band. It was just me. During COVID, and especially lockdown, I needed to find something to occupy my time. It was the perfect opportunity to realise an idea that had been in my head for years, to make a solo album. I wanted to take the concept of DIY to its maximum potential, and with new technologies, it was finally possible. So, I composed, performed, and recorded the first album entirely in my home studio. However, I shared the task of writing the lyrics with my partner Julie, she wrote half of them, and I wrote the other half. Before this album, I had a real complex about my writing. I never felt it lived up to my expectations. I'm very demanding, of others, but also, and especially, of myself. The 'intracerebral' meetings aren't always easy! Haha!

After the release of my first album in 2020, the feedback was very positive and encouraging. People around me often asked me, 'Why don't you turn this into a band? It would be really cool on stage!' That made me want to think about an original formula, something that would do punk rock differently. With Ripol, the drummer, we started working as a duo with a computer to handle the bass, backing vocals, and other guitars. But this formula frustrated me. I felt that the song would gain authenticity and energy if we played it with a real band.

During lockdown, I went to get a kebab not far from my house and bumped into Thomhydro. We barely knew each other, but I knew he had played in surf music bands. We said hello and started chatting. Me, 'How are you? Is lockdown too boring?' Thomhydro, 'It's a bit long, how about you?' Me, 'Yeah, I'm having a blast, finishing up an album. Would you like to play guitar in this band?' Thomhydro, 'Well, why not!' From there, we had a more serious discussion. At first, he told me he wasn't really into French punk rock, so it wasn't looking good! Haha! But little by little, he got hooked on the project and his motivation has remained intact to this day.

As for Kal, the bassist, he's a long-time friend. We played together for ten years in TOXIC WASTE, so asking him to join the band was a natural step. He accepted, but pointed out that with his family, he wouldn't be able to tour regularly. But since it's not our main job, that wasn't a problem.

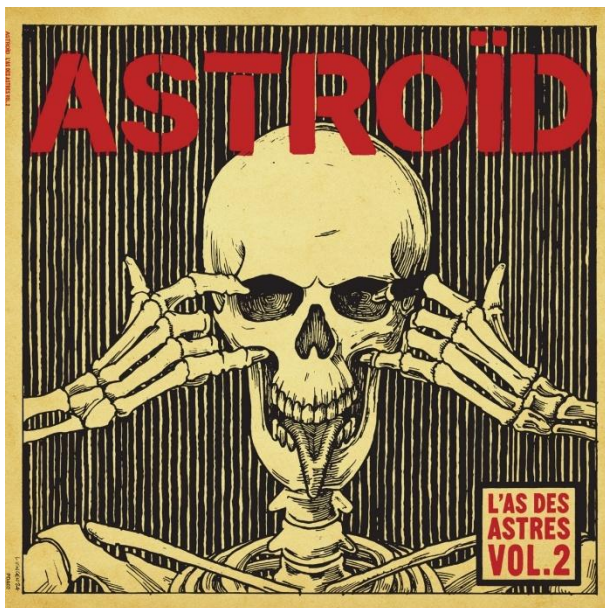


“But as we can see here, the emotion that music evokes is universal. It reminds us that, despite our differences, we all belong to the same species, based on common foundations.”

Aldora Britain Records: You are fresh from the release of an exciting new record called *L'as des astres (Vol. 2)*. This was also my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as artists throughout this process?

Loran: Thank you for giving ASTROÏD a special place in your record collection! It's not a given that an Englishman would appreciate a French-speaking band! Haha! But as we can see here, the emotion that music evokes is universal. It reminds us that, despite our differences, we all belong to the same species, based on common foundations. The cover of the first album was designed by Dish, a friend of a friend from Belgium, an incredible artist, brimming with talent. It was all done on a completely amateur basis, in the sense that it's not my source of income.

Since then, a second album was released in September 2024, entitled *L'as des astres (Vol. 1)*. *Vol. 2* has just been released, in October 2025. Why two volumes? There are twenty-two tracks in total. They were composed during the same period, between 2022 and 2024. But it was impossible to fit everything onto a single vinyl record, the capacity of one side is only about twenty-two minutes. I had thought about a double album in a single sleeve, but the manufacturing cost would have been too high, and I wanted to stay true to the ‘punk’ spirit, which means accessible. The simplest solution, two separate albums.



Before ASTROÏD, I was already composing, but I was primarily a drummer. Switching to vocals and guitar introduced me to new sensations, and frankly, it's a great experience. This solo experience really showed me that a song is more coherent and harmonious when it comes from a single vision, a single sensibility.

Aldora Britain Records: I am really drawn in by the band's dynamic songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Is it collaborative or more individual? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from more of a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Loran: The lyrics sometimes come at the same time as the music. It's not the easiest thing to do, but I really like that feeling of urgency, that desire to finish the song as quickly as possible so I can finally hear it in its completed form. I think it brings a certain freshness. I like to keep the first drafts, without too many edits. Two lyrics were written by Julie also. Sometimes I get stuck, and as I'm impatient, I need lyrics quickly. Often, I already have an idea, an angle, a subject. At times like that, I talk to Julie, she has a talent for understanding what's in my head and turning it into perfectly suited lyrics. Honestly, I couldn't have done better myself.

In terms of themes, my bitterness towards human behaviour continues to grow. The times we live in are an inexhaustible source of inspiration, almost like an outlet. I often start with a real-life experience, a behaviour I've observed in my circle of friends and family, and then I try to turn it into something more universal, striving for a certain accuracy in my words.

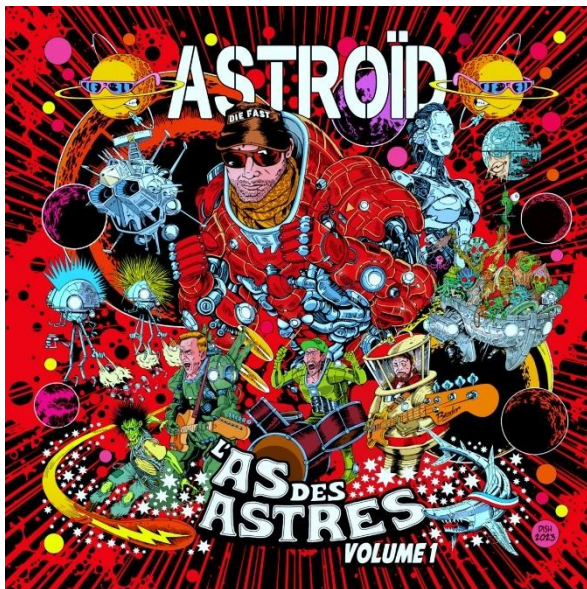
I've been involved in the punk scene for over thirty years. Punk rock is a bit like alcohol, when you're into it, you can experience both the worst and the best of it. There's a lot of excess, and with age, some things become less funny. When the atmosphere turns sour, I prefer to remove myself from the drama and rediscover the

“I had thought about a double album in a single sleeve, but the manufacturing cost would have been too high, and I wanted to stay true to the ‘punk’ spirit, which means accessible. The simplest solution, two separate albums.”

positive vibes that punk rock music continues to generate. In life, some people pull you up and others pull you down, I've chosen my side. All of this inspires me and often ends up turning into lyrics. That's pretty much the spirit of it. I would now like to approach my writing from other angles. For example, the song ‘Sous perf’ tells a true story that I experienced. Telling a real story while slipping in a message allows me to write with more lightness and sincerity.

Aldora Britain Records: Let's get more specific with this now. I would like to chat about two personal favourites, ‘Sous perf’ and ‘Le gouffre’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer of each?

Loran: As I mentioned earlier, ‘Sous perf’ was inspired by a true story, which was rather mundane at first. But as I lived through it, I saw a powerful theme, that of judgement based on appearance, of prejudice based on clothing or style that deviates from the norm and makes people uncomfortable. Before playing this song in concert, I often introduce it with a little speech that ends with the phrase, ‘It's better to be than to seem.’



‘Sous perf’ recounts a journey, a day when I joined the band ARNO FUTUR, in which I played drums for two or three years. Incidentally, I also composed the album *TOUT VA BIEN* for Arno, the singer, who is now a friend. That day, I left home very early on foot. I had more than eight hundred kilometres to travel by public transport, metro, train. I was wearing my leather jacket, of course. Along the way, several anecdotes and encounters with ordinary people caught my attention. I then deliberately emphasised certain features to turn them into a text. The end result is a joyful song that shows that even in the banality of everyday life, you can find fun and originality, you just have to change your perspective.

In contrast, ‘Le gouffre’ is a much less cheerful song. It's about loved ones who lose or destroy their artistic talent through alcoholism. I used exaggerated metaphors to give it a more vivid dimension and convey more or less hidden messages. I chose to write only one verse, repeated throughout the song. It's a way of expressing my bitter observation, sometimes, saying everything doesn't make sense, it would be a waste, just like these fallen artists. The chorus represents the rush for the breath of fresh air that is punk rock. It's also the idea of escaping negative situations over which we have no control, to find a healthier, more vibrant dynamic.

Aldora Britain Records: Previously, if we travel back a little further, you unveiled *L'as des astres (Vol. 1)*. This is another exceptional snapshot of the band. Thank you so much for the music! How do you reflect on this set as a whole now, and is there anything that you would edit or change when looking back with the benefit of hindsight?

Loran: As I said earlier, *Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2* were created in the same spirit, in the same context. Looking back, I have no regrets, the stars were perfectly aligned at that moment. In *ASTROÏD*, I remain the songwriter, but I'm always open to suggestions, as long as they serve the music and bring something real to it. On the next album, the songs will be rehearsed and arranged collectively with the bandmembers, Ripol on drums, Kal on bass, and Thomhydro on guitar, which wasn't the case for the first three albums. Until now, I sent the demos to my mates, who learned the parts as I had composed them. This time, I want the band's sound to become a living, shared material.

“With the passing years, my musical culture has broadened. Like everyone else, my tastes and vibes have evolved. I've always been drawn to high-energy bands with powerful, punchy guitar riffs ... I never tire of those distorted sounds pushed to the max.”

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love that ASTROİD sound and your approach to making and creating music. That hard-hitting punk rock foundation. Superb. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently? I have a feeling it could be quite a broad and eclectic selection.



Loran: Today, with the passing years, my musical culture has broadened. Like everyone else, my tastes and vibes have evolved. I've always been drawn to high-energy bands with powerful, punchy guitar riffs. A bit like the sound of hell! Haha! I never tire of those distorted sounds pushed to the max. But I also love beautiful melodies. In ASTROİD, I try to bring all of that together, a combination of raw energy and melodies, everything that naturally resonates with me. In recent years, I've turned to bands described as 'garage punk', such as Bad Nerves, Radioactivity, Red Dons, and many others. What fascinates me about them is their fast hi-hat playing, reminiscent of the Ramones. These fast, incisive, and uncompromising rock rhythms are bursting with pure energy.

I also have a taste for classical music, which I continue to listen to regularly. I can't help but think that some composers had, in their own way, the soul of a punk artist. Finally, I've always loved melancholy. In France today, there are many post-punk bands exploring this emotion. It reminds me of the energy of 80s new wave, which, with the evolution of production techniques, is being reborn in new forms. ASTROİD, ultimately, is a mixture of all of that, energy, melancholy, melodies, and rock intensity.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. There have been a lot of changes in the world in the post-COVID era, both throughout society, with political turmoil and even bloodshed in Ukraine and Palestine, and within the music industry too, AI for example. How would you say these several years have impacted you, both personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad?

Loran: Historically, there have always been madmen at the helm, and unfortunately, history seems to be repeating itself. However, education remains one of the essential keys to elevating humanity and avoiding the mistakes of the past. Yet we still live in a society that builds more prisons than schools, more walls than bridges. Individuals are becoming isolated, social ties are weakening, and I don't see anything good in that. Screens monopolise our attention and steer our minds down paths shaped by algorithms. Little by little, we are losing our freewill, often without even realising it. This development leaves me deeply conflicted about the future. The socio-apocalyptic scenario that is unfolding is leading us straight into a brick wall. Nevertheless, I am convinced that a change is possible. I find it hard to believe that a human being can completely deny their emotions. Deep down, everyone has a need for truth, a quest for reality, which alone can lead to true fulfilment.

As long as money rules the world, capitalists will remain kings, advancing without scruples or limits. Today, success is measured by wealth, the more you have, the more you are considered to have 'succeeded in life'. This leitmotif poisons our lives and destroys the quality of human relationships, which are now based on competition. Values have been reversed, mutual aid, solidarity, and empathy have taken a backseat, even though they are the foundations of harmonious coexistence. Economic, religious, and territorial issues persist, because the power of man over man remains the rule. Global conflicts are still linked to this thirst for

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domination. The day we accept that the idea of a world without centralised power, without a single representative of the interests of millions of individuals, is possible, then we will undoubtedly move towards a more just future.

It is with this in mind that I am interested in the values of anarchy, which seem to me to offer a more balanced way to live together better. The more I think about it and the more I read about it, the more relevant this idea seems to me. But for it to work, we need educated and responsible individuals. However, our world infantilises and tends to take away individuals' responsibility. Anarchy is misunderstood and often perceived as a utopia, when in fact it is based above all on collective consciousness and maturity.

In this capitalist chaos, technology appears to be a veritable goose that lays golden eggs. Brilliant minds are devoted to it, and music is no exception to this race for progress. The ways in which music is created and consumed are evolving at a rapid pace. I am not conservative and remain open to the idea of creating with new tools, they can really fuel artistic inspiration. The problem is the environmental and social consequences that result from this. The capitalist system, meanwhile, remains deeply unfair in its redistribution of wealth. Most music platforms exploit artists rather than support them. For my part, without being closed to innovation, I remain attached to the classic rock band lineup, two guitars, a bass, drums, and a singer. But I must admit that technology now allows me to record my demos on my own, playing all the instruments, all in a single day. It's undeniably convenient and enjoyable.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist or band? **Loran:** French, OTH. Foreign, Pennywise.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Loran:** *Réussite* by OTH.



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AB Records: First album you bought with your own money? **Loran:** OTH's *Success*.

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Loran:** Descendants album *Everything Sucks*.

AB Records: First concert you attended as a spectator? **Loran:** CHIHUAHUA in a bar in Brittany. I was fourteen years old.

AB Records: Loudest concert you've been to as a spectator? **Loran:** Motorhead, two-thousand people in the venue, I was stuck against the back wall because of the crowd and the volume, which turned my stomach! Ha!

AB Records: Style icon? **Loran:** I'm not sure I understand the question, but if I had to talk about my mentors, I'd say there are three. First, Spi, the singer from OTH. He played harmonica on 'Calmez-vous'. His charisma is incredible, he's really someone to see on stage, and I love his writing. Then there's Manu, the former drummer, now bassist, of the band Les Sheriff. I really admire his talent as a composer. He only knows how to write hits! And then Vincen, the singer- songwriter and composer of PKRK. For me, he is quite simply the greatest songwriter in France, and I stand by that statement. He has become a very good friend. We played together, I was the drummer for PKRK from 2017 to 2020, and we also did an acoustic duo on about thirty dates.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Loran:** I'm not a film buff.

AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Loran:** I don't really have a favourite programme, but in general, I really enjoy documentaries, especially those that deal with social issues or talk about music.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist or band? **Loran:** I don't know about promising, but I saw a band from Bristol playing in a squat near my house two weeks ago. They were called GIMIC, and they were a real eye-opener.



The Fire of the Night

Fernando Honorato of Swedish band Principe Valiente has expanded out under the pseudonym **Fernando's Eyes**, the perfect penname for his noir and brooding side project. 2025 has already witnessed the release of an impeccable and roaming studio album, entitled *Center of Your World*, and now Fernando is preparing for the release of its companion record, *Bonus Tracks and Remixes*. Throughout these captivating outings, this Stockholm based creative maverick delves into an undeniably gothic sensibility, emphasising colours from the post-punk and alternative rock canon. And taking a break from these exceptional and expansive musings, Fernando sat down for a chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about his creative journey to date. We discussed popular original compositions from his back-catalogue, his growth and evolution as an artist over the years, current big influences and inspirations, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time. *[Featured photography by Damón Zurawski]*

Keep up to date with Fernando's Eyes [HERE](#). Listen to Fernando's Eyes [HERE](#).

And please don't forget to send a magazine-sized donation to Aldora Britain Records [HERE](#).

Aldora Britain Records: Hello Fer, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Stockholm. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Fernando: Hey man, and thanks for reaching out! One of my earliest memories goes back to my early childhood, when both my mother's sister and brother played guitar and sang a lot at my grandparents' house. So, music has always been a part of that side of the family. Then there was my first impression of an artist when I was sitting in the backseat of a hire car on some kind of outing with my dad, and he played Bowie on cassette. The song 'Starman' really struck a chord with me, and that impression has never left me. The freedom and exuberance that the song expresses, as well as the playfulness I felt even then, especially in the verses. My passion for playing more seriously in a band came quite late, during second grade in my high school years, when I started playing bass with a band that had two original songs, and the rest were covers of bands like Suede and Nirvana. A fantastic time.



“If I find a specific mood that I like, I keep going down that path until it feels good enough ... As for the lyrics, they are, as you say, personal and sometimes even observations and interpretations of situations and people that mean or have meant something to me.”

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let’s take a leap forward to the present day and your brilliant solo output. I am definitely drawn in by your songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from more of a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Fernando: I just sit and play around with either the synthesiser, piano notes, or a few guitar chords. Sometimes with a bassline, but the bass, which is actually my main instrument, often comes into the picture quite late in the songwriting process. Then, if I find a specific mood that I like, I keep going down that path until it feels good enough, while maintaining spontaneity. As for the lyrics, they are, as you say, personal and sometimes even observations and interpretations of situations and people that mean or have meant something to me.



Aldora Britain Records: You are fresh from the release of a superb new record called *Center of Your World*. This was also my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist throughout this process?

Fernando: I wrote all these songs over a period of three years, sometimes in parallel with writing songs for Principe Valiente, together with the guitar player in the band, but my own stuff felt much more private and uncompromising. I've needed to express myself like this for a long time, even though I'm about seventy percent of the driving and writing force behind PV.

I wrote everything at home and experimented with different sounds. All the drums were electronic from the start, mainly for logistical reasons, and because for some of the tracks it really felt right to have them that way. Then when the songs were pretty much ready for mixing, the producer and I decided that we should have real drums on four of them, and that process was really a breath of fresh air and a vitamin injection for those songs. Then the whole album was finished about six months before it was released, so then came the whole process of planning singles, videos, photos, press releases, etcetera, which was a very intense period of months. It was both new that it went so smoothly and that there were always new things to plan, which is easier when you are the only one deciding everything compared to a whole band.

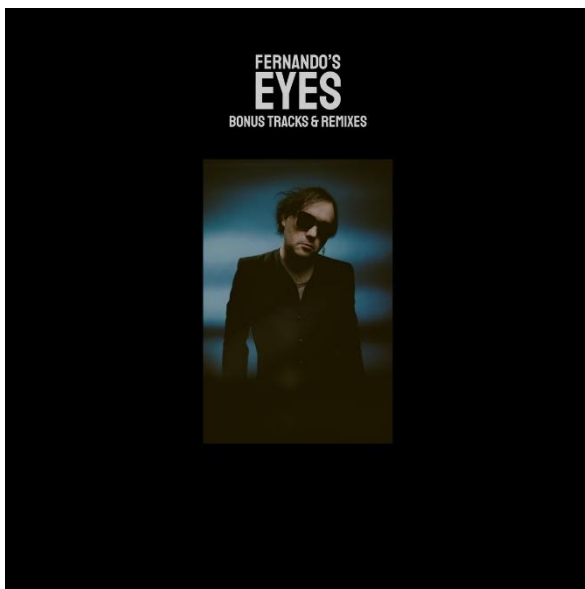
Aldora Britain Records: I would now like to pick out two personal favourites from the record. These are ‘The Fire of the Night’ and ‘In My Dreams and In My Heart’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer of each?

Fernando: Good choices! And well spotted too, as the two have a lot in common in terms of sound and were written very close to each other. ‘The Fire’, which I've mentioned in previous interviews, symbolises for me, and hopefully for others too, being in the present, freedom, and getting away from everyday life in your mind. Something healthy, refreshing, and playful, as the lyrics describe it. ‘In My Dreams’ is more of a classic love song about a girl I met years ago and was a part of my life for a long time, so both songs are based on personal experiences. There was nothing extraordinarily special about how I wrote them, but they were the first two songs where I played around more with distorted string sounds, so they are quite similar in terms of how I imagined the soundscape. Even though ‘In My Dreams’ got a more proper chorus.

“I wrote everything at home and experimented with different sounds. All the drums were electronic from the start, mainly for logistical reasons, and because for some of the tracks it really felt right to have them that way.”

Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to your recorded output, I definitely get the impression that you would put on an unforgettable live show. I am picturing a captivating, immersive performance, for sure. Is this something that you do? If so, what do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist, and what can a fan expect from their very first Fernando's Eyes live experience?

Fernando: It's nice that you get that impression. Actually, I've been trying to get started with live performances for a while, but it's going slowly. Hopefully, it will work out soon, and I can get some decent gigs. Either here in Sweden and/or in Europe. The idea is definitely to have a live band of four to five people, and I'm working on how the shows will be like. More of that soon.



Aldora Britain Records: You are currently preparing to release a companion record, *Bonus Tracks and Remixes*. I love how you are exploring *Center of Your World* from a different perspective. I am excited to listen to the various tracks from start to finish! Thank you so much for the music. Let's delve deeper with it. Can you tell me about the project? What was the impetus behind the project and how did it all come together from a creative and musical perspective?

Fernando: When the record label and I decided which songs would be released as singles, I felt that I would like to let other artists I liked, and had collaborated with previously on remixes with Principe Valiente, remix some of these and release them as single B-sides. The response was very positive, and I was able to treat myself to two remixes for the most per single release, and we still had a few left over. So, it felt like a

completely natural strategy to release these together with other original tracks that didn't make it onto the album. So, we gathered everything together for a follow-up.

I hadn't really cared about remixes before, but since we started experimenting with it with Principe Valiente, and also doing some myself for other bands, I've come to understand the interesting thing about it, that certain things can become more danceable, soften up, and do pretty much whatever you want with them, a very playful thing. This time, it included artists I've collaborated with on remixes before, but also completely new artists and from genres I haven't worked with in the past. Like Jaakko Eino Kalevi, for example, who I've found interesting for quite some time.

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love that Fernando's Eyes sound and your approach to making and creating music. That noir, post-punk, shoegaze, alternative foundation. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Fernando: I have always been a big fan of dreamy music, and to achieve that effect, I've used mostly reverb and guitar pedals, which I communicated to the guitarists who were involved with Principe Valiente from the beginning and through the years. Over time, I've also used a lot of bass pedals as an ingredient in the whole thing, but when it comes to Fernando's Eyes, I've toned it down a bit and been more direct, while still retaining some of that basic idea, which is still me. But to achieve that, I've now used more distorted synths and other effects during the production work on the computer instead of pedals. Then, together with my producer, I've been able to make it all much more professional.

“I hadn't really cared about remixes before ... I've come to understand the interesting thing about it, that certain things can become more danceable, soften up, and do pretty much whatever you want with them, a very playful thing.”

As for inspiration, there are so many different things, and Bowie is always there, at least in terms of the way I sing, because I've been a fan of Suede from the beginning and have unconsciously been inspired to sing that way. But in terms of sound, the most obvious influences are probably bands like Slowdive, Joy Division, Nirvana, and Interpol? Even though I currently listen to more actual bands as well, such as Drab Majesty, Soft Kill, or TR/ST. Even though I don't think my sound reminds so much of those bands, they've been groups I've just listened to quite a lot lately. Also, as I've mentioned in previous interviews, other influences have come and gone while I've been writing songs, as long as things have felt authentic and personal.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. There have been a lot of changes in the world in the post-COVID era, both throughout society, with political turmoil and even bloodshed in Ukraine and Palestine, and within the music industry too, AI for example. How would you say these several years have impacted you, both personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad?

Fernando: Well, it's a very sad development politically, of course, but also because I've been affected by long COVID for five years and am still not completely recovered. Mainly fatigue problems and low energy in periods, and pain that prevents me from living life to the full as I did before the pandemic. Even though I'm doing quite alright now. As for my own music-making, I don't know if I've been affected that much, except that it's difficult to sell records in large quantities and also to get the live part going. It seems that all bands have a great need to play live, both for financial reasons and to stand out from the digital fog of countless bands that are constantly emerging. But I'm persevering. For my part, the most important thing is still to write good, genuine music that I can stand behind and be proud of.

Regarding AI, I'm not a fan of it at all, and it's something I think we really should be careful with. In the sense of music-making, it's totally impersonal to the whole thing, and I really can't get why some are actually open for it, music-making software that promotes it and more. It's damn nonsense. Also, outside of music-making, and art in general, it's not genuine to make creative things with the help of it, in my opinion.



Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist or band? **Fernando:** Bowie, The Cure.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Fernando:** Suede, *Dog Man Star*.

AB Records: First album you bought with your own money? **Fernando:** Sisters Of Mercy, *Floodland*, or if it was actually Bruce Springsteen, *Human Touch*, don't quite remember. First single on vinyl was Guns n' Roses, 'You Could Be Mine', after hearing it on the *Terminator 2* movie soundtrack!

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Fernando:** Soft Kill, *Dead Kids R.I.P. City*.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Fernando:** Radiohead in Stockholm, 1995, at a club venue. I was seventeen and I don't quite remember how I got in!

AB Records: Loudest gig as an audience member? **Fernando:** Manowar at Roskilde Festival in Denmark, 2004, I think? Damn loud was it! Haha!

AB Records: Style icon? **Fernando:** Tricky, I mean, a tricky question, but I had Brett Anderson and the androgyne thing – Brian Molko? – in my mind for a long time during and after the 90s. So, well, Bowie, I guess. But also a bit of Andrew Eldritch, I think, as I'm quite fond of sunglasses.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Fernando:** *Buffalo 66*, *Heat*, *Top Gun*, and *TransAmerica*.

AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Fernando:** *Kids in the Hall* and *Seinfeld*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist or band? **Fernando:** I'm very bad at following new bands! Haha! But I've been a fan of Drab Majesty for quite a while and was glad we co-headlined with them here in Stockholm with Principe Valiente two years ago.



Make a Wish

Troubadouring **Sophie Wren** has a natural instinct to compose songs built on emotion and a deep soulfulness. With her folk background close to heart, this singer-songwriter builds compositions that travel and tell stories, as has been captured on her *Life's a Gift* record. Throughout eight fantastically crafted tracks, Sophie explores an alternative universe of whimsy and mystique, touching on a technicolour sonic palette and a cinematic, almost orchestral feel to her artistry. The album truly finds the meeting point between traditional and contemporary, a difficult task in the folk music medium. And as the excitement surrounding *Life's a Gift* continues to gradually build, Sophie sat down for a chat with *Aldora Britain Records* about her life in story and song so far. We discussed the long-lasting impact of the COVID era, early musical memories from her youth, her unique approach to songwriting and songcraft, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

Keep up to date with Sophie Wren [HERE](#). Listen to Sophie Wren [HERE](#).

And please don't forget to send a magazine-sized donation to Aldora Britain Records [HERE](#).

Aldora Britain Records: Hello Sophie, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Norwich. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Sophie Wren: I'm great, thanks! I'm so excited that you've got in touch. My earliest musical memories involve many, many hours dancing and singing in the dining room of my childhood home with my sister. We used to blast girly classics like the Spice Girls, S Club 7, Britney Spears, and Christina Aguilera. We had a huge mirror that we used to dance in front of and we loved pretending to be popstars. I used to make mixtape CDs of all my favourite music.



“I’d say most of my choices in songwriting come from the heart and what feels right, but I do draw on music theory from time to time too. I am usually drawn to folky styles, but I can get quite experimental and write songs in other genres like country, neo-soul, and hip hop.”

My dad used to play guitar and he’d often play ‘Blackbird’ by The Beatles when I was very young. My dad, from Liverpool, would also play The Beatles a lot in the car, who I grew to love. I also remember my auntie playing a lot of Michael Jackson on car journeys which I loved. In my early teens I really got into Motown, then in my late teens I got into rave music! Growing up me and my family sang and performed in many local amateur dramatic plays. I always loved singing and when I was a young teenager my dad bought me some singing lessons. I was very nervous solo singing in front of others at first, but these lessons helped me come out of my shell. My dad also bought me my first guitar when I was eighteen, and that is when I started songwriting.



Aldora Britain Records: And now, let’s take a leap forward to the present day and your brilliant solo output. I am definitely drawn in by your songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your creative process? Are you drawn to specific themes or topics? Perhaps coming from more of a personal, observational, or even fictional perspective or point of view?

Sophie Wren: Why, thank you! I always approached each song slightly differently, sometimes it starts with a full poem, and I come up with some chords to go with it. Other times the guitar part comes first and the lyrics I come up with intuitively on the spot. I’d say most of my choices in songwriting come from the heart and what feels right, but I do draw on music theory from time to time too. I am usually drawn to folky styles, but I can get quite experimental and write songs in

other genres like country, neo-soul, and hip hop. I often draw inspiration from what’s going on in my life, my personal processes, things I am learning, or trying to remember. Songwriting is a very cathartic process for me, I use it to process sadness, joy, confusion, and other big emotions. I am drawn to very existential and psychological themes, life, death, change, relationships, and how we surrender through these things. I also write a lot about nature, its rhythms, how we are a part of it and how we can learn from becoming more in tune with the Earth and our natural rhythms.

Aldora Britain Records: You are currently preparing for the release of an exciting new album called *Life’s a Gift*. I cannot wait to listen to this one from start to finish. Not long to wait now! What are your memories from writing and recording releasing these songs, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist throughout this process? *[Note to reader: this album has now been released]*

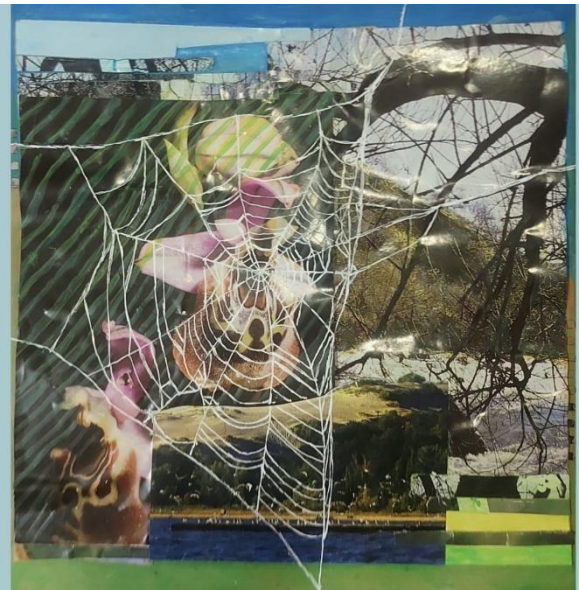
Sophie Wren: Yes! Seven out of the eight songs on the album were written whilst I was living off-grid on a piece of land with nine other friends. This was a very transformational time for me, so the songs take inspiration from this process as well as the land itself. I learnt so much during the recording process, which took about two and a half years in total. The album was fully self-recorded in a converted music studio on the land I lived on. I had session musicians add instrumental parts towards the end of the process, but we very much collaborated when creating the melodies. At the start I only had a basic knowledge of recording, but I gathered lots of guidance and feedback from my fellow musical friends that I was living with, as well as my partner who was a great help. This helped me refine the process more and more as time went on, and I ended up re-recording a lot of material.

Aldora Britain Records: I would like to focus on your most recent offerings, the superb ‘Specs’ and ‘Lighthouse’, of course. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

“Seven out of the eight songs on the album were written whilst I was living off-grid on a piece of land with nine other friends. This was a very transformational time for me, so the songs take inspiration from this process as well as the land itself.”

Sophie Wren: ‘Lighthouse’ was written at a time when I was experiencing high anxiety and my nervous system was getting overwhelmed often. I wrote it as a way to remind myself of the valuable role the nervous system plays in trying to protect us. I find that when I’m having responses to things that feel difficult and frustrating, it helps to value the part those responses play, and to recognise what they are trying to achieve. I also wrote it to remind myself that sometimes I don’t need to go into fight/flight, I instead need to take a deep breath and regulate my nervous system.

‘Specs’ was written in October 2023 when Israel invaded Palestine. At the time there was a big flood on the land I was living on too and the caravan I was living in nearly got submerged. At the time I was questioning why do things like this happen, trying to make sense of it all. This song explores how we cannot know everything, that there is a mystery in the power of nature. It reminds us that we are a very small part of this universe, and we need to respect that we cannot control everything. We must trust nature to take the lead sometimes. This is not to say we don’t have any influence. I absolutely recommend that we all take action as much as possible especially with things like genocide. But ultimately humans are a part of nature and humanity keeps getting into these cycles of war. As much as we can change ourselves, we cannot fully control the fate of humanity as individual people.



Aldora Britain Records: When I listen to your recorded output, I definitely get the impression that you would put on a captivating live show. I am picturing an immersive display of story and song, for sure. Is this something that you do? If so, what do you aim to bring to the stage as an artist and what can a fan expect from their very first Sophie Wren live experience?

Sophie Wren: I definitely like to tell stories on stage, particularly the stories behind my songs. I like to say things on stage that uplift people but also things that I feel like need to be named. Genocide, oppression, depression, mental health, I think it’s important for things not to be too fluffy because there is a lot of people suffering in the world. But I like to frame these things in a way that gives people a sense of acceptance or hope for change. I can also be quite playful on stage sometimes and get a bit silly. But most of all it’s about

the music, and I won’t always speak between songs. I think it’s important for some of the live set to musically flow from one song to another with no interruption.

Aldora Britain Records: I have been doing some crate-digging over on Bandcamp recently, leading me to 2024’s ‘Web’. This is another exceptional snapshot. Let’s delve deeper with it. How do you reflect on this song on the whole now, and is there anything that you would edit or change when looking back with the benefit of hindsight?

Sophie Wren: Yes! ‘Web’ is a song that is close to my heart. It is about remembering the interconnectedness of life. I honestly don’t think I’d change a thing. I was so happy with how it came out and it was such a fun song to make. It was produced by my dear friend Pete Beardsworth (The Barnacles), who recorded it on our home studio onto tape. He played flute and bass on the track and my partner Aslan King played drums. It has such a nice live feel to it as we recorded the drums, guitar, and bass at the same time. I love how the first half is nice and gentle and the second half is really energetic.

“I’ve always really enjoyed this genre, and I think I naturally write songs in this genre because my songwriting is quite an introspective and cathartic process, so folk suits this.”

Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love that Wren sound and your approach to making and creating music. That earthy and superb folk foundation. Brilliant! How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist currently?

Sophie Wren: I think a lot of music I listened to as a child provided the foundation for this style. I’ve always really enjoyed this genre, and I think I naturally write songs in this genre because my songwriting is quite an introspective and cathartic process, so folk suits this. There are traditional artists who are a big influence on me such as Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, Vashti Bunyan, Paul Simon, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and The Beatles. But I love more contemporary folk too such as Johnny Flynn, The Staves, Laura Marling, Anna Mieke, and Julia Gelpke. I am always endlessly inspired by my musical friends, including Nebula Sun, The Barnacles, Tommy Johnson, NYX, Ancient Baby People, and 64 Dreams. There are also lots of great local bands that inspire me such as Floral Image, Black Magic Caravan, and GALLI. I also draw lots of inspiration from other genres such as psychedelic rock, Eastern European music, African music, Afrobeat, neo-soul, and reggae.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. There have been a lot of changes in the world in the post-COVID era, both throughout society, with political turmoil and even bloodshed in Ukraine and Palestine, and within the music industry too, AI for example. How would you say these several years have impacted you, both personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad?

Sophie Wren: COVID definitely impacted me socially and made me more anxious for a while, although I feel I’ve recovered from that now. The ongoing conflicts and oppression in the world affect me a lot and can get me down sometimes, which feeds into my songwriting. I think AI is pretty fucked for the music industry. It has taken me ten years to get my songwriting to the level it’s at, and to think that people could now just generate their lyrics using Chat GPT feels like such disrespect to other artists’ crafts. I think there definitely needs to be laws around this. It also takes the heart and soul out of music. I also hate autotuning for the same reasons. It takes away from all of the vocalists who have taken decades refining and training their voices.



Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist or band? **Sophie:** This is a tough one but I'm going to say Paul Simon.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Sophie:** *Blue* by Joni Mitchell.

AB Records: First album you bought with your own money? **Sophie:** Britney Spears, *Greatest Hits: My Prerogative*.

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Sophie:** Jeff Buckley, *Grace*.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Sophie:** S Club 7!

AB Records: Loudest gig as an audience member? **Sophie:** A drum and bass and jungle night at Space Studios in Norwich, or probably a rave somewhere that I can't remember!

AB Records: Style icon? **Sophie:** Beyonce.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Sophie:** *The Time Traveller's Wife* always gets me, but I loved watching *One Battle After Another* recently.

AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Sophie:** *Vikings*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist or band? **Sophie:** Ella Clayton and Nebula Sun.

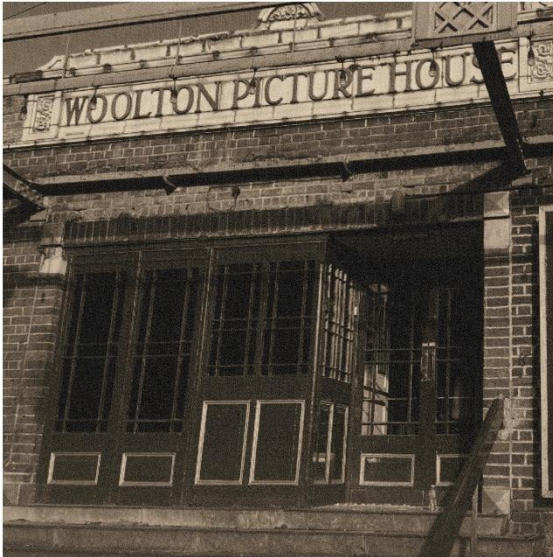


Popcorn

The Zutons with The Covasettes at Rock City, Nottingham, Monday 7th April 2025

The Zutons photo credit: Jonathan Turton. The Covasettes photo credit: Rhona Murphy.

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Liverpudlian kingpins **The Zutons** were one of many British guitar rock bands that flourished during the indie boom of the early 2000s. Reaching their pinnacle with the timeless tones of 'Valerie', avid music fans perhaps may have got the impression that the band still had so much more to offer. This has certainly been the case with their revival and reunion since 2018. In their initial run, The Zutons were typecast as another guitar-wielding combo in the saga of British popular music, but in recent times, with the help of the legendary Nile Rodgers, these rebel-rousers have unleashed their soulful funk powerhouse from within. The result was 2024's *The Big Decider*, and in preparation for this current tour, a juxtaposing-yet-complementing indie folk nostalgia trip with 'Popcorn'.

But first though, on this April evening at Nottingham's iconic Rock City, the next generation of indie rock and roll is here to

kickstart festivities. Tonight's opener is The Covasettes, a band of likely lads, warm and charming, cheeky and happy-go-lucky, putting the joy back into the realms of British guitar rock, a genre that has been lost in 'lad rock' dross and bravado for far too long. From the off, the band are clear about their humour, their cheekiness, a tongue-in-cheek attitude, as Jay-Z's '99 Problems' makes a boombox eruption over Rock City's sound-system, perfectly and amusingly announcing The Covasettes arrival onstage. And they waste no time, launching into a start-of-summer anthem, 'Wave', kickstarting a sunshining, jangling indie pop core from the off. Frontman Chris Buxton looking iconic in Arctic Monkeys tour tee, one leg perched on the front-of-stage speaker, belting out his truth, flanked by lead guitar and bass oozing unbridled joy, and the powerful rhythm packing a chest-reverberating punch perfectly.

'Plastic Gold' brims with an infectious and melodic earworm sensibility, glistening and shimmering onwards with all its danceable intent, and 'Twit Twoo' continues with this theme, perhaps even harking back to the alternative undercurrents of Two Door Cinema Club. In between these songs, The Covasettes continue with their larger-than-life personality, winning the crowd over, and hyping them up for one of their own favourite bands, The Zutons. This was indeed a tour that the group had Manchester tickets for, and upon cheekily asking Dave McCabe for a refund, the response was a dry, thickly Scouse, 'Can you fuck!' And being a Monday night, the warmup slot is no easy one, but these erstwhile, youthful players are delivering something truly special, and a true step up from their last visit to Nottingham, which featured a slight eight-man crowd. Tonight, in truly spectacular fashion, there are audience members that disperse after The Covasettes' portion of proceedings, a support act attracting their own fans, and this is testament to the group's unstoppable trajectory.

A between-song invitation for a 'good video' of the crowd to appease the 'get a proper job' mothers of the band leads into 'Duvet Thief', a dose of sheer anthemia, building to an unrivalled crescendo of indie rock and pop bliss. And with the high-pressure debut album release fast approaching, The Covasettes have been experimenting with various 'performance enhancers' for writing, leading to the next stop-off in the set, 'Feel So High'. The group's energetic band introductions also pave the way for the richly alternative 'Be Mine', a reverberating, pulsating, endlessly catchy renegade of a song with a grungy undercurrent, and then the necessary and important small-band merch plug introduces the set closer, the chirpy and irresistible 'Top Drawer'. And with that, The Covasettes conclude their high-octane and joyous set, with a song that acts

“You know I’ve always been true to you my friend, hope that you can help me out again, you know I get a funny feeling, like an epidemic running through my head, know I’ve got that feeling that’s the best, got the Zuton fever in my head.”

perfectly as an acknowledgement of why they are riding a wave of justified hype and developing a brilliantly loyal and passionate fanbase, all leading up to a debut album that is sure to reinvigorate British indie in 2026.

Not much longer later, and after a ‘Hi Ho Silver Lining’ singalong, The Zutons arrive onstage. Adidas Originals clad founding members Dave McCabe and Abi Harding, epitome of effortless cool, cutting unforgettable and timeless silhouettes of the original British indie boom. Jay Lewis on the lead guitar, crazed hair and subtle in his greatness, Neil Bradley, the Gandalf lookalike, and a true wizard on the keys. Then, our rhythm section for the evening, the towering, solid groove of Tim Cunningham on the bass, and Liverpool local legend Paul Maguire, member of The Stairs, filling in on the drums. This band erupt with vigour and sheer vitality into the iconic, twanging sounds of the eponymous ‘Zuton Fever’, the group’s mission statement and enduring moment from 2004’s powerhouse debut, *Who Killed..... The Zutons?* This opening, as the Nottingham crowd testify to, complete with fuzzed-up guitar, blowing sax, and a gloriously crazed full-band jam breakdown, never gets old, The Zutons have most certainly arrived.

Proceedings then leap forward to 2006’s *Tired of Hanging Around*, and the infectious, driving, earworm-catchy title track from that album. The song’s chorus certainly has this evening’s crowd in unison, and after a dry ‘Any jokes?’ barb from this evening’s frontman, it also provides the perfect introduction to the hard-hitting ‘Why Won’t You Give Me Your Love?’, a spellbinding hellhound of a tune, emphatically unforgiving and unrelenting in its swinging live incarnation, complete with McCabe’s emotive howls and Harding’s higher pitch backing vocals. Bradley’s mystical keyboard tinkering, and wizardry, introduces the current era of The Zutons, through the high funk unveiling and swirling sax revelry of ‘Pauline’, a dancefloor shuffler and irresistible hip-shaker, featuring electrifying twin guitars from Lewis and McCabe, a true high watermark of the band’s most recent output. ‘This is a good turnout for a Monday,’ exclaims our frontman, leading into the rumbling, thundering rhythm of ‘Havana Gang Brawl’, allowing bass-man Cunningham and sticks-man Maguire to shine.



“Well the sun grew dim and the night grew tall, everyone’s dancing in the dirty dancehall, the chins they wobble the eyes did stare, there was a sense of threat in the air ... This is just a night in the City of Culture, but everyone’s whacked and looks like vultures.”

Our sax-woman Abi Harding then takes centre stage on lead vocals for a respectful tip of the hat to the iconic soul stirrings of Amy Winehouse, an artist who, through the anthemic tones of ‘Valerie’, The Zutons will forever be entwined with. This ‘Back to Black’ retelling puts an emphasis on the song’s subtle psychedelic leanings and hits with a direct and honest punchiness. Tonight’s Rock City set then lurches back towards the funk-driven, soulful R&B outpourings of newbie ‘In Your Arms’, and sax-blower ‘Disappear’ follows, a pounding, driving odyssey of a song that hits with a relentless and gloriously unforgiving intent and beat, also again featuring Bradley’s otherworldly spell-working on the keys and a groovy bass breakdown from Cunningham, all underpinned by the whirring cosmic fuzz of guitar-man Lewis. The track then plays out with the pre-recorded dulcet tones of *Big Decider* collaborator and Chic legend Nile Rodgers.

The rumble and shakedown of ‘Dirty Dancehall’ comes next, with a dedication to Aynsley Lister, driven along fantastically with a sultry, storytelling McCabe vocal and Maguire’s grooving, rolling timekeeping, escalating into a captivating and filled-out rhythmic breakdown, leading the full band forward into a jam-like mentality, an enthralling spectacle to witness. A slight respite follows, with Dave McCabe reaching for his acoustic, ushering in a stripped-down segment of the set with his falling-in-love ode, ‘Best of Me’, no doubt a dedication to his wife Paula. And a beautiful invitation arrives, ‘Sing along Nottingham, don’t be scared,’ for this is just what we need in this tumultuous world, a real tearjerker, and a highlight of tonight’s festivities. Newbie ‘Popcorn’ completes this brief acoustic interlude and showcases the maturity of our once-adolescent heroes, a nostalgic and brilliantly placed outpouring of soul and emotion with a fantastically poetic undertone.

With the band back to their full electric selves, the jovial and upbeat ‘Remember Me’ shimmies forward, a reminder of youthful feelings and energy. An essential introduction to whimsical, mystical undercurrents re-emerging with recent title track ‘The Big Decider’, a song that creeps up and hits with an animated, crescendo-



“Now you caught me crying, but I’ll shed a tear in front of you, that scene gets me every time, but I’m dying to see one that’s new. So take me to the cinema, I wanna see one that I ain’t seen before, I wanna bask in all the glory, have you here with me and my popcorn.”

like punch. This track leads into its natural coupling from the same album, ‘Creeping on the Dancefloor’, dedicated to Nottingham’s most enthusiastic Zutons fan, Sarah. The song amps in with an electrifying introduction, erupting into its cowbell-driven, full-band, funky-elation, and its unforgettable chorus of goodtime euphoria. It also fits as the perfect main set closer, as the band depart the stage to a standing ovation, reiterating their current era as a band, and the sheer prowess of *The Big Decider* album, acting as the quintessential conclusion to this part of the evening.

The Zutons don’t keep their crowd waiting for too long, shortly returning with a bluesy, jazz leaning instrumental jam, paving the way for the hard-hitting ‘Pressure Point’, once again encouraging Nottingham in fine voice, an alternative anthem for modern times, complete with shuffling rhythms, hard-hitting crunch, brilliantly blowing sax, and McCabe’s soulful banshee howl. Then, after a short wait for guitar-wielding Jay Lewis’ tuning up, the immortal and timeless melodies of ‘Valerie’ flow out, continuing the band’s word-for-word singalong encore. And this is truly a sight to behold for any fan of twenty-first century indie, anthemic in full force, rousing, uplifting, outstanding, and spectacular in every sense. And with full apologies and great thanks, McCabe introduces the ‘last song’, the stomp-box propulsion and shake of ‘You Will You Won’t’, another throwback of revelry and celebration, and then seamlessly flowing into band introductions and a reprise of ‘Zuton Fever’, a perfect and essential way to bookend any Zutons live show.

The band then leave the stage having achieved what they set out to accomplish with this tour, and indeed with their reunion and second coming. Across a hitmaking set, the band have reiterated their place in Britain’s pop and rock music history. It is a subtle confirmation, not overstating, not tripping up over egos like many of their contemporaries, just embracing the bold hooks, the brash melodies, the unforgettable choruses, and the rock and roll attitude. The songs that they created and continue to create, from their debut, *Who Killed... The Zutons*, to the release of their most recent single, ‘Popcorn’, is a journey and evolution of brilliance. And there is a grace and warmth to the band in their delivery, still very much of the people and for the people, and that, this evening in Nottingham, is all that could have been asked for.



The Covasettes setlist

1. Wave
2. Plastic Gold
3. Twit Twoo
4. Duvet Thief
5. Feel So High
6. Be Mine
7. Top Drawer

The Zutons setlist

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Zuton Fever | [Encore] |
| 2. Tired of Hanging Around | 15. Pressure Point |
| 3. Why Won't You Give Me Your Love? | 16. Valerie |
| 4. Pauline | 17. You Will You Won't |
| 5. Havana Gang Brawl | 18. Zuton Fever Reprise |
| 6. Back to Black [Amy Winehouse] | |
| 7. In Your Arms | |
| 8. Disappear | |
| 9. Dirty Dancehall | |
| 10. Best of Me | |
| 11. Popcorn | |
| 12. Remember Me | |
| 13. The Big Decider | |
| 14. Creeping on the Dancefloor | |



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