HEARD

ISSUE 001
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"tell me more"
The machinery never completely overwhelms the human beings operating it.

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AFAR

"tell me more"

ARTIST

AFAR lives somewhere between the natural and industrial worlds, incorporating analog and digital elements into something soulful, nostalgic, and moving.

Elena Gniß and Joseph Varschen are AFAR. The Berlin-based duo met around 2014, arriving from different musical directions. Joseph came from electronic music. Elena brought jazz, soul, Krautwave, and singer-songwriter influences. Those histories still seem audible in AFAR. Guitar and voice coexist with synthesizers, drum machines, and live electronics without either side being asked to surrender to the other.

That tension is part of what makes AFAR difficult to place. They can build dance-oriented rhythms beneath haunting vocals, then leave enough space for a raw guitar to intrude. At other moments, those same elements dissolve into ambience. The machinery never completely overwhelms the human beings operating it.

SONG

This is a violation. The sonic elements refuse to conform to established expectations while somehow reassuring you



that everything will resonate in the depths of your soul.

“tell me more” opens with a steady heartbeat accompanied by a rolling, subsonic bass line. The kick is a drum machine. The bass might not be. The provenance of each doesn’t matter. What does is that this rhythm invites you to experience Elena’s vocals—the delicate touch of a lullaby drenched in reverb, layered and almost dreamlike. By the time the snare joins the march, it brings along an old friend. The gritty, sparse guitar riff sits above the rhythm, forcing you to lean in with each bend.

The hats hit on the sixteenth notes as the vocals continue. Above them, the guitar evokes something older, a drone that might have started in the Mississippi Delta and



continued through time. The tracks occupy distinct spaces, giving each instrument a voice without letting any one dominate the conversation.

About halfway through the song, a pulsing synth combines with a second guitar track playing an altered version of the primary riff. Notes are carefully placed so as not to interrupt the seance.

The track reverts to a kick/snare rhythm beneath the lonely guitar riff and vocal lullaby, finishing with a deceleration of the dream into a final ringing tone.

AFAR opens the aperture on what EDM and blues can be, combining them in a way that would have been heresy just a few decades ago. Yes, I've heard this song many times by now. But that's not stopping me from playing it again.

ALBUM

Technically an EP, *Tell Me More* started as four tracks released in December 2022: “tell me more,” “try not to sleep,” “low high,” and “nightlight.” Their label, Laut & Luise, then commissioned six remixes, which were added to the original four and eventually became a Spotify “album” in early 2023. The label described the idea this way: “a musical story gets retold and altered by different narrators.”

The release itself became an experiment, a manifestation of “tell me more.” The remixes weren't packaged together as an album. Instead, they appeared every few days, as if those “narrators” were literally telling us more.

musicfromafar.de



Pixel Grip

"Crows Feast"





ARTIST

Pixel Grip began outside Chicago, where Rita Lukea and Jonathon Freund started collaborating as teenagers in Crystal Lake. The project eventually became a trio with Tyler Ommen: Lukea on vocals, Freund on synthesizers and production, and Ommen on drums and production.

Lukea and Freund cite early influences including Daft Punk, French electronic music, Chicago house, Air, Little Dragon, TR/ST, and Justice.

Around 2017, when Pixel Grip was still Lukea and Freund, they called what they were making “goth disco.” They don’t anymore.

Because of their visual aesthetic, Pixel Grip often surfaces in conversations among industrial fans, but that’s only one facet of what they do and who they’ve become.

SONG

The color of this song is betrayal. Rita Lukea’s vocals are filled with regret, a longing for a time when one could trust. It

seems as though she no longer can.

The energy is emotive rather than violent, which might be why this song doesn't need a percussive element. The initial synth riff modulates in the low frequencies, dressed in a flowing, velvet reverb. Just as we exhale for the first time, Rita explains the source of her grief in the first verse: "Thought that I made a friend. It turns out you're one of them."

With only two musical elements, the sparse arrangement gives the lush reverb room to become an element of its own.

As the second verse begins, a second synth riff arrives in a higher frequency but does not compete with Rita's vocals. And around two minutes into the song, the third and final synth line fades in sounding the way a murder of crows might in our imagination.

As the brief lament comes to an end, the song simply disappears into itself without a need for finality or closure.

An interesting note on





language: Pixel Grip lists the song as “Crows Feast” and “Crow’s Feast.” Whether the band is describing what they do or telling us the crows own the banquet, it works. Maybe they think it’s both.

ALBUM

The name and cover art of *Percepticide: The Death of Reality* nod to their influences, pioneers where industrial music intersects the LGBTQ+ community. But that description alone doesn’t provide an adequate one for this record. The aural swirl of angst, betrayal, love, hate, violence, and oppression pushes it beyond factory sound samples and brittle guitar tones.

In several interviews Lukea has described “percepticide” as a cognitive distortion associated with trauma, in which beliefs previously held as true are shattered and a person begins questioning their perception. The band tries to move the listener through betrayal trauma and its cousins, including grief, anger, hopelessness, wrath—and eventually acceptance with a sliver of hope.

pixelgripmusic.com

Mat Zo

"Too Late (Matt Lange Remix)"



ARTIST

Three artists converge on “Too Late.” Mat Zo is Matan Zohar, a producer and DJ who learned guitar at eight and played in indie-rock, jazz, and heavy metal bands before moving into electronic music.

Sinead Egan is a vocalist whose work draws from traditional Irish music, blues, and jazz.

Matt Lange is a producer, composer, sound designer, DJ, and guitarist whose formative records included Aphex Twin’s *Richard D. James Album* and *The Fragile* by Nine Inch Nails.





SONG

The curtains part to reveal a pulsing, low-frequency bass synth swelling beneath vocals placed in a lonely universe by heavy reverb. The voice asks the question that is impossible to answer: “Is it too late? Am I too late?”

By the time the production lifts into the second verse, the low end turns snarly and a few syncopated beats push everything forward. Melodic industrial swells and glitches travel back in time and into the future simultaneously.

By the third verse, the caravan arrives at the foot of the stronghold, orchestral swells and string synths in full



midtempo march toward the gate.

Once arrival is complete, the dust settles back onto the forlorn yet hopeful melody as several final glitches wink out of existence.

The journey feels earned yet circular.

ALBUM

The song’s provenance meanders through several creators and formats. The Matt Lange remix was released as a single in 2016, while the original version appeared on Mat Zo’s 12-track second album, *Self Assemble*, credited to Mat Zo featuring Sinead Egan.

In 2016, Zo said he was not thinking in genres and was more interested in whether the music might remain relevant in ten years. He described *Self Assemble* as a personal

snapshot and told Mixmag Asia that he was attempting to make “a score for a film that doesn’t exist.”

Zo also told EDMTunes that the album was “completely digital,” while older records were used largely for sampling. Aesthetically, he avoided elaborate visuals or stage production, instead trying to recreate the atmosphere of dark London club nights where people danced with one another instead of facing the DJ.

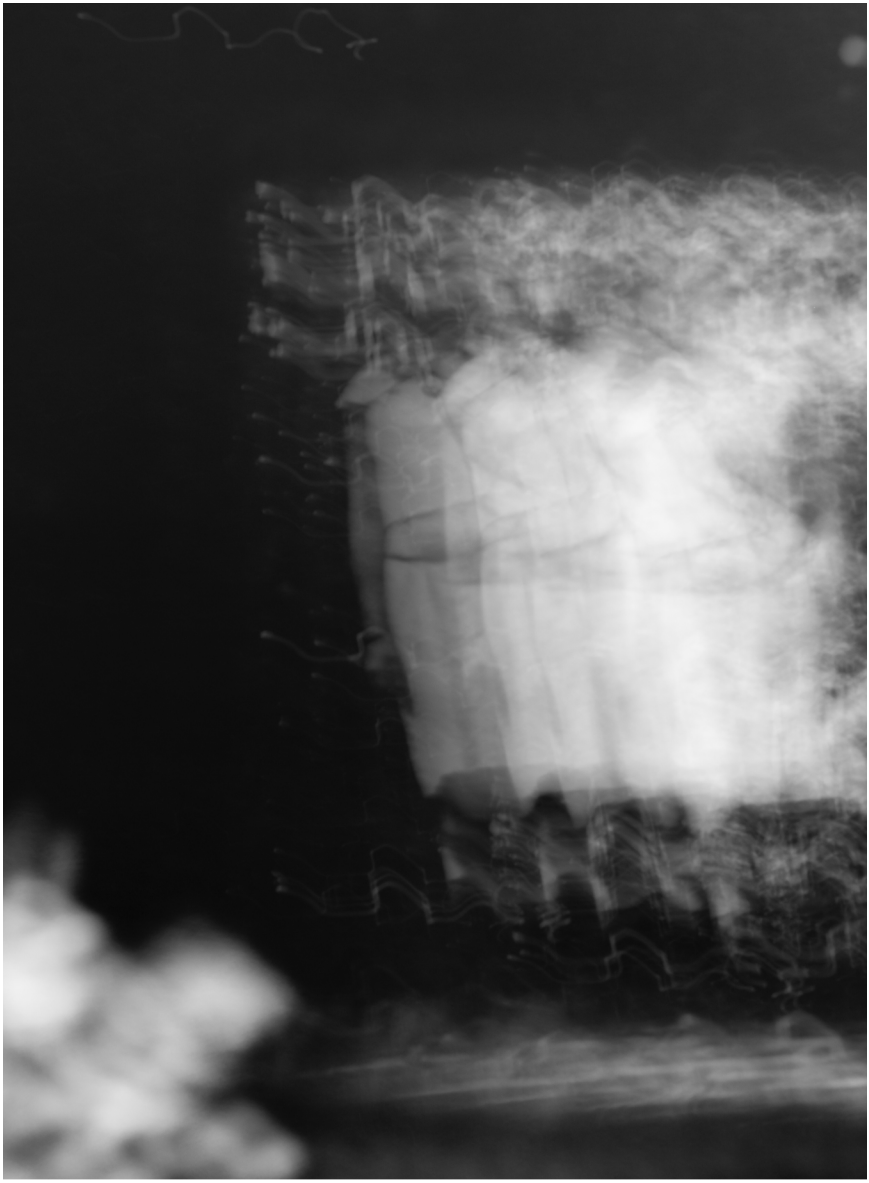
About the remix, Lange said, “I brought it deep down into the bowels of the dungeon and threw away the key.”

matzomusic.com

mattlange.net

soundcloud.com/sinead-egan







Public Memory

"Ringleader"

ARTIST

Before he remembered, Robert Toher was a guitarist/vocalist in the New England experimental/post-rock group Apse, then co-founded Brooklyn-based ERAAS with fellow Apse member Austin Stawiarz.

Public Memory's promotional descriptions placed rhythm at the front and referred to the result as a mix of krautrock, percussion, hip-hop-derived beats, and dub.





Toher prefers to start with percussion, adding bass before improvising lyrics that follow the melody rather than precede it.

Toher resists labels and classifications, but has cited Radiohead and Smashing Pumpkins as influences because of their willingness to change radically from one record to the next.



SONG

“Ringleader” poses more questions than it answers. It doesn't seem particularly interested in resolving them.

Public Memory invites you inside with an ominous two-tone hum that sits just above a

thumping kick drum with a snare echoing through the ages.

The haunting chimes immediately identify this as Public Memory, often as isolated in the mix as they would be hanging from the eave of a windswept ruin. Robert Toher emulates a revenant, telling us to “Kiss along and miss the moaning.” It becomes an auditory Rorschach test without an interpretation.

The drum machine forces the song forward until it syncopates with your heartbeat, a buzzy drone glitching in time beside it. Toher introduces a forlorn guitar riff midway through the song. It is one of only a few sonic elements.

Memories become public and private, a hazy view from inside an empty glass heart.

ALBUM

Although Toher was Brooklyn-based at the time *Wuthering Drum* was produced, he made the album during a temporary stay in Los Angeles. More specifically, he recorded it in the bedroom of his Echo Park house, culling more than 40 tracks down to ten.

Toher said the defining condition of the *Wuthering Drum* recording sessions was





self-imposed limitation, restricting himself to a single Korg MS-20 Mini synthesizer, guitar, and field recordings. In an interview, he explained that the limitation was intended to strip away tangential ideas rather than exploit everything a computer made available.

linktr.ee/publicmemory

Mercy Girl

"Ghost"







ARTIST

Glasgow's Mercy Girl is a four-piece: Daisy Miles, Davey Purdie, Craig Harkness, and Kylie MacNaughton-Wright. Formed in 2024, the members arrive from overlapping but distinct musical backgrounds.

Attempts to describe the band tend to accumulate labels—alt-pop, dream-pop, dark-pop, shoegaze, industrial rock. Mercy Girl's own description is more useful. They contrast "the solace of a dark empty highway" with "the surrender of a neon-hazed dancefloor."

SONG

Mercy Girl brings us to the shore where the ghost remains. But we stopped looking.

The song begins with a soft pad synth suspended in heavy reverb, the vocals entering as little more than a whisper. A drum loop enters the swift current with constant electronic propulsion. The breathy voice sings repeatedly, "I can be the



one.” But we don’t know what.

Midway through, a high-frequency synthesizer builds a bridge that briefly lifts the mood, only to ferry us to the darker side of the river. Eventually, the vocals turn into a steady, insistent confession. We’re not convinced she can be the one, no matter how many times she says it.

The ghost doesn’t stay for long. It doesn’t have to.



ALBUM

Released by Descent Records in 2025, *Ghost* is a three-track streaming release that includes the title track along with “I’m in Love” and “Heaven.”

The band favors a DIY approach, regularly recording in Davey Purdie’s bedroom rather than commercial studios. Tracks are built through texture and layered synthesizers, with an emphasis on tension and release.

In live settings, Harkness runs vocals through Ableton to trigger effects, while MacNaughton told RESOUND that the goal with guitar is to make it stop sounding recognizably like a guitar and become “some form of industrial noise” through extensive pedal processing.

mercygirl.com



Listen to the songs featured in issue 01.
https://bit.ly/heardissue001

https://HEARD.GALLERY