

Oly Ralfe

Notes From Another Sea

Ralfe Band's Oly Ralfe announces debut solo album.

Instrumental piano album *Notes From Another Sea* released 13th April 2018.

Vinyl (limited edition of 500, hand-numbered) / CD / Digital (Ghost Ship Records) ([pre-order](#))

Shares album opener 'The Bridge' ([listen](#))

Announces headline show in Oxford at Holywell Music Room – Europe's oldest custom-built concert hall - accompanied by classical ensemble, 20th April 2018 ([tickets](#))



Meditative, melodic and quietly intense, Oly Ralfe's debut solo album *Notes From Another Sea* casts a spell, enveloping listeners as it conjures its shifting moods. Oly says, *"I think of this album as a pathway through mysterious places; I hope it can unlock the beauty and strangeness of what's around you. I see emotions as pictures and pictures as music, and each of these tracks is a conjuring of an indistinct yet intense place, and my music is the soundtrack to that. When I am inspired I find myself gravitating towards the piano, and through it I've opened myself up more than I have before."*

For Oxford-based Oly Ralfe, who has made albums as Ralfe Band since 2005, the piano is key to his love of music, and features on many Ralfe Band songs and instrumentals. *"Growing up playing the piano, I've always enjoyed the sensation of stillness and moving at the same time. Writing at the piano is almost like travelling into the unknown. I don't need to go anywhere to be somewhere new and I don't need to use words to say how I feel."*

True to this love of the instrument, *Notes From Another Sea* is Oly's first album based entirely around the piano. *"A lot of the music I love is stripped back to just one or two instruments. I've always wanted to create an album with more space, with an intimate atmosphere. At first it felt a risky undertaking, but I was surprised by how natural the process became. It's been great to form a clear simple voice through the power of a composition, the moment of the performance and the atmosphere captured in recording it."*

Capturing the right sound for each track was a vital part of the production process. To achieve this Oly used several different pianos, recording on a Yamaha upright at Strawhouse Studios in Oxford, an old Steinweg grand at Visconti Studio in London, and in his home studio a Eavestaff mini piano.

Oly says, *"It's a challenge finding the right piano and space for each track and you can't just put one under your arm and take somewhere! I discovered how unique all pianos are, from ancient uprights to a well-tuned grand, they're all different and you really notice this on a solo recording. We'd position microphones close to the mechanical innards of the instrument to record it close up. I wanted to capture its actual presence; the wood, the hammers striking the strings and my hands on the keys. The imperfections in it evoke a moment in time and a sense of uniqueness."*

Equally, making use of the huge space of Visconti Studio creates an awesome natural ambience which shifts the album's mood to a more expansive place at several points. Through further experimentation, Oly discovered the natural relationship between the cello and piano. *"The cello is such a powerful instrument and even one well-placed note can have great impact."* Oly collaborated with talented Oxford cellist Barney Morse-Brown (Birdy, Eliza Carthy, Duotone) whose intuitive playing adds depth and richness to a number of tracks on the album.

Notes From Another Sea opens with the expectant chords and emotive descending melody of 'The Bridge', progressing to the elegant minimalism of 'A Forest In The City' and the mysterious, romantic 'On My Train', circulating about an ethereal waltz motif with a darker undercurrent. The album gathers intensity with the slow-building classical 'Glider', slowing to the yearning of 'The Swallow Sleeps All Winter', twisting and turning in the half-light before ending on the elegiac 'Hill Queen'.

Oly Ralfe's music is often described as visual and cinematic. Oly adds, *"Having already written a soundtrack to the film *Bunny and the Bull*, I see this album as my soundtrack, a score to my own experiences."*

In celebration of the album's release, Oly will be performing *Notes From Another Sea* on 20th April 2018 in the historic setting of the Holywell Music Room in Oxford, the oldest custom-built concert hall in Europe.

Oly has been chosen as the first artist for The Holywell Sessions, a series of unique concerts where bands and solo artists are accompanied by a classical ensemble. Oly is working alongside composer and arranger Luke Lewis to come up with new arrangements of the album for a special one-off performance. Oly enthuses, *"I'm so excited to collaborate with this group of talented Oxford musicians in what will be a creative re-imagining of my music. I've been close to these pieces for so long, they've become personal friends, so it's going to be magical to see the music open up in surprising directions and to share this with a live audience."*

Curated by Luke Lewis and BBC Introducing's Liz Green, they say, *"Sitting somewhere between the oscillating patterns of Philip Glass and the reflectiveness of Gavin Bryars, Oly Ralfe's *Notes From Another Sea* sounds like music for a film that has yet to be made. This will surely be an unmissable musical moment."*

Oly is known for being the principal member and songwriter of Ralfe Band, releasing three studio albums, *Swords* (Skint), *Attic Thieves* (Loose), and *Son Be Wise* (Highline). He also composed the score to the feature film *Bunny and the Bull* (Warp Films / Film 4), directed by Paul King (*Paddington*), which was released as a soundtrack album. Ralfe Band have toured extensively and performed multiple sessions for BBC 6 Music and BBC Radio 2.

Oly's music has featured widely on television, and film music is an ongoing passion, leading him to work as a music consultant on the film *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron and the score composed by Alexandre Desplat.

Also working as a filmmaker, Oly co-directed *The Ballad of A J Weberman* and directed *The Mighty Boosh on Tour: Journey of the Childmen*. His films and music videos have won several awards. Another project reflecting Oly's visual talents is his recent work illustrating the novel *A Field Guide to Reality* by Joanna Kavenna (Quercus), his drawings described as *'beautiful and affecting'* by the Times Literary Supplement.

Notes From Another Sea

1. The Bridge
2. A Forest In The City
3. On My Train
4. Hear Me Yourself
5. Melusine
6. Glider
7. Lantern Waltz
8. Which Is The Brighter
9. The Swallow Sleeps All Winter
10. Wanderers
11. Beqaa Road
12. All Our Rooms
13. Night Raven
14. Hill Queen



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'Oly Ralfe is an artist in every sense. There is something of the strange and beautiful in everything he does, like the mood created by the darkest of fairy tales. I'm a big fan.' **MARK RADCLIFFE**

'Ralfe Band return with a characteristically intriguing and unclassifiable recording . . . There's a cinematic scope to it and artful imagery to intrigue as much as to inform . . . Ralfe Band has again served up a generous helping of originality and diversity.' **CONSEQUENCE OF SOUND (Son Be Wise)**

'I can't tell you what side 2 of Ralfe Band's new album is like because side 1 is so brilliant I can't stop putting it on again & again.' **PETE PAPHIDES (Son Be Wise)**

'The 22 tracks here recall the deft melancholy of the Amelie soundtrack . . . The kind of regally drunk spirit last heard on David Dundas' equally fine Withnail & I soundtrack. Score!' **8/10 NME (Bunny and the Bull)**

'The real test of any score is its ability to survive independent of the movie and Oliver Ralfe's piano-heavy work manages that easily . . . It's alternately sweetly hushed, spooky and sad, tapping Bernard Hermann, Danny Elfman, European folk and gypsy song traditions in a bewitchingly evocative collection.' **UNCUT (Bunny and the Bull)**

'Oly Ralfe makes playful, well-crafted tunes that breathe new life into forgotten ways of doing things . . . Treasures hidden in amongst the rafters, waiting to be found.' **THE QUIETUS (Attic Thieves)**

'Attic Thieves is a wonderfully rich romp through the fevered imagination of frontman Oly Ralfe . . . A unique and loveable album with enough dark corners and clever twists to keep the interest up through its twelve perfectly drawn tracks.' **MUSIC WEEK (Attic Thieves)**

'An inspired set of star-gazing psychedelia' ★★★★★ **METRO (Swords)**

'A whiskey-soured folk trip from east to west . . . Ralfe's moon-eyed beauty is simply the work of one vivid imagination' ★★★★★ **MOJO (Swords)**

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