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DISCORDER

magazine

Summer 2019

"that magazine from CiTR 101.9FM"

Local + Free

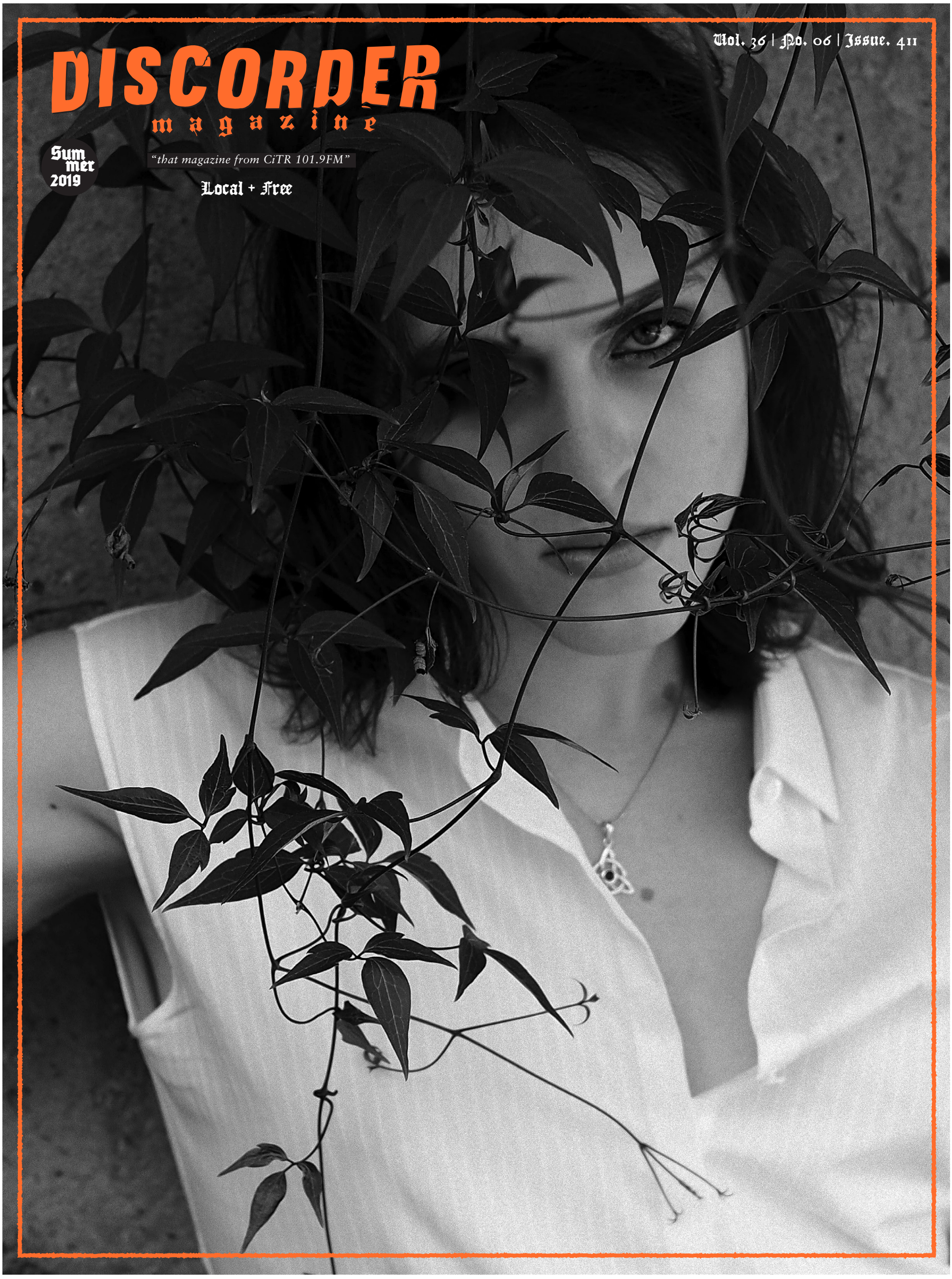


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Editors's Note

As we nurse our collective eclipse hangovers, take comfort in the words that await you. Pour a hot cup of joe, open all your windows and crank the stereo so loud your neighbours are slightly concerned as to why you might be playing Pachelbel's "Canon" on repeat. In the East, we have the sun, and we have Cole Pauls. His brilliance, warmth, and humility, bringing lightness and strength. In a world obsessed with distorted notions of power he demonstrates it's true meaning. In the South we have the forest; Vanessa Kwan's words serve as a reminder that sustained efforts bear fruit, and community nurtures the heart. To the West is the roaring sea; Kamikaze Nurse embraces the darkness, decay, and death that is intrinsic to the natural world. And in the North we have the stars; and there Baby Blue personifies with grace, that there is life after death and destruction, bearing a promise of love, a return to innocence.

Hold onto your hats. Life is a highway — and this is a convertible.

xoxo,
Chandra





KAMIKAZE NURSE

words by Chandra Melting Tallow | illustration by Hayley Schmidt | photo by Alistair Henning

It's a classic grey July day, summertime sadness is the name of the game and what better fitting way to meet with dark lords of noisy rock Kamikaze Nurse. Seated on a patch of dead yellowing grass I succumb to the witticisms of Adams Family values. The band is both wholesome in it's familial intimacy yet grim, celestial and, dare I say, raw.



Having gone through several configurations featuring past members like Mareesa Holmes of Cave Girl fame, Late Spring alumnist Nik Gauer, the band finds themselves fully settled into their present configuration. They're now comprised of original members John Brennan, an old cowboy in the experimental music community; and renaissance woman KC Wei, alongside new members that include her sister Sonya Eui of Necking on bass, and Ethan Reyes, a local music darling with an extensive CV boasting such tender projects as Bedwetters Anonymous and Puzzlehead.

The band finds their humble beginnings halfway around the world, in South Korea. It was there that the notoriously multi-talented KC Wei found herself grappling with the intrinsic loneliness all too familiar to the journey of a solo music project: "That was in March [of 2018] and I was really missing playing in a band." She recollects "I was playing some hazy solo stuff and just feeling really alienated and alone. I missed playing with people. Then John and I were messaging and from there it led to us jamming."

In spite of the newest members only joining the band as recently as last November, their chemistry has fuelled and nurtured the collective creative process in a way that could be described in literally no other way than a Deluezian romance.

"I think this band has made me a much better guitar player. On these new songs I'm able to do shit I probably wouldn't have been able to do when I first started practicing," Reyes reflects "the songs are so weird, and they force me to think in a different way about playing guitar."

"Like Deleuzian?" Wei quips.

"Like Deleuze. They make me play guitar in a Deleuzian way." Reyes confirms.

Brennans background in experimental music fosters a reciprocal relationship when participating in the bands creative process "I've mostly played in kind of improv music… This was a challenge in a way for me, and it was exciting because I got to have the time to play with these incredible people, and think and compose differently on the drums…" he expresses "I think a lot of my approach to playing is a little bit more... it's stranger. And I think I get that from [playing] with [musician] Jake Hardy - Jacob Audrey Taves aka Holzkopf […] playing all these disjunct beats. I try to take from that palette and those microrhythms and micropatterns and then incorporate them in this setting. I feel free compositionally with this project and that nobody's like, "You're going off the rails, this is too crazy."

For Sonya, Kamikaze Nurse has offered a new way of relating to and performing music outside of the realm of her classical music beginnings and upbeat post-punk endeavours, "Literally I feel like my body changes when I play compared to Necking its so weird [...] its like birthing a different persona [...] [Necking is] very freeing in that it's mostly for fun's sake. But in Kamikaze Nurse it feels like shrinking into a ray, if that makes sense. It's very... I just keep thinking violent is the word to describe it. It feels so intense, and I even notice I don't smile when we play at all..." Sonya reflects, "Because I just feel so fucking cool." she adds jokingly.

Wei contributes riffs and while she previously wrote much of the material, the lyrics have evolved into a more collaborative process, with Reyes penning "Blue Garlic Man," and both Eui and Brennon completing "Johnson D." While she was part of spearheading the bands formation, she embraces sharing equally in the creative process. "When a riff is starting to come out in my head, I can see how everyone can contribute and fill it out more, and trusting that 'maybe this riff sounds like this now', but being okay with bringing it to the group and having it sound completely different when the layers are added up. I actually really love that; that's what I look forward to." Reflecting on her growth since her previous band, Late Spring, it's clear her experiences in Kamikaze Nurse have enriched her creatively,"it sounds so affected to me now. I definitely feel that, finally, I've moved on from that project, 'cause that project meant so much to me. But Kamikaze Nurse is more fulfilling 'cause I feel like I'm actually where I'm supposed to be, or I wanted to get here when I was in Late Spring."

Rather than an explicit concept, *Bucky Fleur* (titled after publishing artist Jo Cook's best friend) explores visual esoteric themes, conjuring mood and feeling. The relationship each member has to their intimate experiences with literature and film finds its place amidst the dense layers of sound. The album manages to evoke the cinematic — and albeit intellectual — with a rough irregularity and subtle humor that frees it from the vulnerabilities of pretension.

"When I wrote the lyrics [for Johnson D] I was reading Mayakovsky, I was reading his revolutionary poetry, and it's very bloody and cruel. And like, colourful…" Sonya reflects.

Similarly, Reyes draws from literary influences, "The lyrics for "Blue Garlic Man" were Joseph Conrad and Deleuze. A lot of my lyrics for my other stuff as well have a lot of nautical themes. Just because I love Joseph Conrad and that's all he wrote about… [in] "Blue Garlic Man," one of the lines is just about sinking a boat, basically. That comes in a lot of my other songs as well… lots of rivers and boats."

"Each of the songs are kind of like their own little world [...] because there's lots of parts and it's not always really a verse-chorus-verse-chorus banger, " Brennan elaborates, "it seems like even within one song you'll be transported into a different place [...][they're] more dimensional compositions instead of linear compositions, where we're able to experience these sounds together."

"For me the most powerful kind of artwork is evocative of a mood. Or a feeling, and that feeling is the thing that sticks with you, 'cause you have those feelings all the time throughout your life, whether it's like heartbreak or excitement or desire, and then we just have these movies or books or songs that trigger those moods and feelings. So I think it is all related but I don't really know what comes first?" Wei muses, "I think they influence each other in this circle. It's like nature's circle… of decay and desire."

The visceral, immersive nature of the band's work creates a space for both the audience and its members to be transported,; a process that has bloomed emphatically, like sarcastic blossoms on a grey July. The guitar, the drums, the bass, the vocals — these pollinators of rock and roll let us know this is only just the beginning for this transcendent band.

Under Review



SIGH

Images

(self-released)

April 24, 2019

Sigh is relatively new in the Vancouver scene, despite being a band made up of veterans: Shelby Vredik plays guitar, Jenny McDermid on drums, Morgan Ferrier on bass and Dorothy Neufeld on vocals. Released this past April, *Images* is their first record. Entirely self-produced, each song on *Images* is sweet and sharp at the same time — a very effective combination.

Whether in her previous project Swim Team or here on this record, Neufeld's vocals are always striking. In *Images*, they sound close, intimate and quietly sung — a distinct contrast to the biting, heavily distorted guitars on the tracks. Vredik's guitar playing is a highlight — her riffs are interesting and unexpected without being busy or crowded. Songs like "Hydra" feature catchy, washed out guitar melodies that occasionally become discordant. The same goes for the end of "Magpie." This is in line with the overall feel of the album — a meditative, thoughtful record with deliberately jagged edges.

"Pretty Furious" opens with enveloping acoustic guitars and a hummable melody before the chord progression switches into something more melancholy and complex — alternating between pop-y major progressions and darker, more augmented chords. As with all the songs on this record, the guitar panning is very effective — Neufeld's vocals ground each song as the shoe-gaze-y guitar tones come at you from all other angles.

The title track, "Images," is another stand out — it's simultaneously groovy and sad. Neufeld's vocals are at their most clear as she sings of fading love. A wordless vocal hook finishes the song in a perfectly wistful way without being corny or ham fisted. It makes sense for this to be the album's title track — the band feels at its most unified in this song and it's easy to bask in its melancholy feeling.

Because each member of the band has been active within the Vancouver music community in their own right, Sigh synthesizes all of their experience into something that is more intimate and lilting than your average DIY rock record. **—Doug Todd**



LEAVE

Jeremiah|Carolina

(self-released)

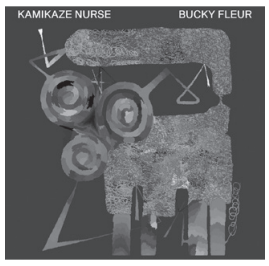
May 29, 2019

Leave's two song EP *Jeremiah|Carolina* is a dichotomous venture highlighting the opposing voices of Emma Citrine and David Knights Cowling against a backdrop of complex sound. *Jeremiah|Carolina* is the band's first release since their 2015 full length album *Allow to Remain,* and it is the band's first release as a quartet, despite new members Nicole Gilley and Bryan Michael not actually playing on the album. Instead, drummer Jeremiah Ackerman, along with Citrine and Cowling, make up the personnel for this release.

The first track, "Jeremiah," features vocals by Citrine reminiscent of Daughter's Elena Tonra. The song begins with an ethereal introduction combining a strong drum beat, melancholic guitar and subtle harmonies for a dreamy layered sound. What appears as a beautiful indie-folk tune sees an unexpected shift to a more intense and haunting sound around the three-minute mark, building to a repeat of the catchy yet profound refrain "I've lost it all now / I'm not enough / You brought me back home / You filled my cup / With good intentions / I'm holding on / To where you brought us / I'm not alone now." The track concludes the way it started: soft and light like lavender, yet one feels that they've been on a journey

"Carolina" features the vocals of Cowling and delves deeper into a more dissonant soundscape that "Jeremiah" only hinted at. The shadowy-feeling and more experimental half of the EP offers listeners the National vibes featuring abrupt yet effective sounds. Engineered by Cowling (and produced by Citrine and Cowling), "Carolina" testifies to the promise to not "prioritize loudness, but instead...space, depth, and timbres" that is written on Cowling's website. This shorter track (less than four minutes, versus almost six-minutes for "Jeremiah") has instrumental depth and highlights Cowling's voice while keeping his vocal levels low, which intensifies the feeling of the track overall.

"Jeremiah" is an outstanding track and "Carolina complements" it and emphasizes the experimental side of the band. Because the tracks are so different from one another, it leaves listeners wondering which direction Leave would take a full album. As a whole, the EP combines rich instrumentation with two well-suited voices creating a comprehensive sound that would be excellent live**. —Jeanette Steinmann**



KAMIKAZE NURSE

Bucky Fleur

(Agony Klub)

May 31, 2019

It's difficult to find bands in today's rock landscape that deliver a grandiosity in their sound. One may go through the endless filler of the internet, finding music that may not stretch past the boundaries of a certain genre. The forward-thinking Kamikaze Nurse works to eradicate that sentiment. Led by artist / curator / filmmaker KC Wei, *Bucky Fleur* offer a fresh take on shoegaze, noise rock, art-punk and dream pop, all exhibited in stellar quality — an album with range.

One of the stand out features on this record is the vibrant production, where dissonant chords illuminate in cacophonous euphoria. Ethan Reyes and Wei's guitar hooks beam like distorted lasers as John Brennan's perpetual drum blasts serve to disembowel, all while frontperson KC Wei's warm vocals provide a comfort in the chaos. The music itself feels grand in scope in a way that Sonic Youth imposed themselves on *Daydream Nation*. On "Sophie's Dad," "Dead Meat," and "Weeping Bone," drum rolls and guitar crescendos signal an intensity that threatens to break the stage. There's a weight to the way each band member plays their instruments. The appropriately afflicting out of tune riffs are played like hammered sheets of metal yet make an impression that these are proficient musicians at work. The only sense of stability contained in these songs is Sonya Eui's bass which drive songs forward. On the end of a track like "So Blue," guitars and drums become uninhibited as the bass's rhythm remains steadfast.

As a vocalist, Wei might channel her influence from Cocteau Twins' Elizabeth Fraser, whose unique vocal delivery operates to hypnotize one's consciousness. A song like "Sun Song" showcases that influence, where Wei brings an ethereality in her "oohs" all the while slogging out an unrestrained whirlwind of shoegaze-y guitar. Not to mention her penetrating screams on songs like "Sacred Cow Hot Dog" and "DDD + KNurse" would definitely impress a punk or hardcore crowd. Lyrically, she explores dreams ("Darkening mysteries down from the sky / Passing by little eyes how many years"), and probes into the existential ("Unnatural feeling / You so boring to me / Impossible to feel, if I peel, would you heal?"). Guitarist Ethan Reyes even contributes Thurston Moore-esque schizophrenic abstractions that boggle the mind on "Blue Garlic Man."

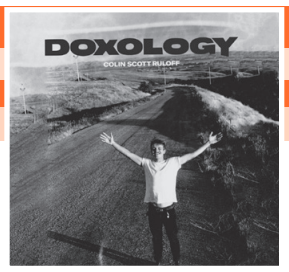
In the end, Kamikaze Nurse delivers an excellent debut that pays tribute to its influences all the while feeling novel and genre-breaking. In hopes to find innovative rock music, *Bucky Fleur* demands that attention. **—Anton Astudillo**

COLIN SCOTT RULOFF

Doxology

(self-released)

June 7, 2019



It's always strange to hear what kind of music the people you grew up with end up making. For two people whose upbringings were essentially the same, the genres and styles with which they identify enough to emulate can be shockingly different. Such is the case for me when I hear Colin Scott Ruloff's music.

Despite growing up together on Bowen Island, attending the same schools and moving into Vancouver around the same time, Colin's music sounds entirely of a different time and place. Clearly drawing from the likes of Bob Dylan, Dave Van Ronk and the rest of the Greenwich Village folk scene in the early '60s; or earlier from the balladry associated with Hank Williams Sr. and country music in the '40s and '50s; or earlier still, from the birth of the Delta blues in the '20s and '30s with artists like Robert Johnson to Son House; all of these influences, Colin Scott Ruloff wove into his own songwriting.

In early April of 2018, Colin recorded ten tracks of guitar and vocals, what was to be his first full length album, *Doxology*. On April 24, 2018, at the age of 23, Colin Scott Ruloff died in a tragic motorcycle accident. Colin's close friends — Noah Gotfrit, Clara Rose, Steph Wall, Aaron Levinson, Theo Story, John Evans, Sky Lambourne, Cody Turple and Cloe Logan — took it upon themselves to finish and release the album. Over the course of the following year, they layered further instrumentation onto the sparse songs, fleshing them out into arrangements that they felt Colin was aiming for.

As they write in the linear notes of the record, "*Doxology* isn't meant to represent a tragic loss or a pedestal that we place a legacy on. Rather, the hope is that the album will be shared and listened to as it was originally meant to be — with an appreciation for the songwriting and the man behind it." In this sense, the posthumous release of *Doxology* is a true success. The additional instrumentation complements and elevates Colin's rustic guitar and understated voice. From square-danceable tunes like "Going To The Garden" to earnest ballads like "My Lonely Heart Forgets," Colin consistently wrote songs that sound as if they had always existed.

But still, it's difficult not to let the context surrounding Colin's untimely passing colour your interpretation of his music, especially if you knew Colin, grew up with him, as I did. Songs that would otherwise have passed by my ear as yet another gentle folk tune are imbued with meaning that neither he nor I would have predicted. Specifically, on the third track of the album "Moon Shining Bright" — with some of the most tasteful and lush instrumentation anywhere on *Doxology* — Colin's voice sings out words that are impossible not to hear as an attempt to comfort those he left behind:

There's hopes and there's dreams, there's plans and there's schemes
Don't they sound so sweet
And it's hard, oh it's hard to smile, oh it's hard
Come on and laugh with me

The moon shining bright on this cold night
On the edge of town
I'm walking on down to the water
Saw fireworks
Hold on my friend I know in the end
We'll be alright

—Jasper D Wrinch