

Why Make The Same Album Twice?

The motivation for making two albums from the same material have not always been clear to us. Most retrospective projects don't happen in immediate succession of their predecessor. At times this has been the product of a unrivaled self-obsession coupled with the feeling that the material and ultimately basic subject matter, *Love & Death*, is such fertile ground that confining it to one interpretation is wasteful. Even the first album is still simply *More*.

On the other hand the idea to make *Fields & Birds & Things* had come from a self-hatred that so often comes with making any work. The album would present me with a chance to belittle the original tracks into unrecognisable alternatives, highlighting the purposelessness of previously made decisions. In many ways the endeavor formed from a need to remove the 'next day sinking feeling', justifying the original choices through a garish display of self-awareness. Almost all of the first reinterpretations were dismissed as personally therapeutic rather than something I actually wanted to create and doubtfully anyone would want to listen to. These various initial instincts upon reflection evolved into a commitment to ensure the two versions had the potential to exist autonomously. Rather than a direct response to the first album we have tried to create the record from a parallel universe. The phrase 'sister album' has floated around the studio a lot, however more accurately the goal has been a twin separated at birth. The challenge came through trying creating an album that could have been written prior to the other, the order of the CD's conception to feel as irrelevant as possible. Although this gesture of course makes no odds as without the help of time travel it is a simple fact that *More Love & Death* did indeed come first. However when speaking of a creative process the concept to base F&B&T on the previous material became about as restrictive as if we had simply decided to make a totally new album with a pre-planned instrumentation, something which we have previously always done.

I'll try to explain a few of the songs where the versions have a tangible relationship with each other. I should also surrender that there is no corner of any of the pieces that isn't ultimately about *Love and Death*. Great efforts have been made to deal with other subject matters but all have been unsuccessful.

In *Men Will Hang* love is something with which our protagonists have previously treated with apathy. In this tale it is not until arriving upon great adversity, potentially even awaiting their fate on the gallows, do they rediscover '*the love we forgot*'. Where *Men Will Hang* finds itself a love song via the experiences of victims, *Men Will Hang Again* explores this trodden ground through the eyes of the persecutors, perhaps even from the same narrative. They respond to their love as a basic human right, that transcends

all other moral and ethical implications. This nihilistic interpretation of 'love conquers all' is only compromised by the need to express it, in this case through a violent disregard of others. A fundamentalist exercise in proving that one love between two people can exist like a monotheistic deity where all else is expendable. The realities of their crimes end with the inevitable consequences of them being on the run...

*Change our names,
Dye our hair,
Shave our beards,
Wear fake beards.*

Another piece which is reasonably explainable is Dine Alone or Find Your Way Home. I'm cautious to explain any specific personal scenarios behind the songs as it can be unproductive and irrelevant to your own subjective relationship with them. However this is quite a big booklet so I shall break the rules. Dine Alone was written during a time when I was frequently visiting a loved one on their deathbed. At this stage she had lost most of her faculties. The song is a mixture of the arbitrary side products of this sad time mixed with my own sentimentality towards the person in question.

*You'll dine all alone,
With your food purified,
Through a tube they provide,
With me by your side.*

When revisiting this song it had been a while since their passing and my bleak reaction to their previous circumstance had naturally changed. When thinking back upon her life, her epilogue (*terminous*) spent as an invalid has since become a chapter of her story now quite superficial to the memories I have of her. Find Your Way Home is my vision of her on route to the afterlife she so believed in. Her death, albeit sad, inspired a celebratory epitaph of someone returning home. Though our protagonist remains the same and *death* remains the theme both works come from very opposing emotions.

*You'll find your way home,
Through a tunnel he provides,
With me left behind,
On a steed that you ride
With God's speed in each stride.*

'The Wonderful Adventures of Lucy & I' and 'Lucy Isabella & I' is a slight anomaly as the later version which appears on the newer of the two records

was written first. It was a song written for More Love and Death but its electronic elements was at odds with the, Chamber Orchestra only, texture of the other tracks. Lucy Isabella is a subconscious character I created as a convoluted way of expressing my obsession with fatherhood. I'm sure other proud parents would understand that though the original version was at odds with the album I wanted to give her a spot on ML&D, and thus wrote 'The Wonderful Adventures of Lucy & I'. Sadly knowing the original version would drift into undocumented obscurity. When dealing with Fields & Birds & Things which does deal with a more eclectic instrumentation it was an obvious choice to bring her back in her original song. Convenient. I should also point out that whilst drunk, cold, depressed and alone I was traveling in Budapest where I got her name tattooed in a heart on my arm. Upon discovering this was regrettable I have made every effort to include her in as many songs as possible in an attempt to make the gesture slightly less mental.

Where the lyrics differ there is more room for easy assessment of how the versions are connected. In '*Kicking & Screaming*', '*More Love and Death*', '*Love Will Hunt You Down*' and '*Fields & Birds & Things*' the lyrics remain the same but are attached to a different harmonic aesthetic so the ties to why they sound so different is more tricky. *Kicking and Screaming* is a relentless modulating cycle of chords expressing the unremitting struggles that restart with each day '*the aurobourous clock*'. The same lyrics are used in *Keep Kicking & Screaming* but attached to a simpler four bar sample layering up to a more determined embrace of the trails of life, an opportunity to triumph. '*I will still go kicking and screaming, with my head high...and a hat!*'.

Love & Death had been preconceived to always be a version for cello sextet an soprano. The only lyric changed was 'Tattoo your face on my cock,' for this was gender inappropriate for our soprano singer Donna Lennard.

Donna's roll on ML&D was closer to that of a lead guitar, the lead instrumental that saws up to the scaffolding above the stave. F&B&T however we have create a different roll. Donna taking the lead on Love and Death and our first 'conventional,' duet on Men Will Hang Again.

The process of the writing the parts is more formal on the surface than in reality. I do score all the parts but they are created specifically for the players particular stylist differences, skills and personalities. I worry this may become like a pseudo Oscar ceremony speech where the mic-stand sinks into the floor as I proudly waffle on, as I could easily talk in-depth about each player and their roll but for fear this becoming over sentimental I will try to limit it to few examples.

Men Will Hang's lead violin part was written for Anne-Marie Kirby's uniquely romantic tone and was scored with out any annotations to allow Anne-Marie to bring her own instincts to the part, making it far more beautiful than my awkward direction could produce. Men Will Hang Again was written specifically for the Kiniro sax quartet, a composition purely created after seeing them play one of their own concerts. Carine Ries's long folk-like lead violin part on Find Your Way Home was originally a questionable part to be simply tried out when recording, When Carrine started looking through the part and adding her own phrasing and stylistic touch it has know become a a main feature of the piece. Rebuild it Piece by Piece was written for Zoe Roberston who can so sympathetically control her five string violin across the four octave climb over the final three minutes of the work.

The drums and percussion are however not scored and created by Ben Milway and myself through wildly tocking, banging, shaking, bowing and jingling our vast selection of drums and percussion now worthy of some top end playgroups. Ben oversees the big picture of the albums, and is secretly the real brains behind this project. I'm relying on him not reading this far so please don't let him know I said that.