

THE SHORT STORY...

Toronto based **Mayday Music** seems to defy category or description. Lush arrangements, a full palate of instrumental sounds, both electronic and organic, graceful and gritty. Lyrics that cover a vast swath of topical space, both personal and universal. Sometimes big, sometimes intimate.

Multi instrumentalist/producer **Jon James** and singer/songwriter **Derek Christie** are the heart of this genre and era defying musical entity. Since the late 80's, they have collaborated musically in numerous bands/projects, with their partnership culminating in this new body of work. Their first album, 'Miracles and Sin' (November 2022), is a collection of songs they wrote and recorded during the pandemic lockdown of 2020-22.

ABOUT MAYDAY MUSIC...

Multi instrumentalist/producer **Jon James** and singer/songwriter **Derek Christie** are the core force at the heart of **Mayday Music**.

After meeting in the late 1980's, Jon and Derek have written, recorded, produced and performed in a multiplicity of projects together, including Derek's solo band. This current iteration of their partnership is a critical mass of recent song collaboration.

Beginning during the pandemic lock down of Spring 2020, they began writing and recording a vast amount of material in Jon's newly constructed studio just outside of Toronto. Jon would construct fully orchestrated versions of arranged music in the form of songs, while Derek would write the lyrics and melodies and arrange the vocals. Some of these songs are included on their first release 'Miracles and Sin' (November 2022).

The album is a collection of songs woven together by a thematic thread: the duality of life and the human condition. Dark and light fight for space in stories that cover diverse ground; from politicized rage run amok, self and substance abuse, to love prevailing through the storms of life. Political and personal, micro and macro, the songs are diverse in style and is not easy to label in terms of either genre or era.

The music defies category or description, genre or era. Lush arrangements, a full palate of instrumental sounds, electronic, organic, polished and gritty. Sometimes big, sometimes intimate. It is at times celebratory, urgent, lamenting, and contemplative. To be listened in full album form, from beginning to end.

Miracles and Sin

The album opens with the title track, a pulsating guitar arpeggio and keyboard sequence. It marks the outset of a journey through life's magic and missteps, where crossroads come early and often. The cinematic, anthemic 'Thin Air' seems to bring us in mid story, to a moment where things are about to change drastically and permanently, and features the widely dynamic and rich vocals of longtime collaborator, singer/songwriter **Laurelle Augustyn**.

'Patron Saint Of The Lost' is the first single and final song written for the album at the end of 2021, featuring Derek's daughter **Kieran Christie** on backing vocals. It is also the only song with lyrics written and vocals recorded after Derek's lengthy ICU/coma/rehab stint where he barely survived brush with death brought on by COVID. It also features his daughter Kieran on backing harmony vocals. A cry out over the airwaves for a savior saint, it was inspired by the story of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, a German Catholic priest and amateur radio operator who saved many Jews from the Nazis during WW2. A restrained but infectious groove draws you and when the chorus finally hits full throttle, the song's intent is fully obvious.

'While We Were Sleeping' is an awakening to the creeping domination of the kleptoclass and its rampant heft, deception and exploitation of all things. A synth sequence pulsates off the top and leads us through the list of crimes committed and fades to the groups howls of coyotes recorded outside of Derek's home via his iPhone.

'Long Dark Winter' is a more tender, laid back lament about a plague (viral and/or psychological) and parents struggling together to save their child. Its pervasiveness is the key threat ("From the streets of Manhattan/To the hills of Beinn Eighe/It'll haunt you through the nighttime/It'll follow you by day"), as well as the fact it doesn't discriminate based on borders or class.

A nod to Bowie and Roxy Music can be heard with the European sway of 'Strange Contradiction', largely inspired by the late-night lights and surreal atmosphere of Budapest in Spring, while an intense urgency and angst can be felt as 'The Wrong Side' builds to its chorus and the character realizes they are in trouble. 'Crawl' revisits the motif of 'Thin Air' by diving into the demo archives of an acoustic guitar idea the duo had roughed out on 4 track cassette in 1996.

Some much needed comic relief arrives by the time we reach 'Safe Word' and 'Beautiful Disaster'. 'Beyond The Rubicon' takes us on a ride through a nation or community divided to the point of conflict, which huge horn blasts and galloping groove. We end on an optimistic note with the upbeat pop strains of 'We Will Find Our Way', a song of commitment, loyalty and partnership.

As teens in the 1970's, the full album listening experience is deeply ingrained in the creators of this music. This is an album best heard from beginning to end, uninterrupted.