

When the two people who make up Sub Machine met earlier this year, they had an immediate rapport; the love of music which pushes the edges of genres, that which is experimental yet tuneful. They both connected over their desire and ambition to create a new kind of music. Something which encapsulates all of the above, but with their own particular flair. They already had the ten songs for the album *A Message to Your Future Self*, thanks to Mark - the one major task was to turn them into recordable and performable songs. Would this be at all possible with only two band members?

Having not seen them live, I can not answer the second part of that question. But (and it is a huge, monumental but) the first half of that question is a resounding yes.

Listening to *A Message to Your Future Self*, I'm transported, breathless through a range of genres. I'm practically dizzy trying to catch which genre each track represents - there's elements of everything in there. From teenage angst post punk, through anger fuelled electronic all the way to ballads that could easily hold a stadium in the flame of a lighter. Some of the tracks wouldn't sound out of place on an American Prog Rock album, while some fit the power rock genre without a bat of an eyelid.

We're given everything on this album. We're given hard, face melting guitar riffs, soft synths, tricky drum loops, melodic choruses, acoustic strums, catchy organs... For only ten tracks, it's kind of intimidating listening to it. To think that this album has been put together by two men from Sheffield is just mind blowing.

The opening track to *A Message From Your Future Self*, *Blame*, could have been by *You Me at Six* - everything down to the stuttering opening and the slightly punk-core vocals have the whole teenage angst feel. You're then shocked into realising that these two guys are more talented than sticking to one single genre when the almost dance notes of *Alchemy* begins. The influences that Mark and Danny share are all over this album, but in a very subtle way. The outro of *Boy* whispers of *Muses' Resistance* whereas the main body has the haunting aspect of *10CC*; *Plague* has the riotousness of *Royal Blood* with a hint of *Nirvana* thrown in for good measure. *Enemy of the People* is sheer *Pistols* - but angrier than I've ever heard *Sid Vicious* be - it's compelling and possibly one of the most importantly politically charged tracks I've ever heard. The vocals change from husky to clear to goosepimple inducing with each track. By the time I'm hitting the seventh track, *Leave*, I'm actually hooked. *Leave* has got pounding piano solos that simply make you want to smile. I do not want this track to end. *Easier* has me in mind of *The Crash Test Dummies*, so deep is that vocal and so sweet is that bass run. It's like drinking a wonderfully rich hot chocolate.

For a debut offering and for a duo that has only been together a few months, *A Message from Your Future Self* is a stunning take on modern life. Heck, never mind if it's a debut album or a seventeenth effort. Never mind how long the band have been together. This album is simply stunning. It is effortless on the ears, it's eclectic to the point you get lost in the sweet harmonies and ripping riffs. Just do yourself a favour, buy it. It's out on the 18th October via most platforms.

Now, I need to see if they live up to this sublime recording live. Challenge on, boys.

Sally A.

I wondered what this album was going to bring ever since we reviewed "Plague" a couple of issues ago. Would it be more of the same? I liked "Plague", but wouldn't be able to listen to an album full of them. I needn't have worried; There is only one Plague, and the rest of the album is an astonishing mix of genres. I don't think there's one song on it that could be akin to any other! Does that worry me? Is this a band that can't find "their" sound? Not in the slightest! This is an album by two guys who are exploring as many genres and styles as possible, and they pull it off brilliantly! You know, I could play all ten of these tracks as the contribution from Local Artists on my Eclectic Avenue Radio Show, and no one would be any the wiser! They'd think we had 10 different bands!

Let's take a quick wander through the tracks, then... I won't give everything away; you need to listen for yourself ...

Blame, starts all of a stutter, then sets of into an emo post-punk style which is fabulous (Panic at the Disco!, is that what I am thinking of?). The chorus is sublime.

With Alchemy we might be at a rave, but it breaks into a beautifully ambient sound. A full minute before a smooth soft vocal starts, and the harmonies join in... a beautiful track. This is my new favourite.

Life, with a funky distorted guitar and drum and bass line intro. Another singing style, perhaps reminiscent of some of the better songs by Robbie Williams. I hear U2 in the chorus (not a criticism) which is sublime! This is my new favourite!

Enemy of The People, is the most political song about at the moment. It is so angry, and with quite a few "swears", it needs parental guidance! It's a dark, angry track, which it must be, considering the lyrics. I wonder why it is the only track with more than a one-word title? It's possibly my new favourite song on the album.

Plague, again a political song which we reviewed a while back. Tamer than Enemy, but still dark and ominous.

Boy, is a lovely track, about looking back at the little boy who would become the person singing the track. I don't know if it is autobiographical, but it feels that way. This track is fabulous, and feels like the reason for the album title.

In at 7 we have Below, which is another sublime reflective song. a slight jazz feel to it, a smooth soft voice over a subtle rhythm. Just beautiful.

Track 8, ah...track 8! The phenomenal Leave. What can I say... stunning in every way. Hard to believe it's on the same album as Enemy of the People, or Blame, but it is, and it deserves to be. This is DEFINITELY my favourite!

Easier kicks off with a great acoustic guitar with a Crash Test Dummies vocal. That is so good, but then the chorus refrain is just... I don't know...beautiful! (Running out of superlatives!). The

harmonies! Honestly, I am tearing up! Maybe this is my new favourite?

And we finish with Grace, which opens with another jazz style rhythm, with piano leading. and feels like a final track, strong vocals and power chords. It's epic.

One line for summary, so here it is: BUY THIS ALBUM!

Craig