

MEMORY LANE Album Notes

MEMORY LANE is my first standalone work in over five years, and serves to encapsulate my experience thusfar as I enter my own adult identity. The album is very closely rooted in numerology and personal significance. The album spans thirteen tracks, my favorite number and one that I believe deserves some better connotations. Thirteen is referred to as unlucky for a number of reasons. Judas was the thirteenth guest at the Last Supper, and Loki's sly arrival as the thirteenth member of the assembly in Valhalla led to the untimely death of Baldur. Thirteen also gets compared to the wholeness of the number twelve (twelve months, twelve zodiac symbols, twelve disciples). I believe thirteen to be a complete number as well, however, with two sixes on each side of a central one. The album follows the same structure. The first six tracks develop the record, with track 7, **Solstice**, serving as a turning point for the following six. This creates a day/night cycle that allows the album to end up at the same point as where it began. The key signatures of each piece loosely reflect this cycle. **Monad** starts on G and ends on a sustained F note, the 5th interval of B-flat, which is the key signature for **Love Call**. B-flat is the 5 of E-flat, the key signature of **Birds of Paradise**. **Phosphors** steps up to F minor, then **Lotus Eaters** in F major. **Wellspring** starts on a G major chord, then **Solstice (Antler Dance)** up to A minor. **Tsubo** starts with a B-flat note, **River Man** goes up to C, then **Unmanifest** up to D-flat. **Rancor** doesn't really have a key signature, but **Sonder** picks up the pattern settling into a D major scale, then **Komo (Breath of Hope)** rounds out the project in C major, ultimately ending on the same G note as **Monad**.

Elements of numerical significance also appear in the structure of the songs themselves. **Phosphors** (track 4) is in 4/4 time, the most intrinsic and instinctual time signature. **Wellspring** (track 6) is in 6/4, **Unmanifest** (track 10) is in 10/8, and **Rancor** (track 11) in 11/8. Many tracks also share parallels in correspondence to their ordering on the tracklist. The second song, **Love Call**, a piece about connection and outward projection, mirrors the eighth song, **Tsubo**, about loss and confinement. The instinctual, driving bass pulses in **Phosphors** (track 4) appear darker and more carnal in **Unmanifest** (track 10). **Lotus Eaters** (track 5) depicts the alluring nature of excess, while **Rancor** (track 11) shows the desperation one may find themselves in without tangibility. Both are brief, abstract pieces that tell a tale of veiled perception, blinded by the next rush of satisfaction. The sentimental piano in **Wellspring** (Track 6) is sampled in **Sonder** (Track 12) to elicit an unfurling of emotion out of the dark second half of the record. The final track, **Komo (Breath of Hope)** ultimately concludes by diminishing into a single frequency that the singing bowl, a recurring motif of vibrations and rippling, begins the album with on **Monad**.

As the project is largely instrumental, I've written some haiku to further contextualize the pieces. I believe firmly that we should be as interdisciplinary as possible, for it is through these connections across mediums and lifestyles that we determine the underlying motivations for how these exercises and feelings can help us grow. When making this album, I drew upon works of great literature, visual art, and spirituality to create a cohesive and ageless narrative of the human condition. It is my hope that through honest and reflective art we can further develop the canon of ingenuity and find new and relevant meaning in works of eras past.

Track One: **Monad**

The opening track to the album is called **Monad**. Through the early studies of cosmology by the Greek thinkers and into modern metaphysics, the term “monad” was ascribed to represent a theoretical particle that comprised the indivisible building blocks of the universe. “Monad” comes from the Latin “monas/monos,” meaning “unity,” or “alone.” The monad is depicted by a small dot encircled by a larger ring. This representation carries with it many important symbolic meanings and appears frequently in both the industrial and natural world, such as the rings about a tree, the orbitals about celestial bodies, the ripples about a drop of water, the grooves about a vinyl disc, or within our own eyes. These circular patterns, for me, evoke the ways in which our actions and experiences ripple through time and society, as well as how fluctuations in our own human experience grow outward from the integral roots of our being, those roots being our instincts, emotions, and innate ability to feel and recollect.

To me, one is the number of isolation and loneliness, but also of grounding and self-assurance. Just as the monad is indivisible, so is one's sense of self. While the world around us is constantly changing, it is important to maintain one's base, one's heart. Everything emanates from and is contextualized by your center, this oneness, immutable, as with obsidian and black onyx. The monad represents totality, indivisibility, and the central aspect of self upon which our lives and relationships are built.

Track Two: **Love Call**

This is the first song I wrote for the album. To me, two is the number of love, connection and compassion. It takes two to tango, after all. Everything starts with one, but it is important to project that foundation outward, extending yourself without getting lost in the tide of everyday living, like a buoy anchored amidst a choppy sea. It is important to maintain a balance between self-care and care for others, control and chaos. The repetitive form of the piece is meant to symbolize pure groundedness, while the shifting instrumental elements bloom outward to the point of near-uncontrolled boundlessness.

Love Call is the album's declarative piece, a representation of one's desire to love and care for themselves and the world around them, for what were we put on this planet to do but love?

Track Three: **Birds of Paradise**

The track **Birds of Paradise** is meant to evoke natural themes, courtship, and fundamental instincts. The number three has always felt powerful, albeit a little messy. Think love triangles, for example. It's also a visually evocative number in my eyes, whether being used for heart emojis or simply because it kind of looks like breasts/buttocks ;D

Overall, the piece conveys the sprawling network of eros within our world, both as people and as animals. Just like the birds of paradise, we humans present extravagant displays in the name of courtship, complete with vibrant outfits and mannerisms that would probably seem silly and arbitrary to most other species. The narration by the great Sir David Attenborough serves to send home this notion, creating the sound-equivalent to the bird-equivalent of a bouquet of flowers.

Track Four: **Phosphors/Bokeh**

Track four picks up the album's pace, symbolizing innate impulses and dance. The four-count has been the defining musical groove since the beginning for its versatility in regards to subdivision and instinctual pulse. The number four also symbolizes the balance between ingenuity and structure. Some notable historical depictions of this balance include the four natural elements (Earth, Water, Fire, and Air) and the four humours as adopted by most of Europe throughout the first 1500-odd years into the Common Era.

While most tracks on the album are rooted in concepts of emotion and human inspiration, this song's title was purely conceived based on gut feelings and imagery. As I was making it, and now as I listen back, I'd close my eyes and try to visualize the sound. As I listened to the development of the first half, the undulating bass and ambiguous manner in which the melodic elements emerge to further contextualize the groove sent flashes of light and color into my mind, hence "Phosphors." As the second half of the piece evolves and the arpeggiation gets more and more open and vibrant, I imagined a field of lights blinking on and off, with bursts of blur and tinge both abstracting and completing the sound. This second section I decided to name "Bokeh," a term to describe the blur of lights when they are out of focus.

Track Five: **Lotus Eaters**

Track five is meant as a straightforward vibe with some contortion beneath the surface. Inspired by visions of decadence and revelry, the infectious drums and bubbly synths charm the listener, and even as the track begins to warp, with alarms and distorted feedback seeping in, the party goes on.

The legend of the lotophagi traces back to Homer's *Odyssey*. They were island-dwelling society far from the mainland, with their primary form of sustenance being the roots and fruits of the *lotos* plant. Entranced by the lackadaisical routine, they soon abandoned their desire to return home, or even why they left in the first place. This is a cautionary tale concerning how a monotonous and oppressively hedonistic way of living can obscure one's true motivations. This story contains lessons that can help guide people today, not only in navigating the beguiling entertainment business, but also when moving to a new place. I personally grew up in a rural area, and when I moved to the city for the first time, it often felt like the monotony of the city and the habits I underwent to manage said monotony cast a veil over my perception and swept me along. Only through the memories of my hometown and the conscious appreciation of my roots have I been able to grow and similarly appreciate the new places I find myself in. Through our ability to recollect, we can remain grounded and take our hometowns with us wherever we go.

Track Six: **Wellspring**

Track six gets its name from the three great wells of Norse myth. There is the Well of Urd, overseen by the Norns of Fate, the Well of Mimir, a well of wisdom where Odin frequents, and Hvergelmir, the “roaring cauldron.” Although located on the icy plane of Niflheim, Hvergelmir is associated with nature and abundance. There are many animals who are associated with the well, most notably the great stag, who stands on Valhalla and whose horns secrete a golden ointment that flows through the well and carves the rivers of the world. This endless flow of life essence is the chief emotional inspiration for the piece, for the love we have for each other and the actions we take to show that love can flow immensely and form timeless etches in the world around us.

When writing this song, I harkened back on my experience as a classical pianist and chorister. Prior to my voice changing, I was a concert soprano and much of my eighth-grade career was spent in rehearsals (or driving to/from them). I also spent a lot of time with my brother, an excellent classical percussionist and composer. Working with all these amazing people filled my head with ideas for creativity, and it was during this period that I decided I wanted to compose music myself. My journey into music production began simply with the desire to arrange and release the sounds that were in my head, but did not have the technical ability to play. From that point, I became more influenced by different styles and time periods, and over the course of the following years I began the lifelong process of developing my own toolbox for creative expression. A few simple decisions during my youth set me down a completely unique and unimaginable path for myself, and this track is meant to depict this roiling potential. **Wellspring** is the sunset on the brighter first half of the album, with the pure innocence of the piece’s concluding measures serving to gently lull us into nightfall.

Track Seven: **Solstice (Antler Dance)**

Track seven marks the midway and inflection point of the album. The main motif is built from a sample from a puzzle game called *Botanica*, released in 2012 by Amanita Design, the same developers as *Machinarium* and the *Samorost* series. I played *Botanica* when I was in middle school, and this particular little phrase always stuck in my mind. Something about its simple and cyclical nature resonated with me at the time, but, as does tend to happen with many things during the transition through teenagehood, it slipped away into my deeper memories and I spent the next ten years or so with nothing more than a mental vignette in the back of my mind. It wasn’t until December of 2025 while I was back home during a recess from college when I decided to play through *Botanica* again. Again I was struck by the sample, as though it had never left, and as

the wintertime sunk in and the days reached their shortest, this little music box motif perfectly complemented the feeling of rainy redwoods around me. That same break I attended the Christmas Revels with my parents, a tradition that my family has kept up since first attending in 1994. The theme of the pageant changes each year, but some renditions are kept stagnant in the name of celebration and preservation. One of these pieces is an English folk tune known as the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. It is one of Britain's oldest dances, with the first mentions of the dance appearing in the 13th century in Staffordshire, England. The performance has been expanded to feature ten performers, each donning outfits indicative of character tropes from the time and equipped with reindeer horns which are clacked together in time. Its unadorned, eerie composition paired with the striking imagery of the performers cemented the piece as a favorite for me and my family, and as we watched it together, I drew some comparisons between its structure and that of my dearly beloved *Botanica* snippet. Combining the two together, **Solstice (Antler Dance)** was conceived, a blend of old tradition and modern storytelling to create a piece that feels aged, yet timeless.

Track Eight: **Tsubo**

The titling of track eight is based on “takotsubo cardiomyopathy,” the tightness in your chest caused by trauma, loss, or distress. The colloquial name for this condition is “broken-heart syndrome.” Tsubo is a Japanese word meaning “trap” or “pot.” A new relationship can present itself as a beautiful vase to fill with love, but can morph into a trap that grips your heart like a vice. This sense of confinement is a representation of the main message of **Tsubo**: heartbreak.

My writing process for this piece was challenging. I had lots of ideas on how I could express the concept of heartbreak and the different ways you can respond to it. I had ideas for guitars, a metal breakdown, and the song just kept getting longer and longer. None of these ideas really resonated with me, however. Something about it seemed forced and melodramatic. I then realized that my experience writing the song mirrored my own experience with sudden losses and severed connections. During the fallout, there are so many things you wish you could say to assuage the situation, or to at least express your feelings, but whether because of personal inhibitions or lack of closure (of which there will always be some form of deficit), all you're left with is writhing mutedness inside. This silent screaming is what heartbreak truly felt like to me. I completely scrapped my ideas and in their wake lay thirteen seconds of abstract audio, by far the shortest song I've ever made. The piece begins with a single B flat note on the piano, a reference to the song's counterpart, **Love Call**. Undulating samples of creaks,

conversations, and static bleed in like a dilapidated house until the piece completely crumples into compression, sealing the wails away.

Track Nine: **River Man**

The only cover on the album, as well as the only piece with lyrics, “River Man” is a song by British folk musician Nick Drake. Drake was a seminal figure in early folk music, a virtuosic guitar player and deeply emotional songwriter, his condensed catalogue has achieved a revered, almost mystical status, especially considering the hectic and dubious nature of Drake himself. While I believe Nick Drake’s life story can sometimes supersede his songwriting, he is definitely a figure worth noting, and I believe his articulate and deliberate style is best exemplified by “River Man,” the most well-known song from his 1969 debut album “Five Leaves Left.”

From my perspective, number nine has carried the sentiments of the 20th century, specifically the folk/beatnik movement of the mid-1900s. When I was sixteen, the COVID-19 lockdown hit, and given that I didn’t have a driver’s license and lived miles from town, I didn’t do much socializing during that time. With my mental health already in rough waters, the shutdown sent me further into isolation and despondence, and there was not much to do to avoid succumbing to my brain besides walking along the trails and forestry, writing music. Despite my status as a contemporary electronic musician, I consider myself deeply connected to the ideals of the folk initiative, taking inspiration from the natural world, both internal and external. **River Man** is my way of bridging the gap between acoustic folk musicianship and modern ideals, and breaking new ground for me as a solo singer.

Track Ten: **Unmanifest**

“The Unmanifest” has been used to describe a state of nothingness, formlessness, namely, the void. I latched on to this term as a way to encapsulate my own isolation during lockdown. I was sixteen, grieving, and living in the countryside with no driver’s license. I felt during those months that I’d been completely broken down and stripped bare, and now had to trudge through rivers of mud, tar, and grime, vaguely looking for anything to hold on to. This feeling relates to “The Unmanifest” too, as this emptiness is ultimately the source of all other creation. To find what truly matters to you, you must begin with yourself and work to find attachment through the stillness.

Track Eleven: **Rancor**

Rancor is a short, frenetic piece meant to evoke the desperate anger that one feels towards their circumstances. On the other side of emptiness in solitude, there is a state where you're wracked by pain and trauma, but when faced with immense apathy and hopelessness, all you can do is lash out. All you know is to keep moving, even if that movement sends you further downward. Even at the expense of yourself, you'll do anything to avoid that hole again. This is how I felt during my late teenage years, post-COVID, trying to spur my sensations and glean something from my experience before heading off to college. I wasn't trapped anymore, but I was now out in the world as a young adult with no tools in my toolkit, and a lot of pent-up drive and bad habits. I believed that self-agency was the ultimate sign of strength, and that I had to power my way out of grief. It took a while for this anger to fade, before I began to look beyond myself and accept the influence of others again.

Track Twelve: **Sonder**

Sonder is a word used to describe the notion that every human's life is as complex and real as your own. This song has gone through a number of versions, the first being written during my second semester of college. Winter was in full swing, I was living alone, and I never went outside. I was in an amazing school with lots of caring people around me, but I couldn't perceive it because I insisted on tackling my problems alone. The first version of **Sonder** was under a different name, over ten minutes long, and much more liminal and murky than the version that appears on the album. I'd stayed up for two nights straight, not even working or studying, just filling my brain with bullshit because the real world didn't exist if I wasn't a part of it. This version served as a portrait of my mental state at the time, a cavernous hall where stimuli took ages to reach me. I came out of this second semester feeling incredibly alone, having failed nearly every course I'd enrolled in and lying about my situation in the hopes that somehow, passion would come to me again. Only after I broke down to my parents about what happened and gotten set up with people who could help me did I start to change, and it was those people who helped me realize that both developmentally as a young adult and as a human being, I was never truly alone. From there, I started accepting the idea that other people were going through their own journeys and that we could share in these changes together. This shift in perspective led to a larger realization; aging is changing, and therefore life is change. Change is not only inevitable but necessary, and you must accept these changes as parts of a whole, rather than fundamental transformations of who you are. You are the product of all of your changes, and that great process of change is something that every single person will go through and relate to. These alterations to my worldview enticed

me to revisit the piece and turn it into something with more light at the end of the tunnel depicted in the first version. The effect parameters on the piano and organ have many layers of automation affecting themselves, symbolizing how our actions can ripple through other people, and how lessons can lead to larger lessons. We must continue to change and grow as these lessons fall in and out of efficacy. What works for you at a certain moment may not work the next, and being present and receptive to the influences around us will help to make us more whole, as an individual and as a collective.

Track Thirteen: **Komo (Breath of Hope)**

The final track on the album is a paean of hope and the unshakable belief in a better time, that the fetters of ignorance won't obscure the rays of light and truth that can come from a conscious and honest community. The title comes from "komorebi," a Japanese word to denote sunlight shimmering through trees. Just as true hope and groundedness cannot be taken away, the light that shines to the ground is unobstructed by the branches in-between, appearing round and whole as the sun. The song structure is based on styles of Indian worship music, with an initial phrase being played to articulate the scale being used, and where the tempo is determined, then increased over time until you think it can't get any faster, and then it does. This intense and instinctual energy comes from the ideals of Shiva, the Hindu lord of polarity and balance. He destroys in order to create, embodying the waxing and waning of life and its chapters. He symbolizes order and chaos, positive and negative, and the paradoxical nature of being an ego-driven being in a space governed by influences beyond our control. In a world full of shifting powers, we must find balance in order to live completely. We must accept both the peaceful and warring parts of our humanity, just as we must accept life in full. It is the duality of these forces that give life its complete color.

The piece implements various techniques to simulate breathing. In addition to using instruments that utilize air, such as the accordion, harmonium, and melodica (in which case my own lungs function as a bellows), I created deep synth textures to emulate a deep breath. It's my intention that the song can be used as a guide for your own breathing as a means to reorient yourself when faced with distracting negative thoughts. Deep, slow breathing has always been an effective method for me to unwind when things get hectic. The breath overall is a symbol of hope for me, because no matter how bleak your surroundings seem, you always have the power to keep breathing, keep living, and keep hoping for a brighter future. You must acknowledge and accept your errant thoughts and attachments, then return to the breath, the **Monad**, the center of your being.