

WE ALL WANT TO COME UP INVISIBLE

Back in 2009 we scored a new rehearsal space, at an old garage turned studio, belonging to Darek Mudge, behind the railway tracks in Albion, on Brisbane's north side. We ended up recording our debut EP there, and "The Shed" became our band home.

The following year we decided to branch out and try to record with as many engineers and producers as possible with the hope of making an eclectic and varied album. This worked in the end, but not without its costs: the album took forever to make and we always had a stack of songs half mixed, almost done, partly done, or just giving us headaches. In the end we usually ended up taking the mixes back to Darek – he was skilled and patient, someone we trusted and who knew our songs and sound backwards.



In 2011 we had enough songs for a new album. We'd been rehearsing them a long time – some of the songs dated back as far as 2008 – and were frustrated and really ready to get in front of some microphones and hit "record". The band line up had changed a couple of times and progress was slow.

We decided to push ahead and we booked two solid weeks at The Shed, with the aim of doing it old-school: start things up mid morning, record all day and into the night, and think about nothing but the songs for the whole time we were there. It worked, great ideas came forward, songs evolved and were improved and we buried ourselves in a mess of cables and pedals and sounds.

I was going through a funny phase at the time, I was sick of the electric guitar. I go through patches where my instrument of choice isn't doing it for me. Usually I get a spark of inspiration from a new tuning, or a new pedal or piece of gear – something to make things different and interesting again. I'm not an accomplished musician by any means. I have one style of playing, and about 3 sounds I like. It kinda tends to make things a bit limited sometimes.

Anyway I ended up recording almost all the guitar on the album through an old acoustic. Some of it was recorded straight up, and a lot ended up going through pedals and amps. It made enough of a difference for me to be happy. Acoustic guitars are really different to electric guitars in their dynamics and tone.

A lot of the electric guitar on the album was played by Josh – his thick busted-up fuzz worked perfectly with my often thin and far from traditional amped-acoustic sound.

Another thing was that our bassist Ben had just joined the band and was learning the songs as we recorded them. He didn't own a bass amp so we ended up running the bass through my Fender Deluxe guitar amp. A tiny rig, but it suited the bass so well, giving it a clarity and presence we would have missed if he'd used a typical deep boomy bass setup. Some songs we'd record all the guitars and the bass – one by one – through that amp. On *Automatic* you can hear that we left the reverb cranked up when the bass was recorded. No one noticed and it ended up sounding cool.

We tried to keep things spontaneous as we could. We recorded *Before The Accident* with me singing and playing guitar pressed up against the glass between the two recording rooms watching Dan playing drums, and him

watching me for timing and arrangement cues. I didn't think about the singing at all, I almost whispered it out. When we went to record the vocals proper nothing could come close to that un-thought-about guide track. Darek was wary of using an entire guide track as the lead vocal, but I pressed him on it, and we ran with it, mistakes and all.

We had a cool time recording this album – we felt unified as a group, and genuinely inspired and free. We experimented, and we got things wrong, we worked hard, stayed up late, got drunk, got frustrated, got annoying, we couldn't work out parts, and we played each others' parts. We sang first thing in the morning at 9.00 am, we sang on sore throats, sang on too much wine, and sang into one mic together in a noisy kitchen.

The result is a record of the 5 people in the band WE ALL WANT TO, and a very excellent recording engineer, winter 2011: Come Up Invisible. [ts]

Song By Song

Ramp Up The Bleeding | ts

This song was demoed on the computer at home, made up entirely of loops to begin with. I wanted it totally mechanical and bludgeoningly monotonous. Thankfully Skye's singing lightened the tone and gave it some sweetness, which I realised was a good thing. It was initially inspired by the whole world's fervour about social media. The "Everyone's having a party and I'm not invited" factor which in the end makes everyone feel inadequate. The simple idea of trying to live by your own standards and not give a shit about what other people think or do.

stop being cool, stop trying so hard to think..

No Signs | ts

This is a rare song in that the bulk of its lyrics were never trying to pack a punch or deliver a deep message. The words rhyme and bounce along in the right way. The song is quite typical however in that the message did become apparent quite a while after I'd written it, and I could suddenly relate to specific lines about having faith in yourself, and doing the right thing and having hope in it - even if all hope seems lost.

..if we see lights we should walk towards them, if there's a chance there we should take it

We're Not Perfect | ss

This came from a scrappy poem that I edited up - Tim nussed out the chords. I was at the end of a long relationship and was staying with Tim's sister, who had a postcard on her fridge that showed a guinea pig with angel wings. The caption read 'I may not be perfect but parts of me are excellent'. That inspired the chorus. It was a sad transition in my life and I was crying every night and feeling really afraid, but in between cries were these peaceful little moments where I felt calm and still. Tim said the vocal reminded him of Morrissey which made me happy because my ex hated the Smiths.

..who said love should be gentle ? we drove each other mental

Where Sleeping Ends | ts

I wrote this in bed on the nylon string guitar that I first learned on when I was 9, at school in England. It was meant to be a short song, but more verses kept coming and the story unfolded. I never really write story-songs about a fictitious person, but in the end, yet again there were specifics in it I could relate to in my life. Making mistakes, running away from things, alienating people and having regrets. It can be read as the story of a guy who becomes a drunk and abandons his family, but it wasn't intended that way, it was meant to be far more whimsical. I love 3 chord songs, it's nice to be able to pull off a 6 minute song with just 3 chords (G C Em). In a way it feels good for me to go against "being a musician" and write songs that I can literally play with my eyes closed. I've never felt any affinity with technical players, nor wanted to be one. *..I've still got things to do before I die..*

Automatic | ss

Again, I found this little poem in one of my notebooks and when Tim came up with the snappy chords, we shaped the structure together. It's pretty much a self-portrait. I'm irresponsible, I put things off and I'd prefer to escape into a sunset than ever have to line up at the DMR or sit a test. I'm incapable of planning for the future, being tactical or looking at the bigger picture ie: moving up or down in gears. I'm automatic. I really have had my learner's permit for about 17 years, although it was recently revoked for failing to pay fines for not voting. It is a little known fact that I am a great driver (if the car is an automatic). I learned to drive in one night after catching up with a friend at the Greenslopes bowling alley. He was in bad shape, so I drove him and his car back to Canberra and flew home to Brisbane the next day.

If there's a sunset with my name on it I want to drive right into it

Before The Accident | ts

This was written about a true story a friend told me about how they'd seen someone at a festival that they'd once had a drunken fling with. The person in question had had a bad accident falling from a window, in the interim, and couldn't remember much about my friend - their name or anything. A pretty weird experience. I made a mental note at the time "I'm gonna use that". *..we were out of our minds at the back of the tent, but that was before the accident..*

Shine

The body of this song is subdued, rhythmic, almost meditative and at the end it just goes BANG with guitars and shimmering cymbals and massive, anthemic harmonies. There are two basslines! It's an interesting song in that it's dark but it's joyous. I look at self-esteem and what a strange thing it is that your friends and the people who love you tell you how wonderful you are, then you can look in the mirror and feel saddened by what you see. So much pressure to be attractive, to be successful, to realise your dreams. There's fear of failure but there's also fear of success, when you

physically can't put yourself out there because you're paralysed by doubt. It's basically a song about trying to put that all to the side so you can be the most awesome person you can be for yourself and for the people around you. Whenever we do it live I'll receive messages from people saying it moved them.

Smile, let your heart feel good

Firefighter

A character song: down and out female fighting to see the good side of life, while reduced to living in her car. Holding on to every last hope that at the very least she'll be remembered as someone bold and worthy, thus becoming bold and worthy just by being so damn resolute about it. I think themes like this have echoes for most people – they do for me.

..went down invincible, come up invisible I wanna be remembered as a firefighter..

I'm Still Waiting | ts

I'm glad that I gave Skye the lead vocal on this one, it works so much better. Coming from a female point of view it changes the angle quite a lot too.. "Baby, I can't keep you in the way that you are used to". I laboured probably way too long over the chord progression in the last section, wanting to make it clever like an Anthony and the Johnsons song, but not too "musician-y". I think I just about got there. I love the change in rhythm halfway through, I can't remember where I got that from, I nicked it from somewhere – I know The Beatles do it a lot, the change between 4/4 and 3/4 and back again. This song is meant to be all sad and regretful, but ended up sounding a bit positive too, the narrator doesn't end up too down about it, there's still a shining light of hope out there somewhere.

..maybe I could wait forever, maybe not..

Felt Like a Film | ts

I wrote this ages ago, probably 2007 or so, and we finally managed to get a decent mix of it together – we'd recorded it for the first album but it didn't make the cut. We ended up drafting the vocals from that session into the mix of the song in the new sessions and with a bit of pulling and pushing we made it fit. Skye and I had originally sang the song together into one microphone - a real antique – and it captured that "certain something". The song's theme is kinda obtuse, it's more an exercise in rhythm and phrasing than a "message" song. It has lots of random dream-like parts in it, which start and end quite abruptly, and like a dream you can't really figure out why they're there. Less feeling like a film than feeling like a collection of edited snippets of film on the cutting room floor perhaps.

..where were you when the phone went dead? I was tapping out a signal when the power went crazy..

Let's not lose what we had | ts

A song about love, loss, and holding onto what was important. Not so much about regret as about wanting to remember the past fondly instead of bitterly or with sour feelings. The rosy lens of the past is most often pretty forgiving, which is lucky - the past is where we've been and it's how we got to where we are now, it's precious and vital to everyone. Remember the sweet times, the beautiful times.

..drifting 'cross the delta by moonlight is dreamy..

BONUS TRACKS

Out Of The Woods | ts

A really simple song about a really simple theme.. “honey are we ok, I thought we were ok..?”. We had a lot of trouble putting the arrangement together, it wasn’t an easy song to finish, but you’d never know it, it came out so simple sounding. Skye and I finalised and learned the melody the morning of recording, after I reversed the way the chords go and it all suddenly gelled a whole lot better. The lyrical flow of this song was always meant to sound, casual, carefree, by the by. Almost like a passing thought.. “did I say that or just think it..?”.

..enough of standing still, enough of acting tough..

Secret Agents | ss

I’d be lying if I said this poem wasn’t an apology to my body. I wanted to try and write this very specific letter without being vulgar or obvious, by using dusky words and imagery. It’s a song about taking another step forward as a woman coming into her thirties and putting some craziness behind her, looking forward to lightness, normalcy and connection. Dan found some wind chime samples and it was eerie, when Darek mixed them in they were perfect, the notes and the rhythm of the chimes. It was like they had been designed specifically for this song. I came to the band with the song already written, chords and all. I was pretty surprised that Tim liked it as it was so un-rock.

I see a light.. It’s getting closer.. I’ll let it catch me

You Used To Be Funny | ts

I wanted to write a very simple, dumb, catchy song, based around a cutting catchphrase. I think it was mission accomplished. We used to play this song much slower, then we played it much faster. Then we re-learned it with the different band line ups and thrashed it to death so bad that we don’t even like playing it any more. Hopefully it sums up the feeling of staleness and boredom in any kind of relationship where the lustre has started to fade. I wanted this song to sound like a cross between Devo and Blur, with lots of repetition, one of my favourite songwriting tools.