

INTRO

Having heard tens of thousands of albums, interviewed an array of musical marvels, and written hundreds of reviews by the close of the millennium via my internationally distributed magazine, FRIGHT X, one tends to continuously gravitate toward their niche of cherished content.

I graduated from art school in 1988 with a degree in Visual Communications and some goals: Move to the UK, work at 23 Envelope under design maestro Vaughan Oliver, and somehow entwine myself with my favorite band, The Bolshoi, to fulfill my dream of designing their fourth album. *Well, none of that happened.* So, I just continued on admiring every 4AD release I could find. From The Birthday Party to The Wolfgang Press, I found and loved them all. And still do.

Then something magical happened in 1997. I tracked down the frontman of The Bolshoi, Trevor Tanner, and interviewed him for FRIGHT X. It was a conversation that led to all sorts of things. I created a record label, Emperor Penguin Recordings, and released five of his glorious solo albums. I also became the manager of The Bolshoi's back catalog. It's a beautiful story. Trevor and I are like-minded entities carving our way through a non-welcoming universe. In 2014, more magic happened. Beggars Banquet rang my iPhone with astonishing news, "Remember that fourth Bolshoi album, *Country Life*, that doesn't exist? We found the masters in an attic!" I set out in a frenzy doing everything necessary to take a heap of three-decade-old audio tape and turn it into the album I felt destined to be involved in back in 1988. And they say time-travel isn't possible? In the process, I also became rather close with Vaughan Oliver. I never did move to the UK but I *did* accomplish all of my other old goals. It took a while, twenty-six years to be exact, but I did it. Now, thirty-five years in the making, I am happy to announce that *Country Life* will jump from CD to LP soon, emerging as a full-fledged, triple-panel jacket, double-vinyl release on sun orange and grass green vinyl. I also handled the reissue of *Friends* on white vinyl. Look for both from Beggars Arkive by mid-2024. Time-travel is real.

So, yes, I'm a bit persistent and dedicated when something speaks to me.

FRIGHT X magazine is long gone and so is pretty much anything that sounds like it should have been released by 4AD in the '80s. However, an album called, *Euphoric Recall* was released in 2021 by an intensely talented artist, Jancy Rae Buffington, under the project name MØAA. Oddly, it seems literally ripped out of the '80s 4AD universe as does her 2023 second album, *Jaywalker*. Buffington seems to have time-travelled from that wonderful '80s 4AD period in time to deliver her two musical trophies in the current timeline. And probably the weirdest aspect of both *Euphoric Recall* and *Jaywalker* is that, as magically out-of-time as these two albums feel and are to me, neither one has a single date printed on it anywhere! MØAA is the greatest project created in eons so gosh darn it – go buy both albums **RIGHT NOW** – MOAAMUSIC.COM

As I've already said, FRIGHT X Magazine is a piece of old, ancient history. A relic from the distant past covered in cobwebs. A pre-2000 googleplex of clashing culture that's been buried for years.

But... just for one time-travel-esque, magical moment... in order to properly treasure MØAA...

...what if it wasn't?

FRIGHT X

RICHARD SALA'S
SEASONAL SEANCE

JANCY RAE BUFFINGTON'S

MØAA



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Issue 105

M0AA

EUPHORIC
RECALL
2021

01 Exist

With just forty-nine words comprising the lyrics of *Euphoric Recall*'s first of ten tracks, "Exist" listeners might wonder if the majority of the song is instrumental. However, just past seventeen seconds (which could possibly be a secret nod to Robert Smith's second studio album with *The Cure*, released in 1980 – and if it isn't, it should be),

the opening eight bars of darkly-inspired bass that could easily have

been used on The Bolshoi's, *Giants EP* in 1985, something magical is already occurring. Similar to a pitch-black pupil becoming the size of its hosting human iris after being injected with Hydroxyamphetamine and Tropicamide, "Exist" begins to engulf itself with a haunting undertone of Jancy Rae Buffington's voice. But unlike a normal pop-song structure which would have set it high on top of the mix in text-book music production fashion, Buffington's voice lives slightly underneath the concentric audio ripples that have now pushed one far, far, far away from any expectation of an instrumental track or a song put together with normal behavior. It's hard to separate the instruments from her voice at first, yet upon realizing that she has already started singing, succumbing to the nearly congruent layer positioning of her lush voice, juxtaposed with the immediate wall of sound is excitingly adventurous. Buffington's voice sounds like a trapped angel or possibly a demon in nun's clothing. Blending in with the overall vibe and musical textures that took all of twenty seconds to literally bowl you over, sending you spiraling through hypnotic yet thrashing waves of enticement,

Buffington's voice lurks in the shadows so close to its counterpart instrumentation that the faintness and frailty begin to gnaw at senses falling somewhere in between paranoia and apprehension. All thought of Buffington's nearly harmonic, nearly silent, nearly "small children in cold rain humming together just before Krueger comes out to play" voice, taking a quick turn and jumping out like a bloody knife looking for flesh from a hedge in the darkness, comes to a slow end as what happens instead is even more remarkable. Just behind the jaunting, almost sadistically "poking at an open wound" single-note guitar, just to the left of the ongoing sinister yet happy-go-lucky bass, ever so slightly above the rhythmic percussion, Buffington's voice floats about like the Mothman's herald, Indrid Cold telling a tale of woe. It's not a whisper. It's not aggressive yelling. But it is a controlled melancholic temptation that hides just a few meters, grams, liters, or moles away from the results of the sonic Petri dish Sister Jancy has hidden in her church. She speaks through her veil in whispers and from her temple demands that you get down on your knees to pray for her recovery. Sadly, it's clear that Buffington was badly affected at some point in her past, although it is unclear exactly when, why, or how. Now, through her enchanting words, she might be reclaiming a lot that she once lost. "Exist" is a slow-burning

firework that writhes through its delivery process, hissing like a venomous snake leaving everything it touches singed beyond all hope.

Watch "Exist"

youtube.com/@moaamusic/videos

02 X Marks

Co-written by Buffington's trusted ally, Italian-born, Andrea Volpato (*New Candys*) who is credited with producing, recording, and mixing *Euphoric Recall*, "X Marks" is spot on. "X Marks" starts off with

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WRITTEN + DESIGNED BY
DAVID PAUL WYATT PERKO
NOVEMBER 1982 - 1997, 2023
for FRIGHT X BLACK DAG RECORDS
JANCY RAE BUFFINGTON

a bass line that sounds like a gothic rendition of a Nirvana song. That *might* not be a surprise though as Buffington spent a large portion of her life in Seattle. What *is* surprising is that the first two lines of vocals are not sung by Buffington but rather, Volpato. Ingeniously, a mere millisecond before one's brain begins to accept that "X Marks" might be the "Martin Gore song of the Depeche Mode album," Buffington lurches out of the belfry and reminds us that MØAA *is* a solo-venture at its core. The emergence of her voice is highly welcomed and we are once again in the open air, amongst the trees, out in the middle of nowhere gravely agreeable in the acceptance of the task at hand – burying the bodies. "X Marks" is held together by slightly creepy synth notes that are just barely in tune giving the feeling that something started off wrong, was wrong in the moment, and will live on and on being very wrong until Hell freezes over. Knowing that MØAA is a reconfiguration of the aggression or warrior gene known as Monoamine Oxidase A (MAOA) allows "X Marks" to be pondered from multiple angles. Is the song structure itself a reconfiguration of lead singer vocals? The smoking gun being Volpato taking the lead multiple times, while Buffington fills in the six-foot hole with her accompanying dirt? Or is it the song title itself that properly labels the beaker in which things are being mixed? Is "X Marks" the beginning of a sentence

that doesn't require the ending "*the spot*" to be understood or is "X Marks" describing multiple burial sites all lovingly leveled off with imaginary Xs instead of ornate headstones? This is the confusion of "X Marks" both hypothetically in meaning as well as musically. Its two cohorts caught in the act of a death-tango. They *shouldn't* be murdering things up but they are and yet, like the lyrics imply, "And as you keep getting older and older, you'll keep hiding it better and better." They are up to no good but we can't help listening with eerie curiosity and humming along with them.

Watch "X Marks"

[youtube.com/@moaamusic/videos](https://www.youtube.com/@moaamusic/videos)

03 Flashlight

With an onslaught of country music flair, "Flashlight" seems to function as an interlude of sorts between the dark and dreary and a more whimsical approach at song-crafting. This is the second track that is co-written by Buffington and Volpato and by being so, *Euphoric Recall* diversifies itself even further into ingenuity land. Volpato's guitar part is played with a glass-slide on the fretboard so that the notes slur and slide around not unlike the photons of a flashlight darting to and fro, right and left, emitting themselves out into space forevermore. The result sounds like something that could have been included on 'Til Tuesday's 1986 release, *Coming Home*, but wasn't because Aimee Mann ripped the guitar out of guitarist



Robert Holmes' hands just as he was starting to figure out what to play in the verses of, "Coming Up Close." I urge any nay-sayer to fully investigate the proposed view. Outside of its lyrics and actual vocals, "Flashlight" could almost be a single by The Smiths played at 33 1/3 or even a bit slower. The interesting layering of the glass-slide aided guitar notes, the nudging drums and bass propelling everything forcefully forward, the groove-locked chord-strums, and what sounds like it could be simplistic, slightly reverberating single-note xylophone (*which does do quite an excellent job of loosening up the background*) is a nice concoction of poisoned tea. Even the highly controlled build up of guitar feedback/squeal –

or is it the tea kettle ready to boil over? – about a third of the way through adds to the uniqueness of Buffington and Volpato joining their minds together. It doesn't *seem* natural. It doesn't *seem* forced either. It kind of sounds like Spock performed a mind-meld without Buffington or Volpato knowing, which just adds to the oddness and mystery that much more. Like the majority of concepts and lyrics in all of Buffington's fine work, it's rather hard to understand the true meaning of "Flashlight," which of course is definitely not necessary to cave in to being tickled by its cowboy-esque trotting.

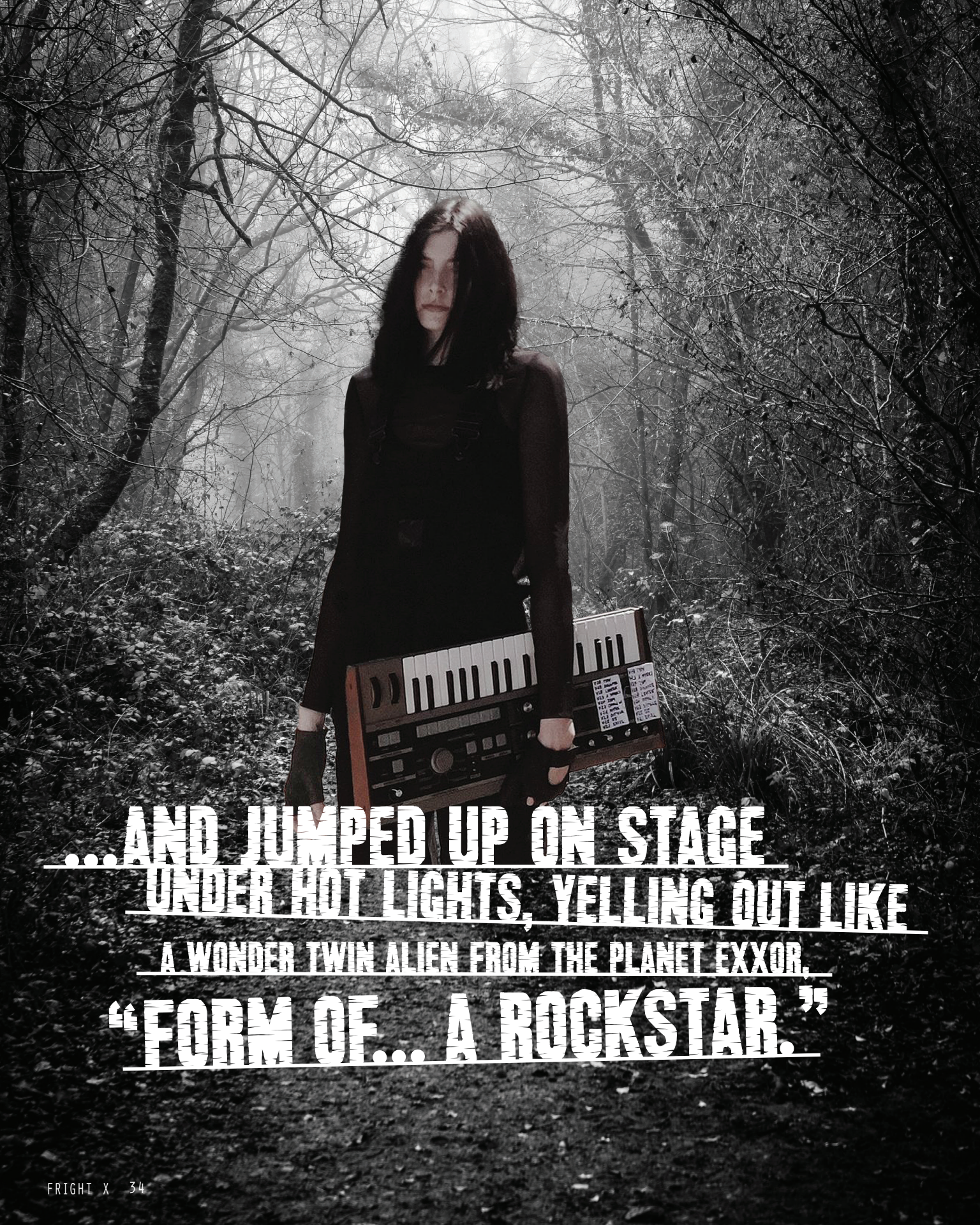
04 02

Gone are the days when MØAA drifted from rain to sun and haze to moon while – oh wait, that was actually just one song ago. It's very easy to fall subject to Buffington's enchanting witchery as she leaves you stunned, wishing for a recovery serum. Oxygen is Earth's most abundant element. After hydrogen and helium, oxygen is the third-most abundant element in the universe. Anything living on our planet – animals (*that includes humans*), plants, and fungi – needs oxygen for cellular respiration. Basically, oxygen is needed for survival. Buffington knows this. Which is not really all that miraculous considering she seems to be wicked smart and probably has an extremely high IQ. A former scientist herself, Buffington has a degree in Genetic and Molecular Biology, which not only aids in her process of

concocting songs together by an acute methodic chaos, but also provides the general concepts of literally everything she is discussing directly and more frequently, in between the lines of her lyrics. The merging of a brilliant scientific mind with a deeply disturbed approach to songwriting is literally the coolest construction schematic for an artist to have in their possession. Even though Thomas Dolby wasn't a real scientist, he play-acted one and it made songs like: "One Of Our Submarines," "Windpower," and "Cloudburst At Shingle Street" much more effective. Buffington is highly intriguing, explosively volatile, possibly scary, and this is all way before getting Sigmund Freud involved. She's hands-down a creative individual that could surely achieve anything she put her mind to. A true force to be reckoned with, she is no stranger to a poetic approach to self-Armageddon. Although throughout the first half of *Euphoric Recall*, Buffington has already assured us that she is nothing shy of your standard necromancer, like all living and breathing things, she needs O2 to thrive. So, of course, the opening sounds of "02" set a theatrical stage with an emptiness so void of life that perhaps outer space itself has more O2 than the "winded siren." It's uncanny, but as the song begins, what is heard is reminiscent of breathable air. O2 literally vanishing and being slowly sucked out of existence in a late '60s, Lost In Space sound-effect style. It's almost as if retro sci-fi producer Irwin Allen had joined the

project, if only for a few breathable moments. It's terrifying to put it bluntly. "02" is reminiscent of Kate Bush working in her own death during the second half of, 1985's *Hounds Of Love*, when she described herself, "Under Ice," void of O2. The creepy-claustrophobic-oxygen-evaporating sounds don't last long in Buffington's magnificent "02" as moments into the song new life seems to be reborn out of thin air. Within twenty seconds, everything on life support has vanished. Then, Buffington's grip squeezes hard until everything gasps and turns electric-blue at the brink of asphyxiation, erotic or not. 1992's *Doppelgänger* album from Curve with Toni Halliday and Dean Garcia now handling the oxygen lines seems to take over the turntable. But it's just not the case. It's Buffington drip feeding us intravenously her tribal drums all aflame, beating at horror-movie pulse-pace, her mesmerizing vocals whirling around a blood-red, ominous sky in between devilish guitar that sounds like it was ripped out of an early Clan Of Xymox album when Vaughan Oliver was still designing the covers. Then, Buffington glances at us and our eyes connect with her eyes as she forces us to reflect back to the "I Want To Believe" *X-Files* poster with agent Fox Mulder sitting in front of an image of a UFO and there's a real fear

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....AND JUMPED UP ON STAGE
UNDER HOT LIGHTS, YELLING OUT LIKE
A WONDER TWIN ALIEN FROM THE PLANET EXXOR,
“FORM OF... A ROCKSTAR.”

of realizing that we really don't have a clue as to why, other than fully understanding that this far into the program, Jancy Rae Buffington has a dastardly way of opening her lips with suffocating impact.

05 Tracer

Riddled with treatments of Joy Division, “Tracer” drops us headfirst into the flames of Buffington's next intimidating campfire. Perhaps we will never know what a tracer is to our humble narrator but technically speaking, a tracer is something that either notifies or shows the path of *something*. Just beyond the dreary concoction of darkly-tinged guitar and sinister bass set against MØAA's programmed, tribal percussion, Buffington spews out some very heady poetic meanderings. Attempting to ignore the jangly skeletons at her seance table, we peer skeptically into the inviting folds of the deep purple velvet gown draped around Buffington's body, half-expecting to see some goodness appear inside the crystal ball. Instead, Buffington tells us, “Go to find the cup of sorrow, pay back the world tomorrow.” She is riddled with grief to the point that she can no longer function. She must fight to survive, to work herself through this vicious occurrence of loss. During an event that leaves behind a trail of sadness, there are those that lose the struggle. There are those that luckily find a way out and are triumphant. Buffington is neither. She's trapped in the middle, still looking for answers. Will she fall to pieces and follow the

choice made by Ian Curtis? Or will she find the answer on how to prevail, by way of tracer? If the tone of “Tracer” gives us any clues, gears are switched in the last minute and twenty three seconds when Buffington effortlessly, along with the beautiful music, fades us out of desperation. In an almost Blade Runner sounding mode that could have easily been written by John Carpenter for the intro to a movie called “Broke And Hollow,” the song comes to a bitter conclusion with an echoey, spoken word section that acts as an epilogue of sorts. We shall trudge forth.

06 Lam

It's absolutely amazing how MØAA seems to know the exact recipe for orchestrating total sonic chaos, while maintaining a coherent enough composition that the word “song” can remain a descriptor for the wickedness that emerges out of *Euphoric Recall*. Six tracks into such an immense undertaking as this album surely was to conjure up, it becomes almost mystifying that MØAA has released *Euphoric Recall* as their first effort. It seems a bit suspicious to say the least. It usually takes years of practice and experimentation to arrive at something so unique and mold-breaking, yet quickly enjoyable and memorable. Pre-*Euphoric Recall* MØAA doesn't seem to exist.

Song-wielder Jancy Rae Buffington seems to have run far away from reality, through vast fields of reflection under glowing moons and while no

one was looking, slipped off her white lab coat, adorned her abused black jeans and big clunky footwear, drastically lightened the last ten inches of her long, enchanting dark hair, slipped on black glovettes, applied a tiny bit of moody eyeliner, and jumped up on stage under hot lights, yelling out like a Wonder Twin alien from the planet Exxor, “Form of... a rockstar.” “Lam” sounds like a song written by 1982's Xmal Deutschland and then re-done for the rougher, fourth volume of This Mortal Coil that doesn't exist, under the direction of Ivo Watts-Russell after purposefully swallowing a slow-acting cyanide tablet that doesn't kill you but, rather, turns you into a vampire. One strong point to note with “Lam” is the very interesting key changes from the verses to the choruses. Specifically after the first verse going into the first chorus, fifty four seconds in. So peculiar in its formation, it's almost unbelievable that it's musically possible. It's a small portion of powerful music that happens in the blink of an eye, but it will literally rip your heart out and lash upon you the sum of all hurt felt during a lifetime of true-love breakups. Jancy Rae Buffington is either an ancient celebrated musician known for her whimsical darkwave music construction, albeit arriving to the post-2000 music scene by way of time-travel, or she is a

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religious descendant of the Almighty come to show us the way, or she's an alien from deep space. True genius, here and now, euphorically recalled.

07 Dilate

With lyrics like, "The tide pulls away and drowns them in your wake" and "They'll follow you till the sun will be white," one can only imagine that the angst and hurt that fueled this song into existence was brutal. As the single-note synth signifies the commencement of this next sonic-journey, it is soon met with a melodic tinkering of sorts on guitar that begins to dig into the hard soil penetrating slowly, down, down, down. Moments later the diabolic drums kick in and it seems like previously abolished and forgiven sins will be amplified and cast back upon a myriad of unlikely victims. By the time Buffington casts her first spell, "Let us not set in stone the place that you are," listeners of "Dilate" have probably fallen to pieces, stunned by its beauty. "Dilate," like the demon Bob from David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, emerges with a vengeance. Don't stand in its path because survival is surely futile. A dark anthem, "Dilate" shouts from the cinders of still-glowing orange embers, "No I am not, I'm not you. No it is not about you." It almost seems horrendously cruel that Buffington didn't write a dedication to the "you" because, someone needs to hunt the "you" down and nail a sign to its forehead that states,

"I am pure evil. Please stay the living blazes away from me."

08 Night Vision

The driving force behind "Night Vision" seems to be a mix of insomnia and some sort of last minute escape plan. Fueled by the ever-melodic, perambulatory, atmospheric single-notes of Volpato's guitar that call back to The Cure, Buffington's lyrics are highly poetic. It would be elementary to format them in E. E. Cummings fashion. "no sleep," next line, "nothing," third line, "no sleep anyway," and so forth and so on. Like watching the white dashes painted on the road flip by at night, flicker, flicker, flicker. "Night Vision" correlates with the quick flashes of the street lights, one for every night-vision-flash. One for every kick of the bass drum. One for every hit of the snare. Tick, tick, bam, bam, flicker, flicker, pow; Buffington takes us into the night filled with danger because she's secretly scared to death but also openly giddy and empowered by disappearing. As the malevolent bass and rancorous guitar seemingly unite into one, we hear tambourine that's not actually there as we fixate on wave after wave of mosquitos, their bodies glowing under the headlights, car after car. Crash after crash.

Watch "Night Vision"

youtube.com/@moaamusic/videos

09 Don't Mind

"Don't Mind" seems like something Buffington wrote



© Mila F. Photography

very early on and ironically no one should mind. The track is filled with the same angst that seems to be stuffing all of Buffington's children into over-packed scarecrows. Her angst is literally overflowing throughout. However, to not point out the nearly identical attributes of the first eight measures of, "Don't Mind" with the first eight measures of, "Red And White Lights Like Fire" by the extremely obscure band, Mysterious Creature from their 2007, *Guilty For Breathing* release via Apple Music would be a sincere shame as the similarities are actually rather spooky. Both bass lines are heavy-hitting, aggressive, and mildly distorted. Beyond those already odd dead ringers, the eclectic styling of both bass

lines hold a remarkable kinship with the only true difference being Buffington's, "Don't Mind" song having a somewhat slower tempo than, Mysterious Creature's. Otherwise, the odd likeness is undeniable. Even more bizarre is that the aforementioned "time machine" concept begins to apply to MØAA once again – did Buffington travel back to 2007 and somehow get exposed to, "Red And White Lights Like Fire" becoming infected by it only to unknowingly discharge the virus when she returned to the current timeline? It seems impossible, although, again, as previously presented as an unusual, yet curious theory she seems to have done analogous things. Regardless, "Don't Mind" takes off from the onset and never looks back for a second. A true under-three-minutes attack on the senses, "Don't Mind" is the track on *Euphoric Recall* that has the most difficult to understand lyrics, which the sly Buffington surely did on purpose. The lyrics come in layered waves causing a chain reaction of confusion that seems overtly angelic at times but also extraordinarily distressed in the majority. Buffington starts off her barrage with, "I found you as prey" and ends her vocation with, "Don't pry into me" which essentially describes both the music as well as Buffington herself: you are the willing participant purposefully exposing yourself to me, but after I have done whatever I want, you will refrain from trying to understand any part of me. The pen *is* mightier than the sword, sure, but in MØAA's case, which upholds more strength: the chorus or the chorister?

10 Diffuse

As "Diffuse" begins to disseminate, like the particles from a quick burst of perfume seeping into air molecules as they attempt to reach their intended target of a neck or wrist, an immediate psychedelic vibe begins to churn and overpower as it becomes very easy to understand how crowded dance floors turn from potential energy into kinetic energy when they fall subject to Buffington's black magic. As she speaks of hung juries, war, beauty, and a half-smoked cigarette through her lyrical incantations, she convinces us in a *Psycho Candy*, The Jesus And Mary Chain's 1985 triumphant debut, manner. "Diffuse" is lofty and electric soaring high above the earth's troposphere as it brings *Euphoric Recall* to an end nearly ensuring there is more to come without blatantly stating, "Stay tuned for MØAA part two." It's an effective, great-closer for an iconoclastic album that ignored all of the proper ways to do things while breaking all sorts of standard rules in the art of music-making. It carved its own path, fueling itself with bits and pieces of mid-'80s remnants, left over from inventive and ethereal 4AD bands, consciously or not. Easily one of the most brilliant albums ever created, *Euphoric Recall* is highly on par with an abundance of palatial works from eras long past yet, aside from one nearly microscopic mention of Dead Can Dance in an antecedent interview, Buffington doesn't seem to have deliberately borrowed from the past, which makes her even that much more

magical. Jancy Rae Buffington is like an enigmatic, female version of the "Time-Travelling Hipster," a man depicted in a November 1941 Canadian photo of a crowd of onlookers at the reopening of the South Fork Bridge near Gold Bridge, British Columbia. The hipster is wearing what looks like a printed t-shirt before screen printing was possible, a modern pair of sunglasses that look very out of place amongst the onlookers and were extremely rare in that era, and holding what appears to be a compact camera, nearly nonexistent at the time. Everything about Buffington seems odd and other-worldly or out-of-sync in some manner. It's no wonder that MØAA garnered such a massive following nearly instantly as even her energized stage presence looks like she has been performing in front of gargantuan crowds for decades. She's uniquely charismatic and could effortlessly utilize her rockstar appeal to double as a Dr. Marten's high-fashion model. Her simple yet grandiose lyrics demonstrate an illustrious literary approach to writing abilities that add never-ending layers of intrigue and mystery. Her sensuous voice could lull a thousand crying babies to sleep or charmingly calm a pack of ruffians. Mix in her visual and audial sense of unity notable in her music videos and there's no question that Buffington is a scintillating and luminous star. ☺

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JAYWALKER

2023

01 Jaywalker

Bedazzling the world with his Talk Talk ensemble only to deconstruct it more and more as the albums went on, reaching a point where the content was so sparsely disturbing to his record label that they eventually called it quits, the late enigmatic Mark Hollis was once asked, in a 1998 interview conducted by Rune Schjøtt-Wieth for a Danish TV show the following: “Silence is a funny thing and it’s not only in between the tracks, there’s also silence in the songs. Do you use silence as an extra instrument?” Hollis responded, “Before you play two notes, learn how to play one note. And don’t play one note unless you’ve got a reason to play it.”

When *Jaywalker* starts spinning, silence is replaced by an immediately recognizable advancement in Buffington’s already established ability as the music is instantly more impactful on this second album with Buffington’s voice still lurking in the shadows but not nearly as severe as how it was positioned for the duration of her 2021 debut, *Euphoric Recall*. Buffington seems to be much more comfortable in allowing her voice to nearly equal the weight of the MØAA-esque guitar-driven, single-note melodies sitting in front of a very gruff and almost pompous bass that together still define a MØAA song so quickly there’s no doubt that the iron gates of Buffington Cemetery have

been kicked wide open and the esoteric spirits are ready to howl. The synthetic drum beat is explosive and simplified to allow the more defined instruments and parts to shine and sparkle. These slight adjustments give a new energy to the overall presentation and delivery of nearly everything that comprises the track, allowing “Jaywalker” to quickly boast about as a radio-ready hit dressed in wolf’s clothing foaming at the mouth looking for blood. Even the lyrics are now more elaborate, written in sentence form, loose as it is. Vague poetic words and half definitions are gone and it feels like Buffington is confident and wanting to convey more direct and meticulous messages.

Buffington has stated publicly that when she wrote *Jaywalker*, she meant it to describe others who never seem to be able to stay on the straight-and-narrow and often end up in mischievous places, “‘I’ll see you never’ late out on the street.” However, she recently updated her thoughts and has now claimed that she was mistaken and that in reality, she herself is a jaywalker and she’s *always* been one. It’s an important distinction as it shifts the vigorous, authoritative vibe into being an intellectually prolific stance, like a song from the more commercially viable albums delivered by Robin Guthrie and Simon Raymonde of Cocteau Twins fame. Context, chosen-direction, and predetermined goals are all extremely significant parameters. It’s the difference between a grade-school crossing-guard seeing a stray black cat and responding to it by thinking it needs shelter

or possibly something to eat. A keener and more imaginative soul might see the same black creature and realize that un-holy turmoil is about to be unleashed upon someone. Even though *Jaywalker* is still co-produced by Jancy Rae Buffington and Andrea Volpato, it’s undeniable that Buffington is vastly reliant on herself first this second time around. This is significantly evident as early as the first chorus which seems purposely a bit more heightened than MØAA’s previous way of doing things. Truth-be-told by the second line, “All weathered, those old letters don’t matter much to me” old and new fans are locked-in already singing along and eye-balling the volume dial in hopes that it’s not on eleven yet.

Watch “Jaywalker”

youtube.com/@moaamusic/videos

02 The One

This track really is Buffington being overly brilliant and sensational thus far into her musical endeavors (*twelve songs if you include the ten tracks of Euphoric Recall*). She’s barely off the new launch pad and she’s hotter than Falcon Heavy’s aluminum-lithium alloy rocket cores. The pre-programmed drum beat kicks off with a very lovely keyboard melody that tosses the majority of folks

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straight into a horse-show watching their beloved child try its damndest to win that first blue ribbon. Another lot of listeners pull as hard as they can on the laces of their roller skates hoping to get out into the rink to skate to as much of the song as possible. Others, few as they may be, go a different route and grab for the ornate chain of the necklace that's no longer there as it's been gone for years. You know the one, given by the person who purposely (*or not*) cut your heart out and threw it in the blender with more callus than a shark in a feeding frenzy. Although those aloof analogies might be in reverse and/or improperly labeled regarding control group size, it's hard to know for sure if Buffington is telling this tale of love from the perspective of someone else, or if it's literally from her own eyes out. But by the fifth measure, the light and happy keyboard melody – that sounds like something The Cars legend Ric Ocasek's son Chris would have written during the construction of his *Glamor Camp* album in 1988 – gets invaded by a more foreboding keyboard part that more than likely, given MØAA's general mood-setting, is more telling of something abnormal. It's surely the beginning of the injection treatments into the experiment so that the variables can properly be tested. Scientific evidence of truth surfaces in the results just after the horses make another loop around the ring and the initial happier keyboard part is killed off

completely leaving only the pounding drum beat and the darker keyboard setting the stage for Buffington's voice, "You should know you're the one for me, got to be I suffered yeah." Buffington seems to peer out into the rollerskating rink with her heart on her sleeves. In that familiar single-note-melodic guitar played in minor scale by excessively talented Andrea Volpato, that is undoubtedly meant to instill sadness, doom, and melancholy nostalgia. Buffington's next lines hit like a kiss of death: "You should know, you're hot as hell. Don't you know, I saw you yeah. You should know, you're hot as hell. Don't you know, I'm sorry yeah." The perspective seems to exorbitantly dart from light into the dreadfulness of darkness. It's this far in that everything shifts drastically and all the horses die of colic, most of the roller skaters lose a wheel or two and end up with broken legs, chipped teeth, crushed rib cages, battered skulls, *or worse*. The idea that this song is a re-telling of *Juliet and Romeo*, with Juliet falling in love with Romeo when she first sees him, vanishes. Then Buffington, with the most direct and clear vocals she's ever allowed in a MØAA song, gives it to us straight as jarring guitar rips into the vast audio space like a villain first appearing in an old sci-fi flick – red hot lasers shooting everywhere – sounding like the background music for a battle between God and Satan fighting over a human soul, written in Nijmegen, Netherlands by Ronny Moorings of Clan of Xymox one cold, pale 1983 winter. Evidence begins to pile up that the word "hot" might not mean "sexy"



like Paris Hilton uses the term, but rather, "hot" means literally "hot" as in body temperature on fire that can't sustain life much longer. It isn't immediately discernible yet nothing seems good now and Buffington, exposing her soul, takes one of her really awesome musical turns that leaves you devastated in admiration. The tone shifts and descends down, down, down as Buffington takes a breath and then bellows out with a seductively reserved intensity, "Watching the clock, you said, 'We should wish now for an end.' Watching your eyes go red, someday you will tell the difference." If you have the intellect to do so, one way to illustrate or convey how important someone was to another is to promote the idea

that they were really only truly appreciated to the maximum by the person who admired them so much more than any other. Buffington is so emotive and brainy that, as she's continually working through her catastrophic loss, her ability to channel a universe of unrest through the mere two cables of stereo is so imaginative and utterly compelling that she's inadvertently helping others cope with similar situations. And she probably doesn't even realize that she's doing it. As the song comes to a close, Buffington assures us that no one else truly appreciated the important person that she has lost, "Nobody else, nobody else saw you." Anyone really paying attention is now covered in goosebumps and feels like someone hung them on a hook, sliced their feet off, and left them dangling with no hope for survival. Slowly they bleed out as everything goes white. The feeling is very similar to opening the door to a bathroom and seeing someone buck naked blow-drying their hair. Your heart goes to your toes as you become immediately apologetic and, closing the door as quickly as possible, you keep repeating, "I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry..."

Watch "The One"

youtube.com/@moaamusic/videos

03 Such A Saint

When Buffington states, "It's all clear when I see you lit, you'll see me laugh when I see you slip" and later, "Now I gotta be clear" two things are

abundantly clear: First, anyone who crosses Buffington is going to live to regret it. It could be by voodoo doll or some other form of bloodletting, but anyone making the mistake of colliding with now-mighty Buffington is asking for it. Secondly, it seems likely that someone has already made this grave mistake. While Buffington doesn't seem to be a vicious, out-of-control, vengeful murderer, she does certainly achieve something achingly similar by way of her songs. The initial stage of "Such A Saint" finds Buffington preparing to embalm the body. From the onset, there's nothing there but a disinfected stainless steel table and a deceased sanitized body; essentially a hefty drum beat and either a forceful lower range guitar or a forceful bass line – it really doesn't matter which – the keyword being: forceful. Then Buffington's disinfectants and antibacterial solutions are added and the hefty bass or low-range rumbling guitar is replaced with a higher-range guitar that sounds like a buzz-saw-siren as Buffington sets in with a serious level only out-matchable by rigor mortis. Half-chanting in an almost let-me-just-tell-you derogatory manner, "I've seen you laugh, I've seen you cry. I will not live until you die, you die," Buffington expresses severe distaste towards, well, *someone*. Everything seems to be amped up quite a bit already but then she grabs her array of trocars and artery tubes and the embalming process begins. A wall of sound now supporting a flurry of vocals that send chills up the spine for anyone lucky enough to still be alive, "I've been around, but I don't wanna be here.

You've been the cause of all this fuckin' pain and loss. Why play around when I don't wanna be here? Now I gotta be clear. Some say I'm off, but now it's time to be known, why play around when all this time I laid low? I went along but now it's time to be clear: I don't wanna be here, you don't wanna be here." It's all very Morrissey-ish when he sings so jovially about a double-decker bus crashing. Without paying attention to what's being said, it would be easy to jump into the shower and, as you're gleefully getting squeaky clean with a nice loofah, singing these exact words thinking they are describing some far-fetched happy-go-lucky scenario but be assured: No. Not the case by a long shot. Towards the end of this nearly five-minute manifesto, a few beats past the additional bone-vibrating guitar sirens and some fancy talk of "awful lies" and "slitting shut of eyes" a very Stranger Things-esque keyboard riff emerges out of the Upside Down and mutilates everything into a trance-like state with an almost Stanley Kubrick meets The Duffer Brothers desperation. That same low-frequency, repetitive keyboard riff starts growing and growing and growing like the Mind Flayer getting ready to overtake the innocent town of Hawkins, Indiana and it is astonishing. An all-encompassing prophetic sound that sends you straight into sheer oblivion, building

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ENLARGED VIDEO STILL FROM THE MUSIC VIDEO "THE ONE"

layer upon layer of vocals and intense instrumentation. Then, at the very end, the keyboard riff keeps rocking you into very dark places until finally it is nearly all that remains and Buffington makes her final sarcastic statement to her perpetrator, “I don’t wanna be here, you don’t wanna be here, so now you’re gonna be such a saint, yeah. You’re such a saint, yeah. Go on and run. A saint. Go on and run, go savior.”

04 Like Me

“Like me” is a departure from the normal ingredients of a MØAA song. Gone is the underpinning bass with the familiar sound of annihilation and a quick-rust. Atmospheric single-note guitar melodies flying out of a recently polished dark purple Gretsch are also absent and the dark purple part is, of course, imagined. It’s easy to imagine all sorts of things while listening to dangerously lovely Buffington converting her psychological recoveries into mid-’80s 4AD fodder. It’s also easy to imagine *ignoring* the real implications of her words and only concentrating on how great it feels to be able to finally hear her inspiring voice with more and more clarity and being able to sing along for a good portion of the album. But no one should do these things, because if you aren’t getting the whole picture then you really aren’t getting it at all. “Like Me” is, hopefully, a made-up, creative cluster of dressed-up-prose about sometimes feeling unwanted. Buffington delivers it with immense strength but

if the lyrics *weren’t* so easy to hear and understand amongst the wondrous melodic backdrop of music, she’d almost sound like Cocteau Twins’ Elizabeth Fraser. But it’s simply not the truth here. Buffington emerges as a blatant and definitive canary in the coal mine of sorts. A natural-born talent showing off her abilities as she proudly flocks about, she seems to almost be bragging. Many of us have been the black sheep or the unwanted, too-complicated-to-deal-with friend. “Like Me” perhaps, lends itself to those that have *never* been there, so that they can imagine what it might be like. And if that’s not it, then it is simply speaking directly to those who *have* been there and looking for likeminded sorrow, using familiar tactics while almost punishing you with the upfront chorus that never leaves your brain. Lingering long, long, long after the song ends.

05 Chalk Lines

Sometimes it’s interesting to read the lyrics of a song prior to listening to it. In the case of “Chalk Lines,” this method of analysis seems to really get the accusations flowing. Before observant eyes even pull out a magnifying glass to use in a red herring lyric search, a clue has already been picked up as to who the culprit might be. Forensically speaking, chalk lines are typically drawn around dead bodies. Given Buffington’s general way of dealing with a number of things, obviously chalk lines are not referencing young children drawing kooky photos on the sidewalk with

their hands becoming more and more coated with limestone composed of calcium carbonate. Without even hearing a single measure of “Chalk Lines” Buffington’s motif for writing it seems rather outlined this far into the mystery. Pressing PLAY confirms an array of allegations as the track abruptly lunges out, beautifying the entire horrid crime scene with Buffington’s spiraling fingerprints. Instead of police sirens, we soak in the now quite familiar off-kilter single-note melody of Volpato’s guitar. Moments into the track we stupidly believe that another guitar line with a nice cheerful touch might quickly join the scene like some nice baby’s breath surrounding a cluster of hot pink carnations. But then we remember that baby’s breath has a tendency to smell like spit. And honestly, like it or not, when the creepy almost serial-killer bass line starts attacking and rumbling the thin speaker cones, we feel comforted to have returned to the dreary mindset of Buffington’s Sertraline and Paroxetine landscapes. As she makes her always welcomed appearance, she stands gracefully over the morbid shapes – body and lines – as the rest of the crew and the deviant onlookers await her first comment. “I’ll never see what you could be” flows effortlessly from between her brazen red lips and anyone listening instantly

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dies in relief and anticipation. Buffington is a miraculous individual who creeps into your world and fills you so full of her that not actively listening to her tactical singing is like watching a Tim Burton movie without Johnny Depp. She becomes the beautiful frame surrounding the not-so-pretty picture. Buffington's way of crafting things together is similar to how Edgar Allan Poe would always lure you in, have you slightly confused and guessing at various things, and then clock you cold over the head with a steel hammer. The chorus of "Chalk Lines" is simply genius writing manufactured like a seasoned tradesman who hits the nail on the head with every forceful swing. The chorus is a four-line stanza with keywords in each line charmingly rhyming so that as they roll off of Buffington's tongue, they do so in concert with your own. The dreamy, flittering vocals mesh with the instrumentation supporting them much like a nocturnal owlet moth positioned just right so that the glow of the moon makes its silhouette seem outlined in chalk. As the track takes its last few breaths, the drums isolate themselves with MØAA-single-note guitar wonder and walk off into a private corner. Now with the bulk of the chaotic scene at bay, it becomes evident that the drums might resemble a heart beating. Morbid curiosity that compels un-invited spectators to *have* to look when driving by a car crash sinks its razor-sharp teeth into our music-listening souls and

that PLAY button starts to look deviously irresistible, yet again.

06 K.O.

Perhaps, "K.O." was an outtake from *Euphoric Recall* that for whatever reason didn't make the cut when it should have. Or "K.O." could also easily just be Buffington euphorically recalling all those inventive and eclectic sounds she used on her previous album. The most prominent aspects of "K.O." that seem to be overtly nostalgic are the more vague and sparse lyrics. Hearing them is like opening the front door on Valentine's Day as the sun is setting and realizing that you actually *are* receiving heart-shaped milk chocolates, some gorgeous blue roses, and a slightly disturbed poem that is dear in spirit but makes you realize that maybe you really don't know the sender as well as you thought you did. Although you are conditionally happy, the person is allegedly still willing to be romantic with you. "K.O." is upside down and inside out and begs to come to terms with Buffington not being O.K. which is the painful point here. With '80s-tinged synth sounds that could fit in a Wes Craven flick, and an overall sound that should have landed MØAA up on the stage at David Lynch's Bang Bang Bar in season three of *Twin Peaks* alongside Chromatics' white-haired starlet, Ruth Radelet, "K.O." churns like a phantasmagoric, introspective dream without some kind of loophole that lets its main character out to violently rip you to shreds. Come to think of it... inexorable Jancy Rae Buffington,



in a white Andy Warhol wig with long extensions and the last ten inches dyed black would probably be a real knockout.

07 Made In The Shade

Do you remember that one night back on April 2nd of 2021 when Echo And The Bunnymen were playing at Madison Square Garden? Will Sergeant had just walked out on stage and started to play track seven of the new album on his guitar when – after just sixteen notes – the members of The Cure suddenly rushed out from the orchestra pit and tackled him while Robert Smith emerged from the shadows and took over. Then Jancy Rae Buffington of MØAA skipped out from the left

wing, grabbed the microphone, and started to tell the audience a really strange story about what really happened that cold snowy night when the song "X Marks" began to take shape. At first it seemed like heartfelt acting but gosh those tears looked awfully real... "Yeah... yeah... and....," she kept interrupting herself, "and that's what happened. We buried the bodies and Andrea was very nervous about it and frankly so was I, but then I kept reminding him that, well, due to various factors and chance situations we are, well, "Made In The Shade." *No.* I don't remember any of that either because none of it happened. But I can envision the frowning proscenium with Buffington standing under it in the middle, MØAA-esque guitar poking at everyone from everywhere. Bat-skin-bass reminding us that doom *is* a four letter word. And as Buffington's heavenly, soothing voice enters our weary ears, I kind of understand what *didn't* happen. I kind of comprehend that Buffington is thinking out loud to her accomplice, "Lay back, eyes black, at last we're all in our heads. Veins flat, all matte, don't matter they're already dead." I kind of get the picture. I kind of assimilate that something happened (*X Marks*) and then the next day or possibly awhile later something else happened (*Made In The Shade*). In my mind, I see the Ouroboros symbol and I imagine that I hear angel trumpets and devil trombones like Alex on his bed with two devotchkas getting ready for some of the old in out in out. My mind races and I go in, "Made In The Shade" then out. Then I go in, "X Marks" then out.

Then again. Over and over. It's deviously repetitious like the swing ride at a carnival. It's all so lexicographic. I can smell the cotton candy before and after it is made. I'm feeling enlightened but also inconsiderably sick. You aren't saying that - I mean the shovel was - you and - like... you both - but... we're still at the theater, I mean, ummm, RIGHT?

08 All Blood Is Lifeless

With ripples of Dale Bozzio from, Missing Persons Buffington has taken over the record player with vigor. "All Blood Is Lifeless" starts off like the music Swans made for the 1993 film *Two Small Bodies*, directed by Beth B. And like the subject matter of that film, "All Blood Is Lifeless" is also about lust, resistance, death, and unfortunately love and hurting. Buffington is very much a visual person and it's interesting to become exposed to her lyrics and songs while trying to imagine the process she orchestrated in assembling it all together. At times her ideas seem to be mechanically structured with Buffington then deconstructing them into loose motifs that are then built into layers of angelic whimsical frenzy. At other times it seems the reverse approach may have been utilized with Buffington taking tiny snippets that are more like strange textures and mood-setters and organically merging the loose and open pieces into a larger by-the-book formation. But let's be clear, by-the-book in the case of MØAA is assuredly referring to, *Naked Lunch* by William S. Burroughs, or the richly interesting quantum

physics book, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* by Gary Sukav – and not the fourth edition of, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* edited by Don Michael Randel. There's just no getting around pure fact though or coming to terms that the chorus in, "All Blood Is Lifeless" is fairly easy to grasp. It's an instant train ride at dusk through an exciting city of pale lights where it is just dark enough that all the strangers lurking about on the street corners appear to be freaks on their way to their next auditions. There are millions of prodigy wannabes who fork over mad cash to attend the various higher-rated music schools scattered around planet Earth. But many end up graduating and working at Lowes as sales help or the people who go shelf-to-shelf tirelessly and continuously straightening things as they hum their favorite songs to themselves, scowling at any customers who dare ask a question about the location of whatever item like failure is their fault. It seems like Buffington had it a bit easier. She just broke up with a few significant others, experienced a number of losses or possibly one major one, worked up a few grudges, got a nice chip on her shoulders, and that was it – instant stardom. "I've been such a fool with you, I swear I've spent all this time until this bloody dead end" comes spinning out of the already fascinating and

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unbelievable music of the first verse like a sparkling diamond catching every ray of the sun and reflecting it across fields of old headstones. It's simply miraculous. It's a power-pop moment embedded inside a timeless early 4AD ethereal song that mutates all normality.

Just after Buffington slowly sings "hate, hate" and the words are fading away, just before the chorus hits, the dissipation of her voice has you almost relaxing as it gets quieter and quieter, evaporating into the elixir with Buffington using her vortex mixers until the liquid becomes a nice rich bruise color in the glass test tube. No one on the planet can sing the word "hate" and make you feel so wonderful. I'm mystifyingly convinced of it for sure. During the words "I've been such a," there's a hit-it-on-the-offbeats treatment in the drums like a heart skipping a beat or like you are choking or running out of air and then the chorus catapults you into the hallway with the cast of The Breakfast Club as you run and run and run almost in slow-motion. Right at the word "fool," the drums come pounding back in full force and it's just orgasmic. Right there in that totally empty space – in the disjointedness of reality and fantasy – is where Buffington is truly the most magical. She's like a paranormal medium allowing every brilliant songwriter to use her as a host. Accenting the word "fool" before finishing the first phrase of the chorus, "with you," Buffington lets us know that she means

dead-serious business. She's a damsel-in-distress turned femme-fatale giving listeners so many astonishing moments throughout her *Jaywalker* album it'll spin your head like Beetlejuice. All blood *may* be lifeless but Buffington isn't. She's equivocal and very much full of life. Larger than life actually. Way, way, way "hit-it-on-the-offbeats" much, much larger than life.

09 Undercover

Andrea Volpato creates an ever-evading, effervescent soundscape with his Gretsch working overtime to keep up with his dancing fingers. On and on he goes hitting notes. One there, one over here. Note after note, everywhere. Somewhere way outside of a Love Spirals Downwards activated daydream and a melodic section of a The Sundays song, Volpato's guitar sounds are devoted and faithful, continuously providing Buffington a structure for her to step into the light and shine. She's an alluring and captivating troubadour we have all quickly grown to deeply admire, after a collective total of nineteen tracks (*counting Jaw*) thus far into the MØAA voyage. It doesn't take long to listen to Volpato's sparkling glitter and his insidious and calculating bass before the exotic main performer at the masquerade party lifts up her filigree Colombina Musica mask, breathes in, and slowly transmits: "Numb now and without freedom. Both hands in another's cuff. No plans for a subtle touch. Kiss like sand, falling through my hand." A few

moments later, MØAA does the skip-some-beats-drum-dropout thing that works so well for them and then after a measure of missing percussion, with her bewitching voice that we all seriously now crave, Buffington turns things up a few notches and really lets us have it just as the drums joltingly reappear,

"You've been undercover with another. We seemed so real with each other and now you discovered a new lover. We seemed so, we seemed so real." It's a beautiful chorus packed full of easy-to-sing-along-to words that rhyme just enough that it seems diabolic in one way and weirdly clairvoyant in another. "Undercover" could easily be the official anthem for unfaithful partners. An older teen could be told by a loving parent, "Well sweetheart, it does seem as if you have found someone very special but if the day ever comes when that's not the case please remember to sing MØAA's, "Undercover" so that it is fully understood how deeply you have been hurt." As Volpato continues his gaudy guitar show, keeping everything nice and lofty into the tail end of the song, one might wonder if you'd hear this delicately captivating music emitting out of the gold and silver speakers to the right and left of the pearly gates.

10 SE 24th St

An interesting choice to use for an album-closer, this track is one half cadence and one half stray, feral animal. The instruments are familiar but don't fit exactly right as they did before. It's still a wondrous track



with another strong vocal delivery both in the chorus and throughout the entire song; but it does a really good job of doing the dirty work and drawing to a close something that at times seemed to be whirling itself out of the galaxy. Buffington sings of being "invincible" and "turning blue" which feels almost like a suicide pact that won't actually end in death but will come scarily close to it. She has spent a good deal of time on this album proving that she herself is the proverbial jaywalker and she's more interesting for it, having become so intrinsically elaborate during the venture that it's hard to figure out what her next plan might be. As listeners and observers right along with her, we have simultaneously reached the end of another one of her massive undertakings. Just like her previous ordeal, *Euphoric Recall*, *Jaywalker* could be the culminated bitter ending to something fantastic or it could be a sensational start to who knows what. It's no question though that it's simply way safer to not even think about it. Although, I will be praying hard for the latter. ☺

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CONCLUSION

At some point in time, on one of the open squares of the calendar, the fuel MØAA is burning up – like a spaceship going against the grain of the galaxy as it blasts itself into a time-warp on its way back to 1981 – might be gone. It's hard to know for sure. But what I can state for sure is that experiencing *Euphoric Recall* and *Jaywalker* has been a bedazzling gift of sorts.

Throughout these psychologically-infused, musical excursions, there were times that it seemed Buffington was almost speaking for me, saying all the things I've had bottled up in a time capsule for years. At other times it felt like maybe someone should call the cops on her – I'm joking of course. Still, at other times, she had me in tears. And in between it all, I seem to remember her being an actress in Jantje Friesse and Baran bo Odar's 2017 masterpiece: *Dark*. But somehow, she has vanished entirely from the film. Regardless, at certain moments, I was so in awe of MØAA that I almost couldn't breathe – and not just during "02." Listening intently was like having every emotion within me maniacally and viciously stabbed thirteen times.

The truth is, I am not the same anymore. Buffington has changed me and I am strong enough to admit it. Anyone who is willing to open up wide enough to allow MØAA the freedom to invade them, like Bob did to Leland Palmer, might be surprised by what they discover. It's probably best described as reading a very inspiring novel where on page one *you are still you* but then on page two hundred and whatever *you are no longer you*.

In conclusion, listening to *Euphoric Recall* and then *Jaywalker*, one after the other, while describing such amazing material with words has been nothing shy of falling subject to a highly personalized...

...ridiculously long and obnoxious letter from Jancy Rae Buffington in Seattle, or Italy.