

Bio information: **ALEC K. REDFEARN** and **THE EYESORES**
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ALEC K. REDFEARN and THE EYESORES
have been making uniquely rewarding music for 20 years.
They are one of the great uncategorizable, creative ensembles of our time,
crafting a music that is distinctly theirs alone.

Eleven chimes usher listeners into the world of *The Opposite*, the 8th album by the hypnotically eclectic **Alec K. Redfearn and the Eyesores**. Eight songs later, another set of eleven chimes release us from the music's spellbinding hold. In between lies a collection of songs that are part ritual, part rock; both esoteric and alluring, darkly mysterious but infectiously accessible.

For the last two decades, the Providence, RI-based Redfearn has crafted a compelling, uncategorizable sound that is wholly his own but has tendrils that reach into a stunning variety of influences both musical and otherwise. The music is centered upon Redfearn's arcane rock sensibilities, beguiling vocals and serpentine accordion lines, which lace the music with tinges of everything from Krautrock to minimalism, alternate-universe folk tunes to psychedelic prog. Thematically, his hallucinatory lyrics hint at mind-expanding concepts from his voracious reading and adventurous experiences, with seductive insinuations that evoke the writings of Aleister Crowley or the dangerous edge of pleasures of the flesh.

The Opposite, due out October 5, 2018 via **Cuneiform Records**, is the Eyesores' long-awaited follow-up to their acclaimed 2012 release *Sister Death*. Where that album reached toward the epic with a roster of special guests and layered instrumentation, *The Opposite* pares things down to the core band, with an accompanying intimacy and intensity. With horn player **Ann Schattle**, bassist **Christopher Sadlers**, and drummer **Matt McLaren**, Redfearn has the makings of a spellbinding soundworld. The sparse instrumentation is extended with the use of pedals that blend with the acoustic instruments to offer a unique, alien palette from which to draw.

As has been the case for their last few releases, the album was recorded by Seth Manchester at Machines With Magnets. For the first time Alec worked with noted mastering engineer Udi Koomran at The Pergola. Both engineers helped to insure that the final release is sonically great.

The album takes its title from a recurring theme that runs throughout Redfearn's esoteric readings, the notion that everything contains its own opposite, a shadow or other that balances, haunts, or reflects its possessor. That concept recurs everywhere from Crowley to the Kabbalah to the Gnostics – even to *Seinfeld*, which based a magical episode around George Costanza changing his life for the better by making every decision based on the opposite of what he would normally do.

Redfearn cites that *Seinfeld* episode as a personal favorite, and its inclusion on such an otherwise esoteric list exemplifies the songwriter's egalitarian ethos, one that thrives as much in the glaring light of pop culture as it does on the shrouded, hidden corners of the occult.

"I really delved into the whole canon of western esoteric thought as a way to find some spiritual hook that wasn't the Christianity I grew up with," Redfearn explains. "But I also felt like that was deep in the culture at the moment. You started hearing more about tarot and witchcraft, and it even seeped into pop culture a bit: Jay-Z referencing the Illuminati, and even Katy Perry posing like Baphomet."

Whether it allowed Redfearn to connect with his own other or simply freed his subconscious to make unexpected connections between the varied stimuli he'd been imbibing, a stream-of-consciousness approach gave the album's lyrics a feeling of dreamlike imagery and elusive associations. The music takes a similarly evocative bent, conjuring the influence of bands like **Suicide**, **Can** and **Faust**, as well as ambient synth-pop pioneers **Tangerine Dream** and proto-Darkwave groundbreakers **Gary Numan** and **John Foxx**. The droning cloak of noise occasionally echoes the likes of the **Velvet Underground** and **Chrome**, while Redfearn's heady poetry and mesmeric narratives call upon psych-rock innovators like **Syd Barrett**.

“Soft Motors” opens the proceedings as an invocation of sorts, spurred by the drawing of tarot cards, the song’s swirling, repetitive throb setting the rapturous tone for the album. It’s followed by the instrumental track “Tramadoliday,” whose portmanteau title and narcotic pulse suggest a transporting staycation with a few doses of prescription medication as a soporific tour guide.

With a pace set by McLaren’s insistent beat, an acoustic analog for an electronic drum machine, “The Opposite” maintains a sinister mood, with a tense post-human atmosphere supplied by Redfearn’s pulsating accordion and Sadlers’ bass doubled by actual synth lines. The carnal sensuality of “Carnivore” is given a heated setting with primal rhythms and Redfearn’s panting incantations.

The frenetic “There’s a Bat Living in My Room” borrows its manic lunacy from a former acquaintance of Redfearn’s, an unhinged cocaine dealer prone to paranoid delusions and hallucinatory visions (of a much less inventive, more threatening sort than those crafted by the songwriter’s enticingly inexplicable lyrics). Inspired in part by Aleister Crowley’s Gnostic Mass, “Rend the Veil” peers into the abyss between the realms of matter and spirit, finding a disorienting chaos that is transmitted back into our ears, swarming with the buzz of insects (or their representation via the Realistic MG-1, a synth created by Bob Moog for Radio Shack in the early ‘80s and meant for home consumers but used by the likes of Peter Gabriel and KMFDM).

The dusty, nameless landscapes of Sergio Leone form in the mind’s eye during “Possum,” which seems to take place in a western ghost town haunted by melodies somewhere between **Ennio Morricone** and **Can**. The song pays tribute to a friend of Redfearn’s who committed suicide, but who lives on in the memory of a Halloween party where he carried a possum while dressed as Clint Eastwood’s iconic Man With No Name. “Pterodactyl” ends the album with a Kubrickian chill, making reference to the intriguing poet, banking heir, sun worshipper and libertine ex-pat Harry Crosby.

The personal and the universal, the poetic and the prosaic, esoteric explorations and the humorous insanities of daily life – all come together in the hypnotic and pulse-pounding songs of Alec K. Redfearn and the Eyesores. With *The Opposite*, the band has created a collection of music that is at once their most accessible and mind-expanding to date, the sort of mystery that rewards not solving but getting lost within.