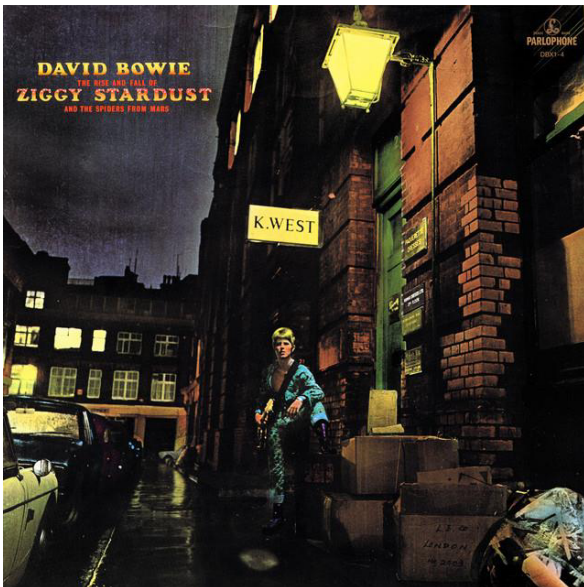


Here and Now

The Moonchildren have a history that goes back to 1986. Spearheaded by creative innovator Oliver Fauser, this German musical outlet has most recently unveiled a spellbinding record in the form of *Grace*, released in February of this year. Across the fourteen featured tracks, Oliver embarks on a roaming and free-flowing odyssey through timeless sounds of rock and roll perfection, brilliantly snapping the modern-day into focus. Being a product of COVID times, *Grace* has many layers, including an enduring and eternal optimism, as well as some melancholic undercurrents. This balance is certainly one of the record's many strengths. With the LP now having passed its six-month anniversary, Oliver took a brief respite from his current creative endeavours to reflect with *Aldora Britain Records* on his musical journey to date. We discussed popular original compositions, The Moonchildren's growth and evolution over time, big influences and inspirations, and much, much more. That exclusive in-depth conversation is published here in full for the very first time.

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Aldora Britain Records: Hello Oliver, how are you? I am excited to be talking with such a fantastic artist from over in Germany. It is amazing how music can bring us together. Let's start off by travelling back in time. What are some of your earliest musical memories and what was it that first pushed you towards pursuing this passion of yours?

Oliver Fauser: Hi Tom, it's my pleasure doing this interview with you. Thanks. Yeah, let's travel back in time. Should be fun. One of my earliest, if not the earliest musical memory, is when I first saw the cover of the Bowie album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* in the window of our local record store. It fascinated me. I bought it in 1976 when I was eleven years old, my first album ever, and I thought it was so old, four years since the release in 1972! At that age

it feels like a lifetime. I remember on the cover it said 'to be listen to at maximum volume'. And I sure did. Blew my ears off. That's when I got pushed towards making music. That's what I wanted to do. That's when I started to play the drums.

Aldora Britain Records: And now, let's take a leap forward to the present day and an impeccable project of yours. The beginnings of The Moonchildren must have been an invigorating time. How did it all come to be? What was the initial spark? Is it an outlet for your solo musings or more of a collaborative kind of feel and approach?

Oliver Fauser: I formed my first band in 1978, playing drums, then I became a singing drummer and finally I was the singer. We played together until the mid-80s, the guitar player Thomas and I were the only steady members. I think it was 1984, when I got my first Fostex four-track cassette recording device and I began to play around with it, without the band. Since I was only capable of playing the drums at the time, I taught myself guitar, bass, and piano while doing it, so I could record some stuff. You can imagine, it was pretty experimental, but that's how I got into writing music myself and not only the lyrics to my bandmates' songs. Eventually I recorded more solo stuff and eventually the band split up. That's when The Moonchildren were born. 1986. Me and whoever had the time and wanted to play along with me. So, yes, it's more a solo project than a collaborative thing.

“I think it was 1984, when I got my first Fostex four-track cassette recording device and I began to play around with it ... You can imagine, it was pretty experimental, but that’s how I got into writing music myself.”

Maybe with one exception, in 2006 I worked with Martin Claas, a fantastic drummer who had played with Joey Belladonna and Evereve. We recorded music for the album that would later be released as *Feel* in 2016. We recorded a lot of music but then the project never got finished. I don’t remember exactly why. So I had these songs, more or less unfinished, lying around, and it kind of stopped me from doing new stuff. So, in 2016 I picked out a few of them and asked Mario Melle, my longtime sound man, to just mix them the way they were and turned it into a music and art project. I am also a visual artist and so I handmade little deluxe boxes with my artwork on top, limited edition of fifty pieces. And I got the songs out of my system. And felt free.



Aldora Britain Records: For this output of yours, I am definitely drawn in by your impressive songwriting and songcraft. How do you approach this part of your process? Are you drawn to specific themes? Perhaps coming from a more personal, observational, or even fictional perspective?

Oliver Fauser: I truly can’t say for sure. Most songs just come to my mind. I play around on the guitar and suddenly it’s there. Same with lyrics. Mostly it’s personal, seldom fictional. I still don’t understand how it all comes together. Sometimes I listen to a song and wonder myself how I came up with it. Like I said, it just comes to my mind, it just happens. But when I try to write about a certain topic it never works. So I gave that up.

Aldora Britain Records: Let’s get more specific now. I would like to pick out two recent favourites of mine, ‘Grace’ and ‘Summer Girl’. For each, what is the story behind the song, and can you remember the moment it came to be? Did anything in particular inspire them and what do they mean to you as the writer and performer?

Oliver Fauser: ‘Grace’ was the last song I wrote for this album and the first one that was finished recording. When I started to write the album in 2021, when the COVID pandemic had put all my projects as a visual artist to a stop, all exhibitions were cancelled and so on, I had just moved from a valley in the Black Forest up to a mountain, to help my stepfather taking care of my demented mother. She died soon after and for the first time in a long while I felt like making music again and I wrote the first song ‘My Darling One’. It’s kind of the mother of the songs on this album.

Anyway, during this time, I had to deal with the deaths of my mother, and soon after my father and two cancer cases in the family. So, I thought about making an album about love. Well, that changed during the process of writing. Besides all the sad things happening around me, I strangely had the best time of my life. And when I was almost finished with the writing and the recording process I met my girlfriend Nadine and we madly fell in love. So I wrote ‘Grace’ for her in like ten minutes. And I named the album *Grace*. And to this day I still have the best time of my life. It’s lovely. I am extremely thankful.

The lyrics to ‘Summer Girl’ were written a few years ago. I changed it here and there. It’s about seeing a beautiful girl and not being able to talk to her, you know, secret admiration. The music came easy after I was finished touching up the lyrics. I love that song, it’s pure pop to me.

“I thought about making an album about love. Well, that changed during the process of writing. Besides all the sad things happening around me, I strangely had the best time of my life.”

Aldora Britain Records: Both of these tracks are taken from a superb record of yours, also called *Grace*. This was actually my introduction to your music, so it already holds a special place in my record collection. What are your memories from writing, recording and releasing it, and how would you say you grew and evolved as an artist throughout this process?

Oliver Fauser: Thank you so much, Tom. Like I said, the deaths of my parents within six months, and meeting the love of my life. When the recordings were done, I took three months off and travelled throughout South America with Nadine. When I came back, Mario and I started the mixing process. It was pretty hard, I was never satisfied, I was insecure, and even now I sometimes feel like it is all wrong. But in the end I know it's good, it's okay. Artists do doubt a lot. I am no different. I learned so much doing this album, in recording, in writing, in producing it, but also the work after that, the release process. I do everything myself, the label, the distribution, the coding, the marketing, the videos, I know the whole process now and it is so much work. I still am cutting videos, released number nine, 'Grip', just recently and I still do the marketing and all that. It seems like there is no end to it. But it's a lot of fun. I am thankful I'm able to do such things.



Aldora Britain Records: As you well know by now, I love The Moonchildren sound and your approach to making music. That classic alternative rock foundation. How would you say this style of yours came about, what goes into it for you, and who are some of your biggest influences and inspirations as an artist and musician currently? I have a feeling it could be a fairly broad and eclectic selection.

Oliver Fauser: Hmm, it is the kind of music I love and it is the music that comes out of me when I write. In the 80s I loved The Waterboys, their hymns and later the Irish folk stuff they did, but I also love the darkness of Nick Cave. I liked the music of both until the mid-90s, I am not really fond of their stuff after that, with exceptions. I always loved John Mellencamp, everything he did since the beginning. I also loved Karl

Wallinger's World Party, and AC/DC, The Stones, you know, but I never was able to write like any of them. I just found my own way of writing songs, mysteriously!

In the last two decades I loved the Queens of the Stone Age, well until the album *Like Clockwork*, which was fantastic. *Villains* turned me off. I think Motorpsycho is a very exciting band, I listen to them a lot. 16 Horsepower, great stuff. I am sure I am forgetting some great names, but yeah, there is so much good music around, it all influences me one way or the other. I can hear a little something of the named acts on my album, feel wise.

Aldora Britain Records: A broad question to finish. We have been through such a unique time in history over the last few years. Both politically and within society, and that is before you throw in the pandemic. How have the last several years impacted on you personally and as an artist? How do you think this time has changed the music industry, both for the good and the bad? I am curious to hear your insights.

Oliver Fauser: Tough question, I answered some of it in the questions before. The pandemic changed a lot. A lot of people seemed to have lost their minds, at least that's what I think sometimes when I hear them talk.

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Personally it didn’t affect me as much, I took care of my dying mother, I lived in a little village, and still do, on a Black Forest mountain, moved there just when the pandemic started. I kind of felt free in that isolation at the time. But I look around, and the world has gone crazy.

I liked the way some musicians performed live on the internet during the pandemic, I have seen great stuff. That was a change to me. As a writer, a performer, I feel like nothing changed in the industry. Artists get way too little, labels and streaming portals get way too much. So, it’s all about playing live. Which is what I plan to do next year, all by myself, my acoustic guitar and me.

Quickfire Round

AB Records: Favourite artist? **Oliver:** Motorpsycho and Mellencamp.

AB Records: Favourite album? **Oliver:** Bowie’s *Ziggy Stardust* and *Trust Us* by Motorpsycho.

AB Records: Last album you listened to from start to finish? **Oliver:** Captain Beyond’s debut album from 1972.

AB Records: First gig as an audience member? **Oliver:** Kiss with supporting act Iron Maiden in 1979 in Basel.

AB Records: Loudest gig as an audience member? **Oliver:** Probably Motorhead in 1984.

AB Records: Style icon? **Oliver:** Don’t know, uhm.

AB Records: Favourite film? **Oliver:** *Forrest Gump* always comes to mind first, but there are many good ones out there.

AB Records: Favourite TV show? **Oliver:** *Better Call Saul* and *The Walking Dead*.

AB Records: Favourite up and coming artist? **Oliver:** I’m afraid I don’t know any.

