

Hemlock Music

Hemlock Music is the brainchild of Jack and Jill, a group of British arts sponsors, who seek to develop new talent in the UK and Japan. Named in honour of Socrates and his attempts at opening "the unexamined mind", the group chose British songwriter, Kev Gray, and the Tokyo-based band, The Gravy Train, to front the project. The group aims at sustainable funding for composers and recorded music through high-quality live events and songwriting panache.

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About Kev Gray & The Gravy Train

Kev Gray is British singer-songwriter based in London and Tokyo. Previously with the Tokyo band, Akibakei, he built up a cult following with his velveteen vocal style and dark themes mirroring the work of The Beautiful South, The Smiths, Nick Drake and Jeff Buckley.

Highly respected on the both the London and Tokyo Japanese music scene he won the prestigious Gaijin Sounds 2008 award for his song, How The Story Ends, and was declared 'a lyrical genius' by the national press.

Since then he has produced 3 albums and 1 EP, recorded for soundtracks, and earned a reputation as a top live performer by playing a regular slot at the legendary Crocodile Club in Harajuku, Tokyo, with his multi-band, The Gravy Train. He now lives in London but spends much of his time in Japan to record and tour.

Music

A melting pot of lush melodies from bossa nova, funk, gospel, lounge and blues, songwriting involves a fusion of traditional genres, resulting in a welcome antidote to modern conformity. Contemporary lyrical themes and soulful vocal textures add the polish to the Englishman's ongoing success.

With an EP, two solo albums, and two further albums scheduled for release this year, the prolific songwriter has recently returned from a

tour in the US and Canada , with a scheduled tour of Asia planned for late 2011.

Biography

Early in 2008, he was spotted by musical entrepreneur, Paul Morgan of Medici Studios in Australia, and invited to record there with one of the country's top producers, ARIA-nominated, Michael Stangel of Jellyfish Records. The result: *Shipwrecked*, an eclectic mix of recordings of pop jazz, gospel, Latin and folk, that transcended each genre.

In late 2008, he formed The Gravy Train, a multi-culti live outfit from Britain, Canada, Japan and the US. A feature band during "UK-Japan Year 2008", The Gravy Train quickly established themselves as a top local act by securing a sellout Saturday night at the iconic rockabilly hangout, Crocodile Club, in Shibuya with their regular UK-Japan Night.

Still, it is the solo performances that continue to enchant listeners the world over. From Club Passim in Boston to Soho Arts in London, Gray's vocal emotion always connects, with total silence often ensuing once the vocals hit their target. While working on a new album, he released a collection of early recordings, *I Should've Stopped There*. This freed up time for his magnum opus, *The Veil Has Been Lifted*, out later this year.

Songs vary from venue to venue and the state of the crowd. Solo, duo and acoustic trio are as common as the change of genre. From Slow Cuban Funk on *Voodoo Doll* to Uber-Rockabilly on *Mississippi Nelson*, the sheer eclecticism of lyrical themes, genres and tempos is testament to the ever-evolving nature of the songwriter.

His mission is unashamedly that of bringing music back to the listener. Asked why, he argues in a world of autotune and programmed music, live performance must prevail, hence the focus on connecting with the audience through dynamic vocals and lyrical content that mirror everyday themes - cold feet at the altar, the rat race, having children, escaping responsibility, swingers parties, the inability to grow up: If you have something worth saying, people will listen.

"One problem with writing quirky lyrics is getting misrepresented. I think the way people interpret songs shows a lot about their character. If they see bitterness, they are bitter; if they see negativity, they're negative; if they see arrogance, they are insecure. If they see all the wonderful things in my songs, they are wonderful."

Recent News & Future Plans

While recent performances have included venerable venues as Hard Rock Cafe and La Mama in Japan, he has been working on festival tours, last year included appearances at Aeon Festival and Wimbledon Calling in the UK. In summer 2011, Gray spent 2 months in the US touring (inc. NYC, Philadelphia, Cambridge Music Festival) and shooting a video in New York.

To support this, two albums will be released in 2011: Antidote, by The Gravy Train, complementing solo album, The Veil Has Been Lifted.

In terms of live performance, songwriting, lyrical versatility and vocal quality, we believe Kev Gray & The Gravy Train have the most to offer to any live audience.

Samples can be heard on the band websites:

<http://www.hemlockmusic.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/kevgraymusic>

Contact: Jhoana Mendieta manager@hemlockmusic.com for more details.

My Dad asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up. I said, "A musician". He said, "Well you can't do both".