

Donpaul McAllister ✱ Solo Artist

Song article by: Joel Peter Simundich

In “Android Men,” the mechanical hiss and static sweep of feedback saturate a world of cold, dead hearts; at once lush and ethereal, McAllister’s vocals call from beyond the wall of sound. Dark washes of sound flood the black sonic landscape, desolate and quiet, before suddenly punctuated by a grand, sweeping chorus, inviting the listener into the safety of a world beyond man’s control.

As McAllister here sings “somewhere out there / there’s a hero / come to save the world,” an inner beacon shines from the darkness, answering and echoing in a new abyss. Driven by rhythmic drums and the sprawling textures of keys, the track is reminiscent of early-Pink Floyd, as classic rock crescendos and contemplative ambience coalesce into a heady, engaging, and unreal journey.

“Burn Away” finds McAllister at his most intimate. McAllister, at once Robert Wyatt and Roger Waters, croons over the downtempo ballad; laden with melancholy and a curious optimism, the track steps in and out of Ziggy Stardust-era Bowie, searching for a cure to a life of idle miseries. McAllister’s sparse vocals pair with the uplifting instrumentation, as delicate keys (think Rick Wakeman) immerse the listener in an after-hours sorrow, his lilting progression through each verse another wave of numbing relief. Bluesy phrasings and strident, smart lyrics match note-by-note the interplay of guitar and vocals – it’s a song to pull away from the world and its sorrows, if only for a moment.

McAllister takes a rock edge to a sordid affair in “Undone.” Beneath the surface, centering the song is a rootsy bassline, embellished by the hum of acoustic guitar. “I used to say / We could walk away,” McAllister sings, “But I always thought we'd stay / But these things happen every day.” Pulling into a sun-soaked chorus, the swell of strings reveals a triumphant self-revelation: “I’m becoming / Undone,” now facing a world cracked beyond repair. Slick guitar lines match perfectly with the steady rhythm, punctuating the grey clouds with moments of blissful recognition. On a downcast day, “Undone” revels in the harsh reality of love gone wrong.