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FEATURED ARTIST – JACK OF NONE

📅 January 19, 2018 👤 dkelly

FEATURED EVENTS



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Interview with Jack of None

By: Dennis M. Kelly

Dennis: Good day A.G., Maxine and Julian, how are you all doing today?

A.G.: I'm back in Chicago after spending the holidays with family in Manila. My wife, daughter and I were there for a good three-and-a-half weeks, so jet lag and the 14 hour time difference hit us pretty hard. Other than that, I'm doing great! Thanks for asking!

Maxine: Wonderfully, thank you for asking. It's 3 in the morning, and I just finished painting something new in my studio. I'm looking forward to answering your very impressive questions while enjoying Bitches Brew over a nice glass of wine.

Julian: Feeling good and well-rested after one month of Christmas festivities. Thanks for asking and thanks for having us here!

Dennis: Excellent, each of you so busy, but it is definitely no surprise given the tremendous results you've shown collectively as Jack of None. You know, there have been a lot of great submissions that have come through ReverbNation and it has been challenging deciding on artists, but then, along comes Jack of None who really took me by surprise with the whole professional package right off the bat. Great photos, beautiful album artwork that evokes a sense of dark psychological wonder and a sound that just blew me away. Great job to each of you for putting such a top notch EPK together and for delivering something that I predict will be talked about and appreciated for many years to come!

A.G.: You don't know how much it means to us to hear you say that! I've always thought of the band as experimental in more than just the music we produce. Our inability to play live together for the most part because we live so far away from each other, for instance, means we've had to search for alternative means to reach an audience. The hope was that the timing was right because the music industry has changed so much in the past few years with the advent of social media and all the digital distribution channels we have today. The fact that we managed to get your attention, and have been getting great exposure from online communities and even Chicago radio bodes well for that hypothesis.

Maxine: Thank you so much for the kind words. We are deeply honored to be a part of Chicago Music Guide, which is truly amazing. We work hard at pouring our hearts and souls into what we do, viewing it





as an actual art form rather than a mere craft. Knowing that you appreciate our work makes it all worthwhile!

Julian: Thank you, that means a lot!

Dennis: You're most welcome and we're so happy to have you here on Chicago Music Guide! The disturbing and deranged imagery that your songs bring to mind (and I mean that in the most complimentary way possible) are highly detailed and leads me (sadly) to the most obvious question, where did the inspiration come from to write songs so explicit and yet so eloquent?

Maxine: The inspiration comes from my lifelong obsession with dissecting the human condition, and unearthing what truly lies within. Heartache, disappointments, fears—these are all of the dark and “ugly bits” I try to embrace in order to be kissed by the light.

Dennis: I guess to further my previous question, Maxine, you've written a critically acclaimed book 'A Secret Life' 10 years ago now (how time flies), but if you could, please tell me where it all began for you and how the band came to be?

Maxine: I have an endless love affair with words and narratives, constantly seeking new ways to describe the undefined complexities of the human psyche. I began writing as a child because I grew up idolizing my father, Cesare, who is a poet and an art critic. I wrote, recited and performed my own poems from as far back as I can remember.

When my first book of poems, A Secret Life, was published in 2008, I was completely uncertain of how it would be received— but I knew that I had something to say, and I wasn't going to let anyone stop me.

From there, I started performing my poems through both spoken word and performance art events, realizing soon enough that the lines drawn between all forms of art (visual, performance, literature and music) were completely unnecessary to my vision of self-expression, and that I would dare to fuse all forms into one. I asked AG to compose music for my poems, and together we formed a band called Utakan. In it, we fused poetry with music, visual art and performance art. Not much has changed since then in the sense that Jack of None seeks to create new avenues for poetry, music and visual art—avenues wherein the 3 are fused into one, sharing a singular and resounding objective: to discover, through new avenues of art, what truly lies within.

Dennis: Very well put and what you've accomplished so far has been executed exceedingly well. Kudos to you and the band! Had any of you had music lessons for your respective instruments?

A.G.: I picked up the electric guitar when I was 13. I like to think I had 2 main guitar teachers. The first was a really cool hippie named Gani. He was a jazz rhythm guitarist who taught me the basics of musical theory. The second was my Dad, who is an amazing musician and one of my biggest musical influences.

My first synthesizer was a Korg Trinity, which I begged my parents to buy me when I was 16. I never had any piano lessons, but knew enough about musical theory at that point to teach myself.

Dennis: Excellent. Thanks A.G., and you Maxine?

Maxine: Other than ballet classes as a child, and majoring in Literature for college, I've never taken any formal music or art lessons. I do collect a lot of music, a lot of books, and a lot of visits to art museums and galleries. These have all been great sources of education and inspiration to me.

Dennis: Well, it is serving you well! And how about you Julien?

Julian: Yes. Guitars were a constant in my life because my dad is an avid guitar collector so I always knew it was something I wanted to get into. My brother, AG, taught me my very first riffs. And since then, I was hooked! After that, I had several guitar teachers up until I was about 20. They came and went as I never felt any of them were a perfect match for my needs so there was no one I could truly call my mentor.

Dennis: How have you applied the lessons you've learned to your sound?

A.G.: My first guitar teacher, Gani, focused on musical theory. Most of the lessons I had with him concentrated on scales, modes and chord construction. Unlike other 13-year-olds who just wanted to learn to play their favorite songs that were playing on the radio, the theoretical aspects of musical composition always fascinated me.

My Dad, who I consider my second teacher, emphasized developing a musical voice that I could call my own. Rather than learning to play covers, he encouraged me to spend my time tinkering with effects, whammy bars, sustainer pickups, e-bows, and anything I could use to craft a sound that would be distinctly me.

I like to think that who I am as a composer is a product of those 2 schools of thought. I'm passionate about experimentation, sonic textures and "sculpting" sound, but I'm also enough of a theory buff to be able to derive satisfaction out of a sudden shift from major to relative-minor in a composition...that sort of thing. Hopefully that comes through in most of what we do.

Dennis: Yes, I would certainly say so.

Maxine: The greatest art lessons I've learned have been from my artist parents, Cesare and Jean Marie. They taught me to always look beyond what meets the eye, and to remain true to myself at all times. These invaluable lessons remain at the very core of my art.

Julian: My teachers helped me learn the technical aspects of playing the guitar but what sculpted my sound was when I truly learned to listen. I fell in love with blues and rock guitar and would find myself listening and playing along to records for days on end. I think a big part of my sound is just a culmination of all those years I spent figuring out what works for me and what doesn't.

Dennis: How long did it take you to write and record your debut album 'Who's Listening to Van Gogh's Ear?'

Jack of None: The groundwork was laid out at a point we were all in Chicago during the summer of 2015. That's pretty much when we decided to form the band. That was a period of about 3 weeks. We didn't resume work until December of that year, though. AG was spending the holiday season in Manila, and we decided to make the most of his vacation by recording together as much as we could. From January onward, the rest of the album was recorded with AG in Chicago and Maxine and Julian in Manila. There were a lot of pauses in between at that point as we struggled to find an effective way to collaborate online. We wrapped up around March of 2016 and released a month later. All in all, we'd say the entire process took about 4 months.

Dennis: Given the hopping back and fourth between Chicago and Manila, I would say the band did a phenomenal job not being able to concentrate on it at any one long chunk of time in the same place.

The song, 'Pater, ignosce mihi', wow... following up after 'Hotel Carcass' on the album comes the sharp edged, heavy-hitter that I did have to Google search what it meant (Father, forgive me). The guitar work is seriously impressive with the solos, but there is so many ways this song could have been approached, especially when talking about forgiveness of our sins... how was the heavier tone decided upon?



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A.G.: Thanks! There's actually a pretty interesting story behind that one. Most of the music was recorded before the vocal — complete with Julian's lead work. I remember corresponding with Maxine through email about ideas for the lyrics. At that point, we still hadn't figured out a good way to exchange ideas online, so she decided to record herself on her iPhone — reciting the words with different tones and expressions — just to see if I thought something like that could work well with the music.

I immediately fell in love with the lo-fi quality of the recording. It sounded almost like it was coming from a small radio. I spent a day mangling the voice further with an 8-bit vocoder, glitches and time stretches, then layering it over the mix. The end result had this eerie and menacing quality that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand the first time I heard it. Maxine was naturally hesitant because she had no idea I would use what she considered a rough test. I think it took just 1 listen for her to agree with me, though. It turned into one of my personal favorites on that album!

Dennis: So, in a sense, the band has iPhone to credit as one of the tools used in the making of the album. (laughs).

Maxine: When AG let me hear the music that he and Julian had come up with for "Pater Ignosce Mihi", I immediately had an image of Dante's Inferno burning at its seams through a Jim Morrison-esque acid trip. On its own, the music was so compelling that I decided to keep the vocals and lyrics as bare and as simple as possible. I must say, the boys really rocked the House of Awesome here.

Dennis: I agree 100%, Maxine!

Julian: I approached this solo (along with everything that I play) with the mentality of "less is more". I always believed that it wasn't about how many notes you could play or how fast you could play them but what emotions each note could evoke when I played them.

Dennis: Very well done Julian, I certainly enjoy it a lot! A.G., 'Nocturnes in Dorian' was composed for your wife, correct? Is she a big fan of the band? And what does this song symbolize for you (for her)?

A.G.: My wife, Mica, is actually the band manager. She's been along for the ride from the get-go. As corny as it may sound, she completes me, and is my partner in everything I do.

Dennis: Oh, well that certainly makes the band dynamic even more interesting!

The track was composed during a very tough time for her. Her late Father was very sick, and she was having difficulty coping. The track fluctuates between moments of tenderness and deliriousness. I like to think that's because it's part love song, and part chronicle of that very trying, very surreal point in our life together. I feel like it also reflects the duality of our prevalent emotions at the time — excited about our new project (the band) and what the future could hold, but filled with dread over the fear of loss. Hopefully that isn't too academic a breakdown.

Dennis: I am so sorry to hear that, but music can really help people get through a lot of difficult times. How amazing that you wrote that for her in that multi-faceted way! How did it feel to receive the three nominations for the Independent Music Awards and to also be awarded for 'Best Album Art, Design and Photography' on your first album?

A.G.: It felt great! We felt validated. For a band like ours, which is decidedly unconcerned with commercial appeal and producing hits, that's all we could ask for — enough reason to keep doing what we do.

Maxine: In my opinion, expressing yourself through art is the most honest way to contribute to the world. On the downside, it sometimes comes with the very binding human question of, "Why do I tear myself up so much for the sake of art? Does anyone really care?". Being nominated and winning at the Independent Music Awards blatantly answered these questions for me. So how did it feel in one word? Liberating.

Julian: It felt absolutely awesome! I wasn't expecting it at all, and so soon after our debut album!

Dennis: How was it recording your second album, 'Who Shot Bukowski?'

A.G.: The first album was very much us testing the waters and figuring it all out. I feel like we learned a lot of lessons from it — how to collaborate effectively online, as well as the type of music we want to produce and the type of band we want to be. As a result, I feel like the production value is higher, and the overall sound is more focused and deliberate.

Maxine: The whole experience was an ultimate freedom I cherished. I wrote most of the lyrics on "Who Shot Bukowski?" during a dark time in my life — broken hearted and lost. I believe the whole writing process allowed me to exorcise my demons. Seeing and hearing my words set into music was an entire healing process — one filled with accidents, recoveries and revelations.

Julian: It was definitely a unique experience! My work on the first album's tracks was mostly recorded while I paid AG a visit in Chicago and was nursing a heartbreak. The second album, on the other hand, was the first time we worked together an ocean apart for the entirety of recording the album.

Dennis: What were your goals for this album that you wanted to accomplish with it (creatively) and do you feel it went exactly to plan?

A.G.: I've always thought of our creative process as very "scientific" in nature. I don't mean that in the sense that we follow strict procedures and apply proven formulas. On the contrary, it's almost the opposite of that. The music usually starts with a concept or hypothesis that we want to prove or disprove — can we make a tin can substitute for a snare drum, or can we combine disparate noises in a way that's interesting and engaging to the listener? We follow that up with a series of "experiments" that we iterate over. Somewhere along the line, the hypothesis is either proven or disproven. Either way, we usually end up with something interesting.

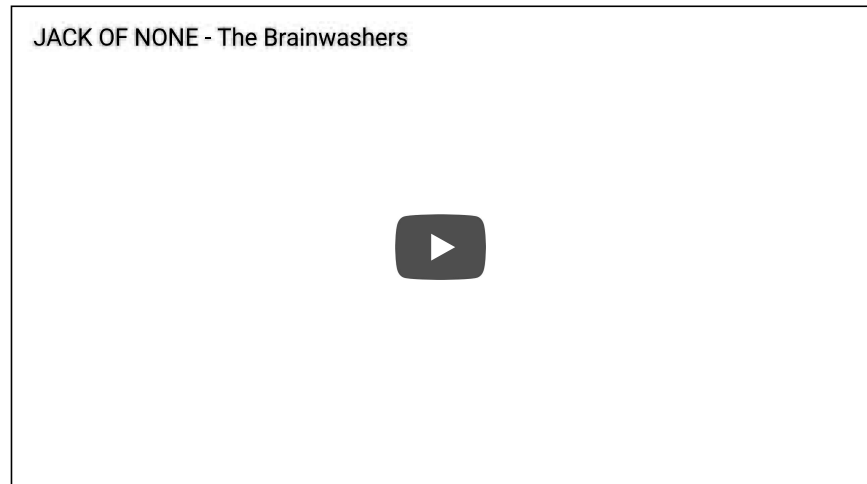
Most of the tracks in "Who Shot Bukowski?" were crafted using that sort of methodology, which I feel paints a better picture of the type of band we aspire to be.

Sound-wise, I like to think the music in this album treads a fine line between structure, repetition and predictability, vs. chaos, disharmony and the unexpected. I think the track "Dear Georges" is a perfect example of what I mean.

Maxine: AG and Julian constantly leave me awe-inspired with the music they create. This album was no exception. As the lyricist and vocalist, I sought to do their music justice by being more daring and experimental with both my writing and vocal styles. Unlike on our first album, I wrote all of the lyrics here from scratch. I also played around with my own voice a lot more — humming, chanting, singing and even somewhat rapping from time to time. In terms of our goals as a band, I definitely believe this

album went exactly as planned in the sense that there was never a definite “plan”. We’re all about experimentation and surprises. Predictability is something we leave at the door.

Julian: My goal for every album is to express myself as truthfully as I can, and to push myself by doing something I haven’t done before.



Dennis: ‘The Brainwashers’ makes quite the poetic point, and I couldn’t have said it any better myself (laughs), but seriously, can you highlight any specifics that you may have had in mind when writing it?

A.G.: I’m one of Maxine’s biggest fans. To me, her work on this track is uncharacteristic of what she normally does because it’s less cryptic and introspective.

Whether or not it was her intention, I think of it as a call to action against the herd/mob mentality we so often witness in social media. It’s particularly frustrating to me that so many people these days feel the need to shout their opinions out loud for the world to hear, but they’re usually just echoing some uninformed tweet they read without taking the time to genuinely think for themselves. I’m reminded of a quote by Mark Twain. He said “Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it’s time to pause and reflect”.

I know you asked for specifics, but I would rather not offend people who are more likely to flame me than engage in healthy discourse.

Dennis: These days, I can completely understand where you’re coming from. I’ve found myself wanting to comment on posts online from time to time and find myself worrying about offending someone (somehow) in anything I say. So, a lot of times, I end up refraining from posting anything at all.

Maxine: Honestly? I couldn’t have written this track with so much passion if not for AG. He and I often discuss our observations and concerns over the world today, and how people seem to blindly allow themselves to be manipulated by the internet and the media. “The Brainwashers” is a nostalgic love letter to the world – one that asks them to listen to their own voices before those of others, and to seek who they truly are on the inside before sleepwalking into an abyss of machine hearts and robotic souls.

Dennis: How was it making the video for it?

A.G.: It was my wife, Mica, who insisted we do something with the track. She really believed in the message and its social relevance. She was also a big fan of the music and its overall vibe.

We knew we wanted to do a narrative with animation because the song reminded us so much of old sci-fi classics like “Invasion of the Bodysnatchers”. Maxine worked with an architect, Benedict Ros, on the storyboard.

Mica and I approached a few animation studios, but found that their quotations were way out of budget! Thankfully, I found a kindred spirit in artist Ivan Ilic, who’s a very talented animator and musician based in Serbia. He agreed to work on it almost as a passion-project — adding his personal touch as an artist and interacting with us every step along the way using an app called Slack.

We ended up really hitting it off. He's become a close friend, and a fervent supporter of the band. We definitely look forward to collaborating more with him in the future!

JACK OF NONE - "Mrs. Stitcher" [Official Music Video]



Dennis: How about the video for 'Mrs. Stitcher', how was that and did you ever release a full version of 'Confessions of a Chop Chop Lady as yet? 'Asking for a friend..' ha ha...

no, I am perhaps morbidly interested in how you visually presented the powerful song.

A.G.: Jack of None was actually formed from the ashes of a band called Utakan, which was comprised of my wife, Maxine and myself. We were performing regularly in Philippine art venues and spoken word / performance art events — usually as part of my Dad's "Cesare and the Electric Underground Collective" Tour between 2006 and 2012. "Mrs Stitcher" and "Confessions of a Chop Chop Lady" are 2 numbers we performed regularly.

When we released "Who's Listening to Van Gogh's Ear?", it became apparent how important video would be in getting attention on social media. Most people just don't pay attention to audio-only content. I decided to piece together a video for "Mrs Stitcher" using old footage of Utakan, and some performance art Maxine did back in the day.

Considering I was teaching myself basic video editing on the fly, I think it turned out pretty well.

Maxine: AG did an awesome job creating the music video for Mrs. Stitcher. As for "Confessions of a Chop Chop Lady", our trailer was actually banned from many social media sites, claiming that it contained "violence" and "disturbing content" (I guess we can blame that on my penchant for existentialist art films). As for the video's full version — let's just say that it may be out there — somewhere — hidden along with the rest of the Chop-Chop Lady's body parts (laughs).

Dennis: Well, I've looked around a lot and if it is out there, it must be buried deep in the digital ground somewhere, because I've not had any luck so far. Perhaps this will be a good candidate for a DVD release one day??

Maxine, your singing style in 'Little Devil Girl' (in particular) reminds me of Nicole Blackman (slightly), have you heard (and read) her works? Who else's poetry inspires you?

Maxine: Thank you for the compliment! As previously mentioned, I thrive on artistic experimentation and the idea of creating something new. I'd like to think that my work takes a rather sly and subtle approach — one that strikes late at night — cryptically — when you're all alone and your defenses are down. Perhaps it's for this reason that many of my favorite writers and philosophers are those whose works seek to find the beauty and the light in the darkness: Charles Bukowski, Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolf, Wislawa Szymborska, Kahlil Gibran, Baudelaire, Sartre, Nietzsche — the list goes on and on. I'm a voracious reader when it comes to poetry and philosophy, and I probably collect way too many books.

Dennis: How often has the band played out live so far?

Jack of None: Unfortunately, the fact that we live so far apart prevents us from performing live these days. The limited instances that we're able to interact in the same physical space are mostly devoted to studio work.

The irony is that Utakan, which is the band that Jack of None evolved from, was primarily a live band and never recorded a thing in the studio!

We do miss playing live the way we used to. There was always an air of uncertainty in the shows we did — especially when working alongside performance artists and poets who tend to be unpredictable. We

never had time to rehearse either, so we'd show up with rough ideas of how we wanted things to play out. It was exhilarating!

Maxine: We've done gigs in the past wherein I incorporated a voice changer in order to depict the many voices of the heart. We've also done impromptu performance art alongside the music. We like being open to surprises – even among ourselves – and the planning of events is just something we feel may hinder us from exploring the depths of self-expression.

Dennis: How have the overall responses been from fans and audiences?

A.G.: I can't really speak for live performances, but the reception to the music we've been putting out has far exceeded my expectations.

Not too long ago, there was a kid from the Philippines who reached out to us on Facebook. He claimed to be writing a paper for school that would review our music. He said his favorite track was "Pater Ignosce Mihi", and he wanted to know if his understanding of it was "correct".

The thought that we were able to reach somebody like him, and at some level, deepen his appreciation of music – that affected me in a really positive way!

In 2017, we witnessed our banner flying higher than ever – we were featured in a number of major publications in the Philippines; we received a good deal of radio airplay in both Chicago and Manila; online writers and music critics continued to be exceedingly generous with their praise; and we're having this interview with you today! All those things were completely unexpected. As the saying goes, "We must be doing something right"!

Maxine: The overall responses have been incredible. In this day and age, many people seem to think of music as a mere element they can use to "fill-in" the background silences in their lives. Though we see nothing wrong with that, we're extremely blessed to have a relatively small, but loyal following comprised of imaginative people who want to truly "experience" music and art. To know that what we create provides a new avenue for this breed of introspective individuals is both humbling and exciting.

Dennis: What have been some of the biggest challenges for the band to date?

A.G.: Timezone differences and the distance that separates members of the band is at the top of the list, in my opinion. But thinking about it now, that's really at the core of what the band is, and why we do what we do.

Maxine: Waiting for the "artistic demons" to come howling.

Dennis: Being siblings, has there been any difficulties in keeping 'family' out of the band and vice versa?

A.G.: Not at all! On the contrary, we're able to be brutally honest with each other without worrying about feelings getting hurt. By the same token, we're able to pat each other on the back without worrying about egos getting out of control. We grew up together, and are as close as can be, so we know exactly what we bring to the table as individuals.

What really helps is we all know when a member is going through some sort of personal crisis and needs to be cut some slack. That's a sharp contrast from, "I don't know what my drummer is going through, and I don't care! He needs to show more professionalism!"

Maxine: I wouldn't have it any other way. I love my brothers to pieces, and I treasure the mutual love, respect, patience and understanding we have for one another.

Julian: Absolutely not! It makes things a million times easier working with people I love, grew up with, and have known all my life.

Dennis: How would you describe the Jack of None 'brand' and how the name pertains to the vision of the band?

A.G.: I think Maxine can probably explain things better – especially when it comes to the band name.

Regarding the "brand" and how we want to be perceived, I will say that music is an art form. As such, it has multiple levels of appreciation – no different from painting, or film. When it comes to music, the most basic form of appreciation manifests itself in being fond of a tune, or grooving to a beat that's blasting away in the background. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that. I appreciate music at that level myself, which is most evident in the playlist I use in my car when driving through bad traffic, or what I enjoy working out to. That being said, I feel like Jack of None's music isn't meant to be appreciated at that level, in the same way that a person doesn't go to see a David Lynch film expecting

to appreciate it at the same level as an Avengers movie. This is actually a conversation I had with Maxine and Julian over drinks during the holidays.

Maxine: The name “Jack of None” can mean many things to different people. To me, it’s poetic wordplay for how we, as artists, experiment with all kinds of sounds and explore the possibilities with all kinds of art. That, in itself, somehow makes us the “jack” of all trades. But because this is a rather (dare I say) quixotic artistic venture, when asked to classify our music into a specific genre, there is currently “none”.

In this regard, our band’s “brand” is based on Art-Rock experimentation and all the twists and turns that those 3 words come with.

Dennis: Maxine, the album covers all (seemingly) have a common theme about them, is there a specific story behind them?

Maxine: Surfaces bore me. It’s what’s on the inside that excites me. All of our album covers are my works of art that depict the desire to discover what lies beyond the surface – an invitation to take an introspective journey to the deep crevices of the soul.

Dennis: Is there a new album in the works for this or next year?

A.G.: Absolutely, and we can’t wait for everybody to hear what we have in store! Personally, I feel like it will be the best one yet! Though we haven’t decided if it will be a full album, or a series of EPs with staggered release dates.

Maxine: Yes, please! Dear Demons: come out, come out, wherever you are!

Dennis: (laughs nervously and slowly moves away from Maxine) (ha ha, just joking) What can you tell me about it so far?

A.G.: So far, the music is sounding bigger and darker, but also more melodic (and accessible?) than anything we’ve done before. If things go according to plan, it will be a roller-coaster ride from start to finish – full of twists and turns through lush soundscapes, brutal riffs and groovier, more care-free works. We’re having more fun on this one for sure!

Julian: My brother and I had a great time recording in the short time he was here! We were able to work on 4 tracks, which I think are pushing our boundaries even further. One of our new tracks on the album incorporates a lot of wicked slide work that I hope you’ll all enjoy!

Dennis: What do you have lined up for the next few months?

A.G.: Another animated video for the track “Dear Georges” is in the works. We’re also continuing to work on the next album, which will probably be released some time between June and August.

Maxine: We’re currently filming a documentary on the band, as well as looking into music videos for our tracks “Dear Georges” and “Polyamorous Serial Monogamist”. We’re also releasing our EP titled “The Tattle Tale Heart”, and working on our third album.

Aside from that, we’ll be taking our music to visual arts exhibitions and presenting it in such a way that the audience doesn’t just “hear” us, but also “sees” and “feels” us. I won’t go into too much detail on this as it’s best left as a surprise.

Dennis: What kind of advice might you have for young musicians just getting started in music?

A.G.: The fact that nobody seems to know what it means to “make it” in the music industry these days isn’t a disadvantage for you. It’s an opportunity. Don’t be discouraged. Be bold and pave your own path forward if you have to.

Maxine: Listen to your own voice, and don’t let anyone change it. Keep it raw and authentic. Have courage, have heart, and remember that it’s all about the journey – not the destination.

Julian: As the great Adam Duritz once said, “just get an electric guitar, take some time, and learn how to play”.

Dennis: Do you have any final words you’d like to share with our readers?

A.G.: If you’re curious after reading this, I invite you to check us out! Physical copies of our albums are sold at Reckless Records in Wicker Park, Chicago. They’re also available for download and streaming in all major digital distribution platforms.

Our music may not be for everybody, but could be worth checking out if you fancy something different!

Maxine: "And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music." -Friedrich Nietzsche

Biography: JACK OF NONE is an experimental rock band split between Manila, Philippines and Chicago IL, USA. It is comprised of siblings A.G. Syjuco (principal composer on guitar, bass and synths), Maxine Syjuco (poet-songwriter and vocalist) and Julian Syjuco (guitar).

The band's debut album, "Who's Listening to Van Gogh's Ear?" was released globally in April of 2016. It garnered critical acclaim, and was described as "haunting and thought-provoking"; "a brave new day for OPM (Original Philippine Music)"; "progressive and bold"; "an odd, fascinating combination of poetry, art, and rock into a satisfying whole". The album received 3 nominations at the 15th Independent Music Awards (including Best Album in its genre), and was awarded "Best Album Design and Photography" at the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts in New York City in November of 2016.

The band's second album, "Who Shot Bukowski?" features much of the same dark, thought-provoking – and at times – disturbing themes that were beloved in the first record, but with a more evolved sound that showcases a penchant for experimentation in the form of densely layered sound, as well as unexpected twists and turns in musical arrangements.

The siblings are the progeny of highly regarded multi-media artists Cesare and Jean Marie Syjuco, who manage Art Lab. Art Lab was a vital hub for multi-media experimentation in the 1990s, and now stands on a combined studio-and- exhibition space committed to continue its mission "to develop new directions and alternative new audiences for Philippine art".

Audio:

Who's Listening to Van Gogh's Ear [buy](#) [share](#)
 by Jack of None

1. Hotel Carcass 00:00 / 04:09

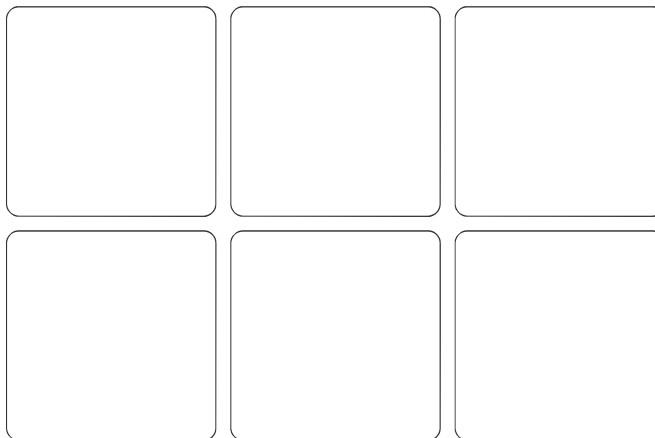
Who Shot Bukowski [buy](#) [share](#)
 by Jack of None

4. Dear Georges (Vous Petit Monstre) 00:00 / 04:06

The Tattle Tale Heart [buy](#) [share](#)
 by Jack of None

4. Polyamorous Serial Monogamist 00:00 / 04:27

Photos:



Links:

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