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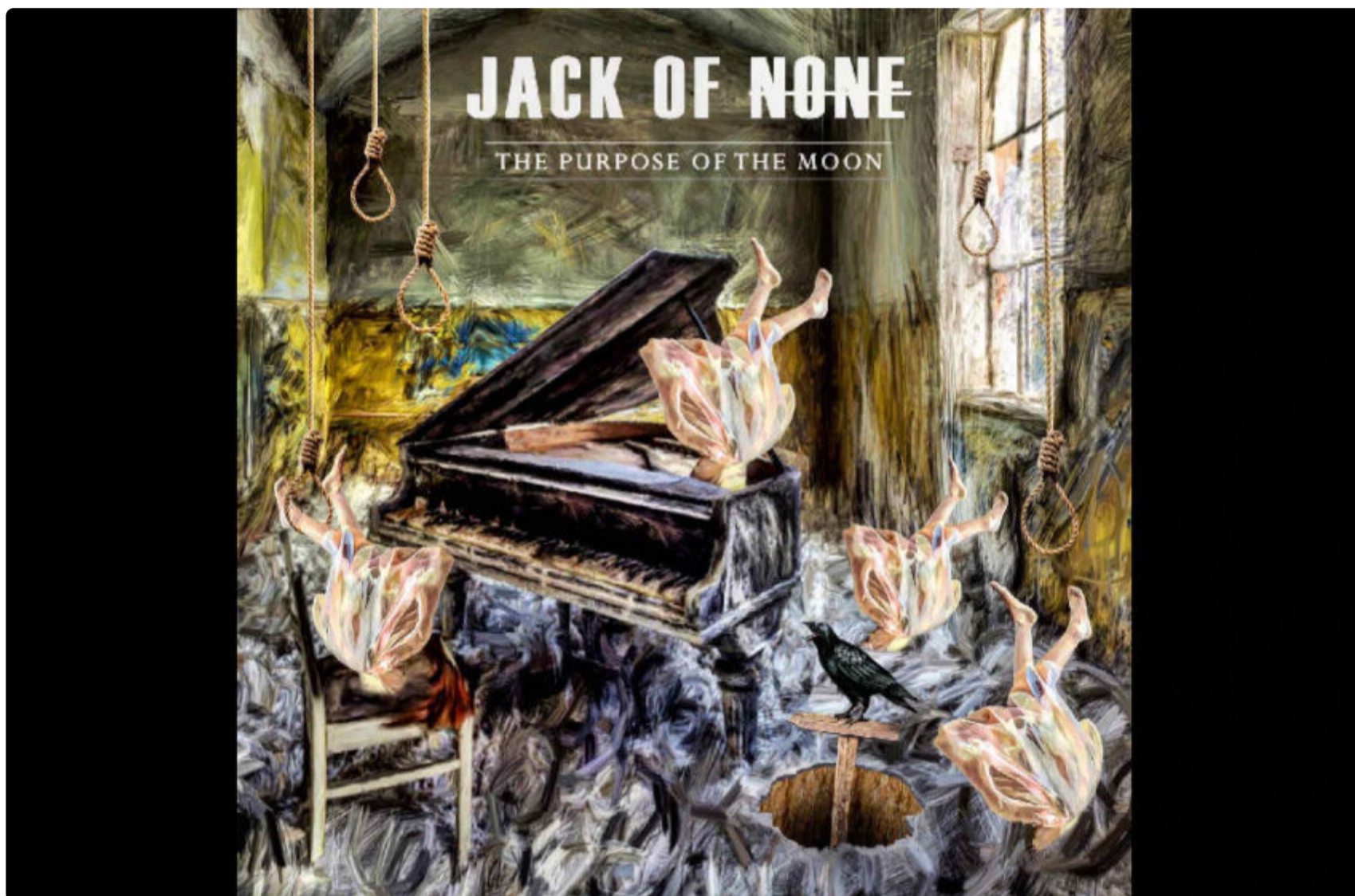
Jack Of None – The Purpose Of The Moon

MUSIC REVIEWS



Jer@SBS

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Jack Of None – The Purpose Of The Moon – EP Review

You gotta love it.

You gotta recognize the fact that, of the .1% of bands fearless enough to combine music & art to begin with, that only .001% would ever have the courage, integrity, and confidence to put out a song like “Maman” as the lead single/gateway IN. To call that a bold move, would be to put it as mildly for sure.

That being said...context always matters...heck, if anything, it matters even more when it comes to the music of Jack Of None if you've got any hopes of understanding what this band is ever on about. You might be lucky enough to catch a couple of Maxine Syjuco's clever poetic references along the way, but chances are you'll end up spending hours down the rabbit-hole of Google search trying to keep up with her or figure out what dark corners of the universe we share that she's pulling her inspirations from. It's one of the many things about Jack Of None that I've loved from the first time I heard them & still holds true to this day...the combination of mischief, mystery, and that extra hint of malevolence has always pulled me right toward this band, ever since I listened to *Who's Listening To Van Gogh's Ear* back in 2016. No one out there that I can think of or recall by name since, mainstream or independent, has reached the level of dedication to the craft like this band of three has over these past four/five years – their passion for the bizarre & their faithful willingness to be the oddity of the scene has continually shown throughout their music as time marched on. At the end of 2016, not only did they make our **top ten list** in our search for the year's best new sound with their debut record, but they've never stopped thrilling us, or the massively supportive network of fans they've got spread out worldwide. From spectacular videos like “*The Brainwashers*,” to their sophomore record *Who Shot Bukowski?*, to the most recent experience we had with their single “*Michigan Ex Machina (She Wasn't Me)*” from 2018 – we've been a proud champion in the corner of Jack Of None for as long as we've had the opportunity to be fans. With this new record they've got out NOW, called *The Purpose Of The Moon* – I don't want to give away too many spoilers about how I feel away just yet...but suffice it to say, it's largely unchanged.

OKAY FUCK IT. FUCK SPOILERS WHO CARES I LOVE IT LOVE IT LOVE IT WHEN JACK OF ~~NONE~~ RETURNS!!!

I'm sure you can sense my enthusiasm, but truly, I mean it – all of it & more. When I started this whole sleepingbagstudios thing way back whenever that was in 2012, it's always been my most sincere hope to discover projects just like this that are supremely proud of making music unlike any other out there. I'm equally proud of them, believe me...A.G., Maxine, Julian...this band of brothers & sisters is practically like family to me at this point; they've thrived on my playlists for years now with no signs of that slowing down any time soon, thankfully. There are so many times where the word unique is bandied about with no real thought for the power that word possesses...but no one out there defines it like Jack Of ~~None~~.

And lordy...if that isn't proven just by pushing play on "Maman" I don't know what else would do it for ya. Right off the drop, as a longstanding fan, I can tell you INSTANTLY from listening to this very song that Jack Of ~~None~~ has found even more ways to evolve...perhaps most notably in the outstanding & award-worthy production you'll find A.G. Syjuco has put into this effort. To be truthful, even hearing that was perhaps more impressive than anything else I could tell ya to start with – you gotta understand that, for a band to have sounded as incredible as this crew has already in the past, to even find the slight opportunities that might exist for their own evolution is beyond commendable. LISTEN to the crystal clarity, the edge, the bite, the innocence, and the venom a track like this has in the mix & in its ideas will ya? "Maman" explores that signature style of opening that Jack Of ~~None~~ likes to bring to their records where each piece gets revealed and the depths of their mayhem & madness builds & builds – not only is the creativity itself as insightfully artistic & stunningly designed as ever, but the sheer SOUND should bring you to your knees in awe of what this band is capable of. Think about it – less than four-minutes & thirty-seconds isn't exactly a massive amount of time, you feel me? In "Maman" alone, you'll go from the smoothest & silkiest subtle Jazz grooves, into brilliantly executed exploratory/experimental art-music, to blazingly innovative Metal riffs & digital frequencies flaring up all over the place – a feat with such a wide range of sound isn't an easy one to pull off to begin with, but **Jack Of ~~None~~** wanders into this song like they LIVE in dark moments like these. Indeed, it's the music that makes this family-based band tap into something extraordinary altogether through this common goal they share as Jack Of ~~None~~ – and what it unleashes in all of them is as purely entertaining as it is straight-up compelling to experience, every time. I don't know what all knobs have been twisted & what effects are applied & whatnot – but I can tell ya this with complete certainty – Maxine sounds freakin' magnificent in her vocals on "Maman" – the story she weaves is as poetic, strange, and stockpiled with vivid imagery as ever, but it's the actual sound of her voice itself & the immaculately focused performance she puts in that has you hanging on her every word throughout this first twisted tale on *The Purpose Of The Moon*. "Maman" is challenging – like all great art truly is – but that's absolutely part of its uncanny charm too; you start listening to a song like this and it becomes a natural curiosity...you'll want to hear where it all leads, and you'll follow. Check out the lyric video that puts a wild ocular spin on the amazing artwork Maxine put together for *The Purpose Of The Moon* and give "Maman" a spin or two below!

JACK OF NONE - "Maman" (Official Video) - 2020



Like I was alluding to at the beginning, you'll find what you love about this band, enhanced x10 – I just think it's undeniable in my opinion. Like if I could hook this album directly into my veins and mainline it, I would, you feel me? As you slide into the wild production of "Pirouettes Of Night" you'll get the extreme crunch & push/pull energy between the loud/quiet dynamics that Jack Of ~~None~~ explores with such confidence every time they hit the record button, along with Maxine's penchant for creating original poetry that also reaches into familiar territory to twist your daydreams into nightmares. As she's managed to in the past like she is here in the present, she'll create a hybrid between the two worlds by drawing inspiration from sweeter material like "Baa Baa Blacksheep" or "The Lord's Prayer" in between her own original verses, flexing the artistic versatility and potential reach of a song like "Pirouettes Of Night" even further. Even if it's not exactly something you'd probably wanna put on right before you sleep or even dare to listen to without the lights on in every corner of your house, hearing things we recognize & can identify with is an extremely smart move on the part of Jack Of ~~None~~ and the way that Maxine writes. It's not forced, it comes naturally to her, and it's ultimately become a signature aspect of **Jack Of ~~None~~** in many ways over time...I think a lot of their existing fans will love to discover this part of what they do is fully intact, and as I've also mentioned, sounds freakin' fantastic. I think just about any critic or reviewer would likely be foolish to attempt to fully understand the depth in the

meaning & allegories that run deep throughout Maxine's words...but that won't stop me from trying anyway! If I had to hazard a guess about what a song like "Pirouettes Of Night" would be about...I'd probably go with something along the lines of a cut that examines the struggle of the human soul, battling to find reasons to go towards the light & what's good as opposed to being dragged downward by our demons and the theoretical promise of a better tomorrow offered by some God or religion. Again, all I could provide ya with is theories at best...and I've got the words right here in front of me! As much as any of us could scrutinize and try to dial in on what Maxine's writing about on "Pirouettes Of Night" or the vast majority of Jack Of None's tunes...there's so much interpretive value in her words that we'd all come to separate conclusions about what it's really all about & debate it for years & years. And hopefully we do! Why shouldn't we be? Like great paintings & sculptures, music & writing induce similar kinds of passionate emotions in us that provoke discussion – when it's done right – and that's where this band relentlessly excels...they do it right ALL the time, and get the maximum out of their art.

At least that's my opinion...hopefully it's yours too. Don't get me wrong, if you're living on a steady diet of Top-40 or the chilled-out open-toed sandals sounds of Jack Johnson, chances are you're gonna find what Jack Of None is doing is well over your head. This isn't me shouting at you down the mountain from atop my guru perch – it's just facts. I've tested this out multiple times right here in my own world; my wife can't hang with Jack Of None, no matter how hard I try to explain why they're amazing. Here's where the real Inception-esque factor comes into play though...it's the fact that two people that are as connected as my wife and I are, and that we can have a polarizing & completely different reaction to the music they make, that truly speaks to how committed & fearlessly Jack Of None pursue the core of their vision. If there are a couple of casualties along the way from people out there looking for comfortable sing-along songs for their ride to the ol' 9-5 – so fucking BE IT, I say...and I'd imagine this band would feel the same. You don't make art like they make without fully expecting strong reactions from just about everyone – and there's never been a moment of listening to Jack Of None where I've ever felt like anyone could possibly be indifferent about it...above all things, that tends to be the most important aspect to avoid of all; they expertly navigate the course far past normal, way beyond the typical, and through the unknown to the other side of it all, like they're nautical champions of the Bermuda Triangle. What makes it tougher for a band like this to thrive in today's world are exactly the same strengths that'll see them continually succeed & give them reasons to keep going; we're all behind in terms of what we get exposed to in art & music – largely because there's damn near no proper vehicles or venues or airwaves suited to get songs like "Mr Lumpus Decides To Die" out there into the world – but that also gives Jack Of None the ability to break more ground every single day they're out there doing what they do. Ultimately, all this makes it tough to examine a record like *The Purpose Of The Moon* and declare any one tune as more single-worthy than the rest, because we're never talking about simple verse-chorus-verse stuff here by any stretch of the imagination...BUT...if I had to choose, I'd be fairly inclined to look at "Mr Lumpus Decides To Die," or "Dark The Star" right afterwards, as solid choices to follow their lead-single "Maman" in enticing you in. Not only does "Mr Lumpus Decides To Die" have one of the best titles of any song this year and a slight degree of more accessible sound for people to latch onto through the rhythm & melody in Maxine's verses – but take a damn good listen/look at the lyricism she's got goin' on in this storyline! Dark AF without question, but an extremely solid concept to have built around, "Mr Lumpus Decides To Die" revolves around the tale of the many missing persons, and somewhat implies where it is they end up in the process. They bust into a like...I mean...it's enormous and beastly like something you'd expect outta KMFDM, but with a whole lot of savage funk in its soul too, you dig? Definitely one of the most gripping cuts on the record from start to finish – it's a ghoulish & psychedelically-tinged late-night graveyard freak-out session – and who doesn't want some of that?

"Dark The Star" takes what's almost the polar opposite approach in comparison to the rest of what you've heard so far, which in itself creates a noticeable separation that has you listening intently to what's up on this slow-burning & sensory set of vibes by Jack Of None. While I mentioned its single-worthy potential – and stand by it though I'd probably still side with good ol' "Mr Lumpus" first – I think there's tremendous value for the band overall when it comes to the depth they display throughout this tune. A genuine highlight for my brother-from-another-mother Julian Syjuco on the lead guitar for sure, and a song that in general, feels like Jack Of None almost can't help but stand out for, showing much restraint & atmospheric melody guiding them as they glide smoothly from beginning to end without the interruption of some kind of additional chaos or mayhem in the mix along the way. While there's never been and likely never will be a limitation on where their music will take them, "Dark The Star" also really felt like it revealed a whole different dimension of the depth in the music this band makes that I'd never been personally exposed to before, even after faithfully digesting their entire catalog many times over. As I often claim on these pages of ours, any chef would tell ya it's the simplest ingredients that usually make all the difference – and I'd imagine many listeners out there will find that to be true of "Dark The Star" – this isn't Jack Of None pushing the envelope as usual, so much as it is making sure that every single ticking second is professionally dripping with a mesmerizing mix of alluring-meets-deadly sound. It's not like they handle it with kid gloves or any less confidently or fearlessly than any other tune – it's as simple as you can hear they've taken their time with this material to make sure they got the most out of it & kudos to them for doing that...the whole record speaks strongly on a production level...and moments like "Dark The Star" that achieve a breathtaking intensity without them even breaking a sweat is simply more proof that the effect of listening to Jack Of None creates a connection between you and their music that can't be compared, only felt & understood by the rest of us out there listening as well.

OK...if that's A.G. laying down the piano in the mid-song breakdown on "Houdini Whodunit" then the man deserves some well-earned bonus points. Maybe it was "Houdini Whodunit" I dunno – but whomever it was, someone get'em some bonus points will ya? The creativity in this band is such a rarity out there in the scene and always so magnificently impressive to experience. Much like I mentioned with "Pirouettes Of Night" earlier on, this is an excellent version of much of what we know & love from Jack Of None in the classic recipe of ingredients stacking up throughout "Houdini Whodunit" – you've got the signature devious mood & atmosphere set up by the band, the digitally-enhanced edge to the vocals, and a masterful display of wordplay in Maxine's lyrics all right there for you to enjoy. Coming out like a lullaby that's taken a sharp decisive turn into a labyrinth of twisting syllables, eerie background, and powerful dynamics on the surface – make no mistake, this song is like all the things in your closet have come to life after the lights have gone out, so beware. Jack Of None comes out firing on all-cylinders with a mix of haunting melody and savage viciousness as they transition & morph their way through the music of "Houdini Whodunit" and give the real fans an update on the sound they love. They have this uncanny ability to generate what I can only describe as like...a metallic or mechanical vibe to the grooves & sound they lock into

at times...you can almost close your eyes and visualize Jack Of None in the middle of a warehouse at midnight using whatever sorcery they use to make their music via a chorus of machine surrounding them, controlled only by the sheer power of their minds, of course. The badass grind of this rhythm & groove at its most intense is designed to grab ya & never let go, and the remarkably adventurous & ambitious construction of the lyrics on this song has Maxine reaching into her bag of tricks deep to pull out the magic in the art of being a wordsmith for you all to enjoy.

"It's evolution baby!" as a wise man named Eddie Vedder once said. It's one thing to step into the realm of experimental music to begin with, like they did back in 2016 – but it's another thing entirely to do what they do in coloring so far outside of the lines of what's typical, now knowing that there are legions of dedicated fans just like myself spread out far & wide across the globe that truly respond to their ideas & music. You can hear how the additional confidence has played a significant role in how they've approached & attacked these songs – they've always thrown themselves all-in to their art & craft, but you can hear how that is all so much more targeted, specific, focused, and spot-on in the results now. "The Game Of Dying" is another highlight example of their ever-versatile sound & the extraordinary use of the musicianship in **Jack Of None** – a track like this just as much about texture as it is about tone. Overall, you've really gotta look at what they're achieving as a band with their catalog so far, and how it all adds up towards something overwhelmingly special with the potential to change the whole musical landscape. Think of all the people you know out there that make 'experimental' music...and how often being under that label seems to give license to the general quality being sacrificed in some way, or the instrumentation not quite being up to snuff – there's NONE of that BS in what Jack Of None creates, and no pair of functioning ears could ever conclude otherwise; this band is tight as tight can be, and they've ensured that the refinement of their art is at an all-time high with the focus they've applied to the stellar lineup of songs that run throughout the set-list of *The Purpose Of The Moon*. Whatever it is that A.G.'s cooked-up to go with the twisted-take on "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" in the music...I honestly don't even know...the guy's superhuman sometimes...I think we're hearing a riff built of harmonics? He'll know full-well what I mean...it both starts & begins "The Game Of Dying" – it's enhanced by a gentle record scratch in the final moments too, which was honestly like the freakin' cherry on top for me. The mechanical vibes of Jack Of None pound out a vibrant & lively rhythm & highly tangible melody mired in the dark as per their standard, and exceed your expectations with impeccable attention to every detail.

Wrapping up *The Purpose Of The Moon* with "Monsieur X" and including this cut was a great idea, even though it's the only song on the record that doesn't feature Maxine. I ain't gonna lie, even without their superstar quarterback in the lineup, **Jack Of None** proves just how mesmerizing they can truly be with this last instrumental cut – it's absolute gold. There are songs that need words in this lifetime, and there are songs that say everything that needs to be said without using a single word – and this is the latter case without question – A.G. & Julian display a breathtaking array of skills and superior sound at work throughout "Monsieur X" as they play this together for the finale. It certainly ends the album with a definitive conclusion...and it offers this...man...this exquisite glimpse of light through the cracks of darkness in the melody that's like looking at the world through a pinhole's view with a cracked prism as your window to the outside. You get this isolated & captive sensation while you're listening...but not one without significant doses of hope & possibility in the mix as well...which is...pretty damn awesome to say the very least. I think the writing is tremendous, the execution is flawless, and the sound-selection itself has such impressive melodic depth to it that you can't help but ride along with this final cut to find out where it'll go. The brightening up of its demeanor was perhaps the most unexpected twist you'll find on this new record by Jack Of None – when the piano first comes in, it's like every cloud & shadow that has enshrouded this band from day one breaks away entirely, if only for a moment, allowing these wonderfully tortured souls to see the sunshine & remember the feeling of its warmth.

Another exceptional record from **Jack Of None** all around, and one that proves the band continues to evolve, even from the massively high standards they've already set in the past. *The Purpose Of The Moon* is more than a satisfying listen from start to finish, it's another noteworthy artistic achievement that both raises the stakes for the rest to follow, and inspires others to reach for their level of inspired creativity at the same time. Because you WANT music to be as different and truly unique as this is – I've seen the proof of that time & again here at these very pages of ours, and I can certainly see it visually in the rabid response that fans have about Jack Of None's new music every time they put some out. They bring their A-game to every moment of *The Purpose Of The Moon* & live up to the incredible reputation they've earned for themselves as the innovative groundbreakers of the independent Art/Music scene they are – Jack Of None's latest EP is out and available NOW... go treat your ears to something different.

Find out more about Jack Of None at their official pages below!

Official Website: <http://www.jackofnone.net>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jackofnoneband>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/jackofnoneband>

Bandcamp: <https://jackofnone.bandcamp.com>

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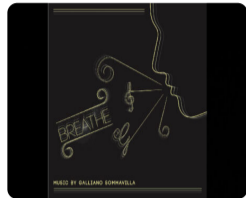
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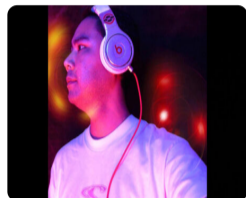
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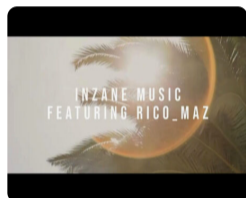
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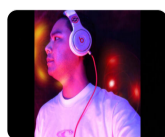
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