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For Immediate Release:



Liam Gowing's *MOTHER LODGE: Alpha + Omega* coming Nov. 15

Five-year "exile" in China leads to cathartic double album: 24 cuts in all

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Multi-instrumentalist singer/songwriter Liam Gowing, a former music journalist and onetime columnist at the *Los Angeles Times*, has announced a release date of November 15 for his second collection of original music, a double album entitled *Mother Lode*. The DIY behemoth—two sets of classic melodic songs running the gamut from lo-fi indie-pop to virtual symphonic rock—has been five years in the making: the result of an inspired decision to go into a self-imposed exile in the People's Republic of China.

"At the end of 2016," Gowing explains, "a Buddhist friend told me that she would be treating 2017 as the year of her death. So, despite being in perfect health, she planned to knock out everything on her bucket list then and there. It got me thinking about some unfinished business of my own.

"Back in 1997, after an amazing round-the-world backpacking trip, seeing Mount Everest, meeting the Dalai Lama and writing songs along the way, I blew off the University of Chicago Law School in order to pursue my first love—music."

Returning to Los Angeles where he'd attended UCLA, Gowing subsequently recorded a 4-song demo he hoped would land him a recording contract. Unfortunately, the weekend he finished it, his mother, an opera singer of local renown in his hometown of Dallas, called with the news that she had inoperable pancreatic cancer.

"So I ended up shopping the cursed thing during her illness and immediately after her death in 1998. And it actually opened some doors—there was interest from the label that produced Beck and Elliott Smith, as well as a chance to join Kara's Flowers before they mutated into Maroon 5—but I was too dejected to walk through them. Then after a stint as a hired hand in a friend's psych-prog band, I sort of hung up my guitar and became a journalist. And all those songs I'd written just went into limbo."

Having developed an unshakeable knack for pop songcraft, Gowing never completely stopped writing new music, however, which came to fruition on his debut album, 2013's freewheeling indie-rock release *Drunk Sluts Forever*.

“But the first album was a fluke. The project started right after I stopped writing for *SPIN* when an out-of-work friend who was staying with me asked if he could record me in lieu of paying rent. I didn’t know Pro Tools [recording software] at all and picked newer, shorter, easier songs that I figured I could knock out quickly. For *Mother Lode*’s bigger tracks, I envisioned strings, horns, little symphonic movements. I knew I’d need intense focus and a lot of time. I felt like I needed to maroon myself somewhere.”

Gowing needed total isolation. He had to become a recluse, a hermit—a castaway.

“I considered temporarily moving to Kingman, Arizona on old Route 66 to live with the painter Mark Maggiori who was sequestered there working on all these classic landscapes of the American Southwest. His wife, fellow artist Petecia Le Fawnhawk, was my buddy and suggested it. But another friend who’d spent a few years teaching English in Beijing, working short hours for decent pay, persuaded me to take a different ‘great leap forward.’”

So in late 2017, Gowing gave up his little house in West LA, sold or gave away everything he owned—save his prized 1952 Gibson ES-125 guitar—and moved across the planet to execute a five-year plan of self-imposed musical exile. “I moved to a country where I couldn’t speak the language, to a city where I didn’t know a single person, to do a job I’d never done before.”

It was a mid-life crisis in reverse, though—not a destructive time but a productive one.

Spending his summer and winter breaks from teaching English Lit at Shanghai Jiao Tong University—the second oldest college in China and one of the most prestigious, known as “the MIT of the East”—collecting, arranging and demoing his unreleased material, Gowing quickly realized that *Mother Lode* needed to be a double album.

“I originally had 27 songs: About half from my initial time abroad up through this awful period between the death of my mother and the suicide of a close friend; the other half, songs I’d written since in a similar style that really demanded a hearing. So I split them into two sets: *Alpha*, the album I really had to make, a kind of prequel to *Drunk Sluts Forever*; and *Omega*, the album I wanted to make, a proper sequel.”

Thus Shanghai’ed, Gowing’s journey of a thousand takes began with a single click track.

Buoyed by the first Covid19-induced lockdown of the SJTU campus in January of 2020—a six-week period of near-total isolation during which he finished the drum tracks—Gowing slowly added a smorgasbord of live and virtual instruments: acoustic and electric guitars, bass, piano, organ, vibraphone and synthesizers, plus violins and cellos, trumpets and French horns, saxes, oboes and flutes on the more epic numbers.

The cuts reveal the sacrifices... [See attached “Album Rundown” for track-by-track details]

Mother Lode cover art



***Mother Lode: Alpha + Omega* credits**

All songs written, arranged and performed or programmed by Liam Gowing with drums on “Pavlov’s Dogs” (verses) and “From a Train” by Jeff Bishop. Thanks to Wang Zhiyuan, Ernest Liu and Amy Li for engineering assistance at the demo stage and mad love to Serina Wang Yuzhu for the longterm loan of her Mexican-made Stratocaster.

Mixed by Jon Griffin at LunaZen Studios.

Mastering coming soon*

Cover artwork and website assistance by Chris Varosy

Dedicated to Julian Forniss

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Bearing Gowing’s homespun imprint MojoSon, *Mother Lode* will be released via CDBaby for digital distribution to iTunes, Amazon Music, Spotify, Napster and more on Nov. 15, 2022

DOWNLOAD MP3s — (coming soon)

[STREAM](#) unmastered mixes of *Mother Lode: Alpha*

[STREAM](#) unmastered mixes of *Mother Lode: Omega*

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