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Touring member of Bastille and solo musician Charlie Barnes has just dropped his latest album, 'Last Night's Glitter', a ten track collection reimagining old favourites, with a new track to polish it off. The album comes off the back of 2018's 'Oceanography', many years of

touring the world with Bastille (finding himself on the bill twice on their ReOrchestrated tour which saw him both as support act and playing for the headlining band), taking his own album around pubs in the UK and touring via interrail across Europe. 2020 couldn't be more different

Taking tracks from 'Oceanography' and 2015's 'More Stately Mansions', 'Last Night's Glitter' is a deep dive into more than five years of work, and a look at the future. It's not a 'Greatest Hits', but another evolution showing the career and many talents of Charlie Barnes, only emboldened by his ever growing career.

As described by Barnes, "This album sounds like home. This album is me, at home." Now 'Last Night's Glitter' is out into the world, for us to listen to, from our homes (preferably social distanced), and I sat down for a catch up with Charlie, two years on from our last interview (<https://themusicssite.com/music-news/interviews/charlie-barnes-new-album-oceanography-touring-bastille-charliebarnes>).

PB: First of all, how are you doing? What a bizarre time we're all in. How have you been doing throughout these weird and ridiculous few months?

CHARLIE BARNES: David! Hello! Great to be speaking with you again. All is well and good here, I hope it's the same case for you. I've been weirdly fortunate with the timing of all of this madness, as, thankfully, the plan was that the Bastille camp would be taking the rest of the year off from touring, so we didn't have to suffer any major cancellations. I really feel for all of the people who've had to cancel or postpone big endeavours due to the pandemic. Obviously there is nothing more tragic than the number of lives being unnecessarily lost, but there are so many reasons that this continues to be such a rough period for so many people. I've mostly been walking the dog, tending to the garden, watching 'Seinfeld' (again) and recording/playing in my home studio.

PB: The world has changed a whole lot since you released 'Oceanography' back in 2018, I imagine you weren't planning then for your next album to be released in the midst of a global pandemic!

CB: Well...rather not! It should've been finished and released ages ago, but when there's no real deadline I can get embarrassingly lax with knuckling down and actually hitting the record button. I'd finished most of the recording process by the time I was doing my last shows of the 'Doom Days' album touring with Bastille, so as the world started to grind to a halt I set about getting the mixing done. I've never mixed anything myself before, so it was a steep learning curve, but it was nice to do it in an entirely pressure-free scenario.

PB; How was making 'Last Night's Glitter', in a pre-lockdown world and finishing it off in this dystopia we now live? How did even you manage to find the time between non-stop Bastille gigs and work?

CB: What was kind of nice with making this album was finally imposing some restrictions on my usual habit of throwing absolutely fucking everything at the wall arrangement wise. I didn't allow myself to double up anything, so I had to let the acoustic guitar parts do most of the work with driving the thing. Obviously that meant the actual recording process for each song was considerably shorter as there was so much less material to capture than there has been on previous albums.

Most of the production time with the album was actually spent learning and honing the parts and then getting fewer takes than I would ordinarily, so that made the recording process itself reasonably quick. There was no reinventing the wheel going on, I'd just go into the studio and do whatever felt natural for the song. It felt great.

PB: 'Last Night's Glitter' is a great piece that almost sums up your solo career so far, by combining your older tracks with new arrangements, vocals and a whole new take on your classics. What was it that made you decide to take on your existing work rather than a set of new tracks? And how did you settle on those nine tracks?

CB: Thanks! Well, the original plan with it was cooked up around the time I was submitting 'Oceanography' to my label for release. In lieu of the usual bonus tracks/b-sides, I essentially said, "I'll record some acoustic versions at some point", and it took me absolutely forever to get around to it.

One of the tours I did in support of the 'Oceanography' album was with my friends Ben (The Society Pages) and Ed (Ed the Dog), travelling around my dear old café circuit in Germany and Austria by train, playing some acoustic trio arrangements of the songs as I couldn't afford to bring a full band and hire a van and all that. I absolutely loved some of the stuff we did with the songs, so I wanted to make sure that, at some point, they would be captured like that for posterity.

When I built (I say '*I* built...') my studio at home, I thought this would be a great project to road-test it, and essentially just set about going through my back catalogue and deciding which songs sounded the best in a fingerpicked acoustic fashion. I'd treated myself to a beautiful Martin 00 acoustic after a particularly monolithic Bastille tour, and it's such a beautiful sounding thing for fingerpicking that it made the whole process extremely pleasant

indeed.

PB: The title track is a really beautiful one. How did you settle on this being the one entirely new song for the album? It feels really introspective and like it would have been cathartic to create.

CB: I wrote it very shortly after I finished the few tours I did for 'Oceanography', and through those tours and the whole release process I think I really worked a lot of stuff out about music, very specifically about my music. I also happened to be listening to a LOT of wordy sad acoustic music at the time so it was bound to happen. Originally I just assumed it would be something that would end up on my next all-original album, but when I started planning this whole stripped-back album project it just seemed like a bit of a no-brainer. It does feel like there's something special about it as a song, it always feels like that when they come out of you with so little effort.

I've had some lovely remarks from people about it. When I played it at ArcTanGent festival last year I think there were a handful of 30 something dudes in bands who reeeeeeeally fucking got it

PB: How have you found being a musician from home? Between shooting your own promo shots, and directing your video for 'Last Night's Glitter', your CV must be growing by the day!

CB: It's been nice! My wife's been in charge of all of the visual side of things; the artwork, the videos, she made that amazing cardboard TV from the promo shots and the video. I guess simply because absolutely everything to do with this album (bar the contributions I had sent in by my ultra-talented friends Jonny, Rittipo and Ciara via email) has been done in the same room, there's a simple cohesion to it all. I used to try and do absolutely everything myself when I was 20 odd, and it always came out pants. I'm older and wiser now, and I have a wife with unbelievable skills who charges me very agreeable mate's rates.

PB: 2020 threw us all a curveball. What were your original plans for this year? I remember hearing Bastille would be taking a few months away from touring, Had you filled the year with other projects to do?

CB: I had a handful of shows booked in, but not many. Those have been postponed, and hopefully as things ease up on the smaller venues I might be able to get a handful more in too. I have been enjoying doing the livestream gigs from home though. I thought I'd absolutely hate it, but, weirdly enough you do still vaguely feel that sense of connection, even when you can't see and hear the people who are there.

Ben and I will be putting out The Society Pages album in the not-too-distant future, which was the plan for this year anyway, so that's very exciting and something to get my teeth into fairly immediately after the (brief) promotional run winds down for CBLP2.5.

I also have my next album pretty much entirely written, so I'm going to work on getting that made very, very, very quickly. The other major project that has been postponed a bit by the distancing requirements is producing my friend Ukesnaile's debut album. That's going to be spectacular. All in good time.

PB: I think we've all turned to various forms of media to get us through this time, music, TV, podcasts, anything at all. What have you been using to get through lockdown?

CB: Weirdly I think I've actually been less engaged with entertainment media than I am usually. I spent the bulk of my working life sitting around in planes, dressing rooms, hotels and tour buses trying to kill time, so that's when I fill my brain up with books, podcasts and movies for a bit of escapism and time-filling. My wife and I have binged our way through Seinfeld and plenty of good movies of an evening, but it's mostly just been the joy of being home that's got me through!

PB: Now your album is out in the world, how are you planning to spend the next few months?

CB: Making another one and enjoying the fruits (ha...) of my vegetable patch.

PB: If there's one thing you want your listeners to take from 'Last Night's Glitter', what would that be?

CB: That there is no instrument classier than a lap steel. (Except maybe for flugelhorn, violin and bass clarinet...)

PB: Thank you,

'Last Night's Glitter' is available to stream on all music services, and a limited edition vinyl can be purchased at www.charliebarnesmusic.co.uk.



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