

## *Elbury (Brisbane, Australia) – band bio (October 2021)*

Songwriting and storytelling lie at the core of Brisbane-based alternative folk group, Elbury. Born in a brick-and-concrete pillbox on the side of Red Hill, as an acoustic folk duo making awkward tunes in minor keys; strained lyrics, obscure themes – the prototypical outputs of new voices trying to mark out a piece of original territory. Through the churn of the low-profile original folk scene, Elbury persisted – knowing that a band can find their own sound and beat a path forward on their own terms.

With the introduction of bass, drums and piano in recent years, the band have shifted from traditional acoustic folk to a fuller alt-folk-rock sound, including progressive and ambient elements. But the music, at heart, remains the same: honest observations, translated into verse, and multiple musical elements jostled into occasional cooperation. The band defy easy categorisation, shifting between mellow jazz interludes, jagged guitar lines, rollicking folk-rock triumphs and intricate Baroque passages. Winsome melodies take centre stage, with three-part harmonies and a close weave of sonic textures wrapped around. Without the power and bombast of harder styles of music, the beauty of the phrase and the arrangement becomes make-or-break.

In concert, Elbury's music is energetic, surprising and engaging. Songs (and sets) that lead the listener through moods, through lightness and darkness, through lush warmth and brittle emptiness. Deceptive complexity that rewards close attention. And even the odd danceable number!

Elbury will release their second long-player – *A Life in Stages* – in November 2021.

*A Life in Stages (2021)*

*Take your passport out, turn the pages.*

*People come in and out, a life in stages.*

“A Life in Stages” originally carried the working title “the 2019 LP”, which was later replaced by the “the 2020 LP” and, eventually, “the 2021 LP”. Finally, with two months left in the year, we are in the home stretch on this super-extended, pandemic-disrupted, always-second-guessing, second album project, and the work has a title - *A Life in Stages*.

Elbury is a different band to the group that produced 2017’s LP *Haunting Ground*, both in membership (Brooke joined on keys and transformed the band just in time for the 2017 album launch) and in creative process. Involvement in a songwriting club (at least for Edward’s output) meant that there were many more songs (or fragments) to choose from, when putting the track list together, and a more rapid approach to song writing has resulted in lyrical content that is more ambiguous, more economical and more open to interpretation. Add to this strong contributions from Michael (*Popular Hero*), Brooke (*Rose and Red Arrow*) and Luke (*Violet Town*), and the result is a more diverse album than our previous release. The fifth voice - Tam’s light and pure harmony – is woven into most tracks on the album, and provides long-time listeners with a link back to some of *Haunting Ground’s* finest moments.

A theme to unite the work of multiple songwriters can be elusive but, ultimately, the idea of passing years, and recalling specific times in our lives, emerged as a common thread and was captured succinctly in a line from *Passport* – “A Life in Stages”. Whether it’s reflecting on a past love (*Rose, Violet Town*), yearning for a more innocent time (*Popular Hero, Hollow, Sugar*) or dreaming of eternal youth (*Pickle*), the songs capture the joy, grief and loss we can feel so strongly for times gone by, and for our former selves.

Four years ago, when putting the finishing touches on *Haunting Ground*, we thought the next album would come quickly. Life (and SARS-CoV-2) got in the way and, before we knew it, we were racing against the clock to make a 2021 release happen!

Lead single – *Whispers* – was completed early in the project and launched in December 2019. It went on to claim a surprise bronze medal placing in the 4ZZZ Hot 100 for 2020. The pre-COVID *Whispers* launch show at the Paddo Substation feels like another lifetime... or maybe just a different stage.

So, we present our latest work, but these are not new songs for us anymore, and the desire to get on with the next evolution, and get started on new recordings, is a strong pull. Talk again soon.

