Artist: Amateur Ornithologist
Release: *The Haunted Life of Architecture*
Release date: 15th May 2026
Label: Regret Everything Records

Listen to the new Amateur Ornithologist album The Haunted Life of Architecture here

Amateur Ornithologist reveal *The Haunted Life of Architecture* on 15th May 2026

It started with a week in the Welsh countryside. In a cottage overlooking the ruins of a medieval castle. With daily walks through historical sites - hill forts, cathedrals and graveyards. So it should be no surprise that *The Haunted Life of Architecture* emerged - a psychedelic pop trip through the fears and regrets of an overactive mind.

Songwriter Daniel Clifford returned from Wales to the Sunderland coast armed with the album's skeletal structure and embarked on a period of sonic exploration with the multi-instrumentalists of Amateur Ornithologist - Maddie Smyth, Chris Perriman, Giovanni Onofri, Dan Humble and Marianne Kell.

Expanding on the "finely crafted arrangements luscious enough to sink your teeth into" (*NEVolume*) of 2024's *Hide*; "an essential album to listen to whole and in one word, magnificent" (*I Don't Hear A Single*), *The Haunted Life in Architecture* is a collage of gothic post-punk, indie folk, chamber pop and art-rock.

Amateur Ornithologist challenged themselves to craft their most ambitious album to date - creating a rich synthesis of pop and orchestral sounds, experimenting with song structures, and confronting core themes of memory, legacy and fear.

Lyrical references to 18th century botanist Mary Delany and cult 90s TV show *Ghostwatch*, neurodiversity and Agatha Christie, megalithic structures and M.R. James ghost stories highlight the collision between ages.

This uncanny sensation is conjured by the mixed media cover, featuring a collage by geographer and artist Michael Jeffries - an anonymous double-garage home sits atop "cup-and-ring" carved stone monuments, framed by brushed cotton and complete with Computer Age font. The piece asks what histories - both real and imaginary - our world is built atop.

Opener *Swing Around* is a miniature gothic opera and sets the tone for the album from foreboding string introduction to layered spoken word exorcism and its final dissonant chord. This haunted house story is intoned in Clifford's vibrato over tom-heavy drums, haunted piano and lead guitar howls.

A synth fanfare heralds *I See Faces*, which bursts into life with Chris Perriman's fluid bass, Dan Humble's incessant drumbeat and Giovanni Onofri's chiming guitars. An anthem to pareidolia, the musical foundation of the song is constantly shifting - with verses veering from jangling acoustic guitars to stomping Northern Soul rhythms complete with Marianne Kell's alto saxophone, to stop-start punk jerkiness.

If I Were To Know is the woozy heart of the album, pairing Daniel Clifford's longing vocal with Maddie Smyth's ethereal wail. Stuttering drum machines and dreamy synths create a 7/4 foundation that mushrooms into a full-blown jazz-infused pop ballad complete with viola and cello harmonies, throbbing bass and kinetic sax.

The album comes to a blistering end with *The Mirror Crack'd*, written about the disassociation and loneliness many neurodivergent people experience in group situations. Verses brood with Rick Matthews' bass synth before double-time choruses crash into life with layers of vocals, saxophone and Maddie Smyth's effects-drenched viola. The track brings the collection to a close through a cacophony of wailing trumpets, acerbic guitars, sampled vocals and pounding drums.

Recording sessions began with live group recordings at Harbourmaster Productions in South Shields - an approach that imbues the tracks with a beating heart that benefits the livelier songs on this release. This contrasts with the regimented rhythms of previous Amateur Ornithologist albums, which were recorded using a completely remote and modular technique.

Following the initial live band sessions in spring 2025, tracks were developed and expanded on at locations across Tyne and Wear through to winter. The album was co-produced by Daniel Clifford and longtime collaborator Harbourmaster (Class Gymnast, Detroit Tourist Board), and featuring Staithe's Nick Pierce on electric violin, Small Town Brass's Craig Hissett on trombones, Aleksandra Karpiuk on flute and Abigail Brierley on trumpet.

Amateur Ornithologist release *The Haunted Life of Architecture* on 15th May across all major digital platforms.

- *The Haunted Life of Architecture* releases Friday 15th May by Regret Everything Records.
- Available on all streaming services, with preorders available now via Bandcamp
- AO launch the album with a live performance at legendary Sunderland venue Pop Recs Ltd. on Saturday 16th May, supported by Faye MacCalman and Madeleine Smyth, with tickets available now

Cover by Mike Jeffries with Daniel Clifford and Chris Perriman.

To arrange an interview, email Robin at hootoffthepress@gmail.com.

Selected tracks from the album and press photos can be downloaded here.

Robin Feathergill,
Hoot Off The Press PR



Photography by Elli Cartwright - @ellicartwrightphoto

Tracklist



1. Swing Around
2. I See Faces
3. Decoupage
4. Catch A Glimpse
5. Rituals
6. If I Were To Know
7. Winter Sun
8. Kiss the Stones
9. Lament
10. The Mirror Crack'd

Credits

Written by Daniel James Clifford.
Except 4 and 5, written by Daniel James Clifford and Chris Perriman.

Arranged by Amateur Ornithologist.

Daniel Clifford - vocals, programming, field recordings
Maddie Smyth - viola, vocals, guitar
Chris Perriman - bass, keys, guitar, field recordings
Marianne Kell - cello, saxophone, voices
Giovanni Onofri - guitar, acoustic guitar, voices
Dan Humble - drums, roto-toms, programming, percussion, glockenspiel, voices

Rick Matthews - guitar (1, 2, 8), keys (3, 7, 8, 9, 10)
Nick Pierce - violin (1, 4, 5, 7, 8)
Abigail Brierley - trumpet (3, 7, 10)
Aleksandra Karpiuk - flute (5)
Craig Hisset - trombone (4)
Harbourmaster - keys (1)
Jenny Rohde - field recordings (1)
Ludovico Rella - voices (1)

Collages by Michael Jeffries.
Design and layout by Daniel Clifford.

Produced by Daniel Clifford and Harbourmaster.
Recorded and engineered by Harbourmaster at Harbourmaster Productions, and by Chris Perriman across Tyne and Wear. Mixed and mastered by Harbourmaster. Made from May 2025 to Jan 2026

Biography

Amateur Ornithologist is a weird pop ensemble from North East England. AO perform with anything from four to seven musicians playing a mix of pop and orchestral instruments.

The band have earned comparisons to Talking Heads, The Beach Boys and Prefab Sprout due to their adventurous approach to densely-layered, harmony-filled pop.

The band focus on crafting captivating songs inspired by the everyday weird of neurodivergent lives to the uncanny of Victorian fiction. But the ability to translate these into enchanting live shows complete with costumes and stage dressing is what sets AO apart.

Amateur Ornithologist have released three albums, were chosen to play Durham Brass Festival 2025 from hundreds of applications, have been on the cover of *NARC Magazine*, had videos screened at Sunderland Shorts Film Festival, played sold-out shows and festivals including Marrapalooza, Last Train Home and Summer Streets, and received radio play from BBC Introducing, Amazing Radio, and a host of radio stations.

Links
Instagram
Facebook
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