

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Gomm". The letters are stylized and connected, with a large, sweeping flourish under the 'J' and 'M'.

Jon Gomm Bio 2020 - **THE FAINTEST IDEA**

When most people look at an acoustic guitar, they see exactly that – a wooden box with strings. As one of the pioneers of the modern fingerstyle sound, however, **Jon Gomm** has a rare gift for turning one instrument into what feels like an entire orchestra...

The Blackpool-born singer-songwriter's 2003 home-recorded debut, **Hypertension**, was nothing short of a musical revelation: drumming beats, tapping chords and striking harmonics on his acoustic underneath that warm, soulful voice. Things changed for Jon when landmark single **Passionflower** racked up millions of views on YouTube and other media platforms in 2012 – with British legend Stephen Fry describing him on mainstream television as someone “*playing the guitar in a way I'd never seen it played before*” and “*an all-round genius*”. Follow up album **Secrets Nobody Keeps** arrived in 2013, further cementing his stature as one of the driving forces behind an acoustic revolution – but now, having signed a label deal for the very first time in his career, he's managed to truly refine the pop sensibilities and emotive expression within that unmistakable wall of sound. Latest full-length **The Faintest Idea** is set for release this October via Kscope...

“I didn't realise that my songs were worth anything beyond the crazy guitar playing,” shrugs the songwriter reborn, who originally started out on ukulele at the age of two. *“When people started getting my lyrics tattooed on them, I had to accept that they're not doing that because they're fans of percussive guitar. The new album is as full of crazy playing as anything else I've done, it's just that it now came second to what felt most important... the songs themselves.”*

Perhaps one of the greatest surprises with **The Faintest Idea** is how it contrasts the incredible human warmth of Gomm's acoustic articulation with more icy affairs, thanks to the synth parts and production work from Australian musician Andy Sorenson. Instead of a war between man and machine, the collaboration delicately cross-pollinates simple honesty with more forward-thinking atmospheres, in ways that add rather than subtract from one another. It is, in that regard, a contemporary masterpiece – rich in its sense of paths travelled and roads taken, while also daring to gaze into the unexpected future...

“Some of my favourite guitar music over the years has been when it's embedded into electronics,” continues Gomm. *“It's such an organic instrument, whether acoustic or electric, that soul is what makes it so popular. It's so expressive and you can hear the real nature of a guitar when you listen to it. I love the way that works against electronic sounds which can create new worlds for those organic tones to live inside... they can coexist.”*

*“Though it's quite funny, on the opening track **Deep Sea Fishes** there's almost no actual synths. Nearly every sound you hear is generated by the guitar and vocal, with custom built reverbs,*

delays and pitchshifters just for that song. Sometimes it would take Andy an entire day to create the reverb for just one chord!”

Other standout tracks include lead single **Cocoon**, which uses tuning peg bends to make his chords dance with each other in a “potent mix of love and fear”, and **Dream Factories**, which examines how television’s celebrity judges reign in fear and judgement. The singer-songwriter condemns how they crush hopes in front of millions via our nation’s screens, unceremoniously handing out judgements like “some spoiled, bored god”. Sharply aimed at the commercialisation of the arts, it focuses its ire on the promotion of plastic conformity over integrity and ingenuity. And yet – despite his calls to “*Burn the factories down*” – this could very well be the poppiest track the English virtuoso has ever put his name to...

“I didn’t do it on purpose, but a song about how much I hate the commercialisation of music is by far the most commercially viable song I’ve ever written!” laughs Gomm, noting the irony. *“When I got to the end, I reworked the chorus and changed the chords to make it even more pop. By that point, I’d just decided to go for it.”*

The album earned its title through the notion that all of us, to some extent, are just **The Faintest Idea**. The singer/guitarist notes that everything is made out of vibrating strings of probability, and it’s this scientific and spiritual meaning – as well as the more literal translation of total guesswork – that felt like the perfect summation of album number four...

“It’s an enigmatic title,” smiles Gomm. *“There’s a fine line between a metaphor and a pun, so I guess it dances on that. Not having a clue about what I’m doing is how I feel about a lot of things, including music. It always feels like the first time when I create. And I’m really interested in the natural sciences. Energy is the fundament of what everybody and anything is. It’s a ghostly, ephemeral whisper of an existence, which I found both scary and inspiring at the same time. Everything is the same. There is no difference between an individual and the universe they live in. The differences are an illusion.”*

Often cited as one of the most naturally gifted acoustic artists of the modern age, a one-man band with seemingly no limit to expression, it’s little surprise that the new music drew from the musician’s own experiences over the last five or so years. And while there have been moments of joyous celebration, by his own admission there has also been plenty of personal upheaval...

“This album has been a long time coming,” he reflects. *“I tend to write in a really painstaking way. The last few years of my life have involved a lot of personal trauma – from me and my wife losing a pregnancy, which I wrote about in **The Ghost Inside You**, through to losing other people in my life. **Song For A Rainy Day** is a cover of a song by my friend Jonny Walker. He was my best mate and he’d been through a horrible time, and ended up committing suicide a few years ago.”*

Gomm performed the track at his friend’s wake and realised he wanted to work out a version that was slightly different – adding to its original themes of lost love with his own personal grief. *“He always struggled with feeling legitimate as a musician because he was a busker,”* explains Jon. *“He didn’t feel like a proper musician even though in the last year of his life he did a tour in Brazil*

– which went well and we were really proud of him. I desperately miss the support we gave each other.”

As well as gearing up for the release of his most universally accessible music to date, Gomm has also been busy working on a prototype for a signature acoustic guitar, used on the new recordings. It will be released later this year by one of the world’s leading musical instrument manufacturers...

“The idea was that me and most of my peers in the modern fingerstyle world tend to play boutique instruments that aren’t easy to get – from small factories or handmade,” explains Gomm. *“They can be very expensive. No mainstream company seems to be making guitars like that, and to that standard, so I wanted to create something people could actually afford. Electric guitars were reinvented to some degree in the 1990s but it never really happened with acoustic... hopefully we can change that.”*

There’s definitely a sense of reinvention that arrives in **The Faintest Idea**’s 11 tracks – which document a musician coming to terms with the talents that got him recognised and choosing to evolve into the unexpected. Despite having already gone viral and established himself as one of the modern-day masters of acoustic, this could very well be the release that sees the virtuoso transition to a mainstream audience far removed from the guitar community he’s long been revered by...

“People knew I could play, I didn’t need to write an album to make that point anymore,” summarises Gomm. *“And being aware of that brought out my music in a better way. The technique side can feed into the ego after a while. This is still mainly acoustic music, but the sound, approach and experiences behind it are totally different. I didn’t need to force myself to follow any musical philosophy when I could just make a beautiful-sounding album that was totally immersive and more emotional.”*

Indeed, it’s as immersive and emotional as music gets. And while these are the most expansive recordings of **Jon Gomm**’s career so far, it still really just boils down to the magic of one man with his guitar and voice. And what a powerful magic it is.