

Press Release Beyond Mytholmroyd's Red Dawn
June 2021 A Synaesthetic, Image-Driven, Musical Synergy

Introductory paragraph

Imagine if colours not only worked together to create images but also soundscapes. What music would a walk through the countryside, or the setting sun create? Through the creativity of synaesthete musician and composer, Erick Ramsey, here in collaboration with singer and songwriter Elaine Samuels, we can enter this fascinating, visual and musical realm, through their song 'Beyond Mytholmroyd's Red Dawn' to be released on July 10th.

Erick Ramsey, the stage-name for Erick Ramalho, is a synaesthete musician with a background in Early Modern English literature and the reception of Greek and Latin in England. He's currently working on a PhD's dissertation on philosophy of music and philosophy of mind. Ramsey is based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and is an active member of the local British community; where he takes up volunteer roles including that of Vice-Chairman of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. Ramsey's project *Spinneys in the Silver-Toned Rain* features his work on music, philosophy and literature as well as collaborations with both fellow musicians (including Elaine Samuels) and painters (like Martyn Dymott) in exploring musical and philosophical takes on neurodevelopmental synaesthesia and the cross-sensed experience of sound in and through colour.

Questions

Let us find out more about this forthcoming song, about to be released as a video, and about synaesthesia, by asking Erick himself:

Q1

What exactly is synaesthesia, when did you realise that you had it and other people did not and how does it affect your life?

Well, synaesthesia is a neurological condition, though not a disease, in which the brain is wired differently, and two or more senses overlap. In my case, I hear musical pitch at the sight of colour, and I also feel my skin is actually wet whenever I see liquid splashing even at a distance.

Synaesthesia is an inborn trait and those who have it tend to think everyone else sees, hears, and feels the world the way we synaesthetes do. I found out about it only as a grown-up during sessions with a professional in psychology who was helping me identify and deal with another one of my traits, which is intellectual giftedness. Although synaesthesia and giftedness often occur separately in different people, it seems that synaesthesia may also be one amongst several forms of hypersensitivity the gifted brain is prone to. All in all, it all came together for me, and I suddenly grasped the reason behind some daily setbacks I must cope with. I mean, eating at a restaurant with walls painted in some shades of colour can be a bit of a burden, as they tend to sound awful to the point of upsetting my stomach. And sometimes I find it hard to remember people's names where the colour of their hair doesn't match the colour their names trigger in my mind. You see, letters and numbers, as well as names and the days of the week, all have very specific shades of colour to me.

Q2

Where does the title 'Beyond Mytholmroyd's Red Dawn' come from? As a musician I keep trying to reach 'that place', an artistic state of mind where both musicians and audience seem to feel as being elsewhere, a magical realm of sensations and feelings. So, I look for unusual sound layers, echoes, delays and lyrics that match the synaesthetic pictures I've got in my mind. In this particular track, the 'Red' of a dawning sky maps onto D minor, for that's the way it sounds to me. For making it all more down to earth and interesting, I invited Elaine Samuels to collaborate with me on that song by writing a folkie part to my experimental tune. We could then bring together a proggy tune and a quintessentially English story in a beautiful straightforward melody about dancing elves. Elaine's lyrics, singing and acoustic guitar added a brilliant narrative thread to my experimentation around the reds in D minor. I'm fluent in Old English and enjoy the sound of Anglo-Saxon place-names like Mytholmroyd. I suggested to Elaine the story could take place up north; and she wrote the lyrics about this imagined realm that lies somewhere 'beyond' Mytholmroyd's actual landscape and waterways. The song, you see, is a musical painting about a lady and dancing elves that takes place somewhere 'Beyond' the dawn. Listeners are invited to have a go at and enjoy some of the synaesthetic experience as we recreate in the tune

and the lyrics.

Q3

How did you bring this special work together?

'Beyond Mytholmroyd's Red Dawn' is part of my project *Spinneys in the Silver-Toned Rain*. The project aims to bring together musicians, painters and philosophers of mind and perception who collaborate in finding ways of introducing audiences to synaesthesia both in scholarly takes and in art-form. Painted landscapes and prog soundscapes merge into one another. As I admire medieval and folk tunes from all around the British Isles, I've added influences from those as well. The subtitle to my project is 'Music about England' not only because it's about life in present-day Britain, but also because it aims to portray music and colour around the British Isles. Elaine has brought a lovely contribution to it with that singing tale and its cultural layers relating to several times and places in England. Now I'd like to further that collaboration with Elaine and also to bring out Celtic musical influences from Wales and Scotland. In the end, it's all about bringing people together around what's beautiful and thought-provoking out there and inside ourselves. That's what music is all about, isn't it.

Credits for other artist contributors here

Elaine Samuels – voice and acoustic guitar

Erick Ramsey – bass and ambient bass

(www.instagram.com/silver_toned_rain)

Colin Powel – electric guitar

(<https://amultitudeofone.wixsite.com/amultitudeofone>)

Ronaldo Rodrigues – keyboards (www.ronaldorodrigues.com.br)

Elcio Cafaro – drums (www.instagram.com/elciocafaro)

Concluding paragraph

Look out for the release of this synaesthetic song, 'Beyond Mytholmroyd's Red Dawn' on July 10th and get a glimpse of the world where colours give off sound, and sound has colour to it.

Release on <https://www.facebook.com/spinneysinfo/>

And on youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqM44zHsgFqotjWvCouOylQ/about>

Glowing shades of sunset reds, eerily soothing sounds, a lady on a boat into the waters by the mist-clad hilly realm of dancing elves. Words and music paint this picture in 'Beyond Mytholmroyd's Red Dawn', a collaborative piece of synaesthetic music by Erick Ramsey and Elaine Samuels. With poetic words in an enthralling voice, Samuels sings the listener into layers of spellbinding folk strains and rhythms. Reality shifts though and coils in the instrumental parts as every next step of the tune is as unpredictable as the next bend of the river of sound the listener is invited into. Landscape turns into soundscape. Elves dance to the ambient music of a hill where senses are crossed. Notes and chords stand for shades of colour: D minor in higher octaves for shiny red, As for the silvery moonlight, Bs for mossy greens, Es for deep-blue night skies. Atmospheric drums, spiralling keyboards, mazy guitarwork, and the unorthodox bass all stand apart as if (mis)leading the listener into a three-dimensional world of sensory experience. The song is part of Ramsey's concept prog rock and ambient music project 'Spinneys in the Silver-Toned Rain', a set of prog music experimenting with his own synaesthesia, an inborn condition whereby the stimulus to a sense (like sight) triggers another sense (like hearing). Samuels' singing keeps the narrative thread at hand by adding sense to sound as the song accrues sound to the senses.

