

*Terry Ohms is the alter ego of Birmingham, Alabama native Wes McDonald – or maybe it's the other way around. After spending time in their individual musical worlds and influences, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish where one ends and the other begins, or where the rhythmic reach of one extends and the melodic ambitions of the other continues. But this wasn't always the case. If you go back 20 years or so, there was only McDonald and an instinctual need to create music and to share it with those within earshot. And to see these sounds released, McDonald moved from Birmingham to Athens, Georgia in the late '90s to begin a 6 year residency which would start the gears that would eventually put him on a collision course with Terry Ohms.*

*McDonald released his rootsy, garage rock-informed debut solo record, "Alarm Clock Recordings," in 2000 and, in the process, discovered a kinship with fellow former Tuscaloosa musicians Jeff Buckley and Mark Evces, and South Carolina native Andrew "the Fiddlin' Heatwave" Heaton. They quickly found themselves playing and creating together and adopting the name of The Ohms for their collective musical divinations, and the band soon became an Athens favorite, performing in venues throughout the city and across the Southeast. Their time together yielded two albums, "Electrical Resistance" and "If You Don't Think I Love You," which rang with authentic alt-country bluster and twang, bound together through an electrified rurality.*

*Throughout his tenure with The Ohms, McDonald continued to write and record LPs under his own name, sharing "Chandelier" in 2001 and "Cutting Up Rocks" in 2002. However, the release of "Cutting Up Rocks" signaled the end for The Ohms, as it marked the point when McDonald moved back to Birmingham and subsequently reunited with some old musical friends, including Matthew Jackson, Drew Davis and Jake Waitzman. All four would soon fall into those familiar rhythmic steps and form the Wes McDonald Plan, kick-starting McDonald's immersion back into the Birmingham music scene.*

*Shortly after his reintroduction to the area, he released another solo album, "The Guest," for Birmingham-based label Skybucket Records, which earned him a spot on the 2-disc compilation, "Low Dose Exposure." Curated by Skybucket chief Travis Morgan, this collection highlighted some of the city's best musical artists. Following this spotlight, the Wes McDonald Plan put together a hectic tour schedule which included a stopover at SXSW. And in 2006 came a new record, "1:50 in the Furnace," and with it, a new sound – something a bit more rocking and less rustic in tone and sensation – and new perspectives. Working with producers Ken Coomer (of Wilco fame) and Charlie Brocco, McDonald later revealed that he was fascinated by the ways in which they approached his music and developed a better understanding of his own musical identity through their work.*

*And it's at this point that Terry Ohms shows up, an anomalous identity fighting to capture command of McDonald's movements and thoughts. "Terry Ohmsplays Wes McDonald" was released in October 2006 and found Ohms embracing the Southern hum and rush of his upbringing while mixing in a little bit of fuzzed-up rock 'n' roll. But this wasn't the only thing vying for his attention. McDonald had also struck up a new musical conversation with Lester Nuby (of Verbena), Jake Waitzman and Keelan Parrish – and formed Vulture Whale, whose debut record was released in 2007. Going forward, however, Vulture Whale occupied the majority of his time, but Terry was always there in the back somewhere nudging McDonald to give him just a few minutes of influence and control.*

*Vulture Whale would go on to visit SXSW and tour all across the country, eventually releasing 5 records in 9 years – with the latest, "Aluminum," coming out in 2016. But earlier this year, Vulture Whale disbanded amicably having decided that they had reached the limits of what a four-piece rock band could accomplish. Throughout those years, however, McDonald never forgot or ignored the calling of Terry Ohms, sharing "Gets Emotional" in 2014 and "A Lot More Than Enough" in 2017 from within his grasp. During this time, he also became a partner in, and operator of, Birmingham-based Cornelius Chapel Records, working with artists such as Dexateens, Bohannons and Leon III.*

*And with the dissolution of Vulture Whale, it looks like Ohms has finally taken over and convinced McDonald to let him loose for a while, as a new record from Terry Ohms called "Terryfirma" will see the light of day on Jan. 18. Recorded in his basement, McDonald played all the instruments on the album, created all the artwork and handled the visual duties for the accompanying videos. "Terryfirma" was the result of time spent in a creative bubble, with all his attention focused on getting the sounds just right. Where the earlier Ohms records were self-contained side projects, deviations from his work with Vulture Whale, this record (and/ to a degree, "A Lot More*

*Than Enough*”) is the product of thoughtful details and a need to stretch beyond the comforts of his previous releases.

*The garage-y sway and vocal twang is still present, but there is also more of an experimental groove to the 9 tracks which comprise the record, as well as an appreciation for classic rock. You can hear the echoes of artists such as The Rolling Stones and Gram Parsons seeping into these tracks – but opening track, “Mind Blow,” evokes the bluster of Hüsker Dü and reckless abandon of The Replacements. Other tracks like the danceable “Bring All to Front” and “We Love You” share space with the lounge guitar vibrations of “Those Eyes,” building a wide-ranging selection of liquid melodies and subtle electronic flourishes. “Peaks and Valleys” explores a fuzzed-up landscape of crunchy rhythms while “Opportunity” brings to mind shuddering synth-pop of the ‘80s.*

*So for the time being, Terry Ohms is making himself comfortable. According to McDonald, he’ll probably never release another record under his own name, although a Vulture Whale reunion isn’t necessarily out of the question at some point in the future. “Terryfirma” is the sound of willful release and inclusivity, an ode to the unbridled creativity and tactile experiences which his history has afforded him. An arrangement has been settled upon, a meeting of personalities and impulses, and Terry Ohms couldn’t be happier.*

Discography :

Terry Ohms Plays Wes McDonald (EP)

What Do You Mean, What Do I Mean? (LP)

Terry Ohms Gets Emotional (EP)

A Lot More Than Enough (EP)

Terryfirma (LP) January, 2019