



Of Lyle performed at the Laughing Planet Cafe on May 15.

PHOTO/OLIVER GUINAN

Take your time

Of Lyle

“Patient” is not an adjective typically

used when describing pop music. Designed to induce a musical sugar-rush—upbeat, melody-dependent, two-minute tracks are assembled using the verse, bridge and chorus formula as means to an end. Yet, patience and its value are focal points of Jordan Caroompas’ songwriting. In his latest project, *Of Lyle*, the pianist re-imagines and explores pop music through a compositional lens.

“I want these songs to feel like they’re composed,” Caroompas said of the band’s forthcoming debut album, *Year of the False Flat*.

“I think pop songs don’t always feel composed. They somehow feel put together in some other way. Deconstructing what pop means is important to me currently.”

Caroompas moved to Reno from Boston in 2016 to pursue a graduate degree in Jazz Piano. At the University of Nevada, Reno, he met Julien Knowles, Greg Lewis and André Sacalxot, who recently completed or are currently working toward similar degrees in music. All four are adept musicians and can easily navigate Caroompas’ demanding compositions.

“There’s this thing about hard music, that if you can execute it, something happens,” Caroompas said. “I have these people who can play really crazy music, so I love giving them really hard music and trying to perform it effortlessly.”

Lewis shares a background in jazz, and has played drums with numerous groups around Reno, including Redfield

Clipper, SpellB!NDER, The Peanuts Gang and math-rock duo Rob Ford Explorer.

Year of the False Flat is slated for release this August and reflects on the time Caroompas spent in Boston, where he received an undergraduate degree in linguistics from Boston University.

“Everything in my life at that time felt really surreal, and I felt out of control,” Caroompas explained. “A false flat is a biking term. It’s where you feel like you’re on a flat stretch of road, but you’re actually not. You’re actually going slightly uphill, but you can’t really tell. You feel super exhausted, and you don’t know why because you feel like you’re on flat ground. Looking back, that’s how those couple of years felt.”

At a recent performance at the Laughing Planet near UNR, the four communicated comfortably, making complex transitions, breakdowns and chord changes appear nonchalant. The group’s elongated, thoughtful approach makes each piece feel more meaningful than if the same composition had been packed into a shorter sequence. Caroompas’ iconic Fender Rhodes piano is buttery, and when combined with Sacalxot’s tenor saxophone and Knowles’ trumpet, the overall tone sounds like a fresh spring breeze blowing in from a faraway place.

“I love writing music that interlocks in difficult ways, but is also lyrical,” Caroompas said. “I really like things that take place over a long period of time and make you be patient. I tend to be into things where narrative isn’t the point.”

Knowles is an assiduous trumpeter whose improvisational acumen, combined with Sacalxot’s tuneful saxophone, creates a texture that, while at times avant garde, sounds like a soft-serve vanilla ice cream cone tastes. Caroompas’ crisp vocals anchor the group, and maintain a welcoming balance of technical complexity and musical accessibility. □

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