

# Theo May Music

Composer, Violinist, Improviser



**Theo May** was born in October of 1997 surrounded by the rivers, cornfields and hedgerows of the north Wiltshire countryside. Inspired by his father's love of jazz and extensive collection of music, he began teaching himself to play the violin at the age of 4. Formal training in music came much later, first at the southwest music school in 2009 and then in 2015 at the Purcell School of Music in less rural Watford. Following two years at the Purcell school, Theo studied composition at the Royal College of Music in London with classical composers Mark-Anthony Turnage and Errollyn Wallen.

Growing up, Theo's musical development was guided and supported by the legendary late Keith Tippett and his wife Julie, who Theo's father had come to know in the 1980s. Theo was immersed in Jazz, free improvisation, folk and predominantly modern and contemporary classical music from an early age. This wide range of musical influences continues to inform and inspire his musical voice today.

His first major project is the launch of his band **Odd Unit**, a quintet featuring music college graduates from London, playing Theo's original compositions on their forthcoming 2023 album 'Alive in the Forest of Odd'. In addition to this, he is also working on an album of semi-freely improvised pieces with his father Greg May entitled 'Sound Islands' as well as a new suite of new pieces for string quintet.

Theo is adept in playing all string instruments and can often be found playing his mandolin on the streets of Malmesbury or found tweaking his myriad of custom-built and adapted violins (including a sixteen string) from his kitchen table.

In addition to his passion for composing, playing and band leading, he is also an instrument designer and builder and occasional palaeontologist with a lifelong passion for nature, art and craft.



# Theo May's Odd Unit

Gustavo Clayton Marucci - Bass Clarinet

William Bracken - Piano

Ali Watson - Double Bass

Alex Temple Heald - Drums

Theo May - Composer, Arranger, Violin

*"My original music for **Odd Unit** is a rich weave of the Jazz, Folk and Classical music which has always surrounded and inspired me - it's difficult to pigeon-hole easily into any one genre, but people seem to be struck by its energy and enjoy the way it sits at the crossroads of musical paradigms they know and love. Though led by my violin playing, it is the stellar line-up of young players from the London jazz and classical scenes who are responsible for the sound of the band."* - Theo May

Click the image to hear '[Voyager](#)' - single released on [Bandcamp](#) on 31st October 2022



High octane and fiercely frenetic tunes inspired by Bulgarian folk dances contrast with dark and mysterious soundscapes and melancholic and lyrical pieces. Odd Unit's first album is a weaving of vibrant and rich musical tapestry pieces that encapsulated many of Theo's earliest influences.

Theo states that “...getting variety into the suite of music was of paramount importance, so some of the pieces draw heavily on the sound world of the avant-garde and make use of experimental soundscapes, whilst others are immediately listenable, groovy and have strong ties to folk and modal jazz music.”

It is music of fierce intensity, featuring variety and scope of musical territory that will appeal to listeners from a wide range of musical backgrounds.

[YouTube](#)   [Instagram](#)   [Facebook](#)  
[www.theomaymusic.com](http://www.theomaymusic.com)

Bookings now being taken for Winter 2022 and Spring/Summer 2023  
Album launch and UK tour Autumn 2023

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