GENERAL

john connolly of lost things

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John Connolly of Lost Things: A Journey Through Music

John Connolly is a name that resonates with fans of indie rock, guitar-driven melodies, and heartfelt songwriting. As the lead guitarist and one of the founding members of the New Zealand band **Lost Things**, Connolly has carved a niche for himself in the contemporary music scene. This article explores his early beginnings, his evolution as a musician, his contributions to Lost Things, and the broader impact he has had on the indie music landscape.

Early Life and Musical Beginnings

Born in Wellington, New Zealand, John Connolly grew up surrounded by a vibrant mix of cultures and sounds. From a young age, he was exposed to a range of genres—from classic rock and folk to the burgeoning local indie scene. His first guitar was a battered Fender Stratocaster that his father had bought at a garage sale. By the time he was twelve, Connolly was already writing simple chord progressions and experimenting with different tunings.

During his teenage years, he attended a local music school where he studied classical guitar and theory. However, it was the rebellious spirit of punk and the melodic sensibilities of alternative rock that truly shaped his musical identity. He began performing in small venues around Wellington, quickly gaining a reputation for his energetic stage presence and raw guitar solos.

Influences That Shaped His Sound

John cites a diverse roster of influences, including:

- Neil Young – for his emotive vocal delivery and folk-rock sensibilities.
- Radiohead – for their experimental approach to songwriting.
- The Strokes – for their garage-rock revival and tight rhythm sections.
- Local New Zealand Artists – such as Alfie & the Stitches and The Mutton Birds, who inspired him with their storytelling.

These influences converge in Connolly's playing style, which balances melodic hooks with intricate guitar work, creating a sound that is both accessible and deeply textured.

Joining Lost Things

In 2009, while performing at a local open mic night, John Connolly met the founding members of Lost Things—a group of musicians who were searching for a guitarist who could bring a new dimension to their sound. The band had been formed by vocalist **Emily Carter** and bassist **Mark Thompson**, and they were on the cusp of recording their first EP.

John's audition was nothing short of electric. He played a mix of original material and covers, showcasing his versatility. The instant chemistry between Connolly and the rest of the band set the stage for a partnership that would define the group's sonic identity.

Early Recordings and Breakthrough

In 2011, Lost Things released their debut EP, *Echoes in the Alley*, featuring the breakout single "Midnight

Whispers.” The track’s haunting guitar riffs and introspective lyrics quickly climbed local charts, drawing attention from national radio stations.

John’s contribution was pivotal. He crafted the signature melodic lines that became the backbone of the song, while his subtle use of effects added an atmospheric layer that set the track apart from other indie releases of the time.

Musical Style and Influences

John Connolly’s guitar work is characterized by a blend of melodic sensibility and technical proficiency. He often employs the following techniques:

1. Fingerpicking Patterns – blending rhythmic strumming with intricate arpeggios.
2. Slide Guitar – adding a bluesy texture to ballads.
3. Use of Effects Pedals – including delay, reverb, and chorus to create immersive soundscapes.
4. Dynamic Contrasts – shifting from quiet, introspective passages to soaring, anthemic choruses.

His songwriting is marked by lyrical depth and emotional honesty. Connolly often writes about personal experiences, relationships, and the complexities of modern life, which resonate strongly with listeners.

Key Albums and Songs

Over the past decade, Lost Things has released three full-length albums, each reflecting a different phase in the band’s evolution. John Connolly’s role in each project has grown from guitarist to co-producer and co-writer.

1. Shadows & Light (2013)

This sophomore album solidified Lost Things’ place in the New Zealand indie scene. Tracks like “Silver Lining” and “Broken Glass” showcased John’s ability to weave complex guitar arrangements into mainstream-friendly hooks.

- “Silver Lining” – a mid-tempo track with a soaring chorus and layered guitar harmonies.
- “Broken Glass” – featuring a melancholic guitar solo that underscores the song’s emotional core.

2. Echoes of Tomorrow (2016)

With this album, John experimented with more atmospheric sounds, incorporating synthesizers and ambient textures. The single “Starlight” became an instant fan favorite, with its dreamy guitar loops and ethereal vocals.

John’s collaboration with the band’s producer, **Luke McKenzie**, resulted in a polished yet organic production that highlighted the band’s strengths.

3. Into the Wild (2019)

Marking a departure from their earlier work, this album embraced a more experimental approach. John’s guitar work here is more adventurous, featuring unconventional chord progressions and experimental effects.

Highlights include:

- “Firefly” – a track that blends indie rock with folk elements.
- “Rivers Run” – showcasing John’s mastery of dynamic shifts and layered guitar textures.

Live Performances and Tours

John Connolly is as much a performer as he is a songwriter. His live shows are known for their energy, authenticity, and the palpable connection he shares with the audience.

Notable Tours

- 2014: New Zealand National Tour – a series of sold-out shows across major cities.
- 2017: Australian Tour – featuring performances in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane.
- 2018: International Festival Circuit – including the SXSW festival in Austin, Texas, where Lost Things received critical acclaim.

John's stage presence is complemented by his meticulous preparation. He often rehearses with the band for weeks before a show, ensuring that each performance is both polished and spontaneous.

Collaborations and Side Projects

Beyond Lost Things, John Connolly has pursued a variety of collaborations that showcase his versatility.

Collaborations

- With indie pop artist Maya Lin – John contributed guitar tracks to her 2015 single "Sunrise."
- Production Work – He co-produced the debut album of the up-and-coming band The Ember in 2018.
- Sound Design – John worked on the soundtrack for the New Zealand film Echoes of the Sea, adding atmospheric guitar layers.

Side Projects

John has also launched a solo project under the moniker *John Connolly & The Resonance*, which focuses on experimental guitar compositions and ambient soundscapes. The project's debut EP, *Waves*, was released in 2021 and received positive reviews for its innovative use of reverb and delay.

Impact on the Music Scene

John Connolly's influence extends beyond his own music. He has played a pivotal role in shaping the New Zealand indie music landscape in several ways:

- Mentorship – He regularly conducts workshops for aspiring guitarists at local community centers.
- Music Education – John has collaborated with the Wellington Music Academy to develop guitar curriculum modules.
- Promotion of Local Talent – Through his label, Lost Things Records, he has helped launch the careers of emerging artists.

His commitment to nurturing new talent has earned him respect among peers and fans alike.

Personal Life and Interests

While John's professional life is heavily focused on music, his personal interests reveal a well-rounded individual. He is an avid photographer, often capturing landscapes during his travels. These images occasionally appear on the band's album covers and promotional materials.

John is also passionate about environmental conservation. He has participated in several beach clean-up initiatives and has advocated for sustainable practices within the music industry.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, John Connolly has ambitious goals. He plans to:

- Release a new solo album that explores the intersection of acoustic folk and electronic textures.

- Embark on a world tour with Lost Things, targeting new markets in Europe and Asia.
- Expand Lost Things Records to include a publishing arm, supporting songwriting for film and television.

His vision is

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