

Local Musician in Global Book Project

✘ Edinburgh musician [Alastair Kilpatrick](#) was recently part of a very international project – where authors from across the world wrote a series of stories inspired by an album of tracks by artists from across the world. Called [Foreshadows: The Ghosts of Zero](#), the book and CD are now available in print and online. We spoke to Alastair about how he got involved.

I began learning violin and piano while I was at school and taught myself a little guitar, and I moved to Edinburgh almost 9 years ago to study Music Technology. I've since started a PhD in [Informatics](#), but I'm still very interested in that sort of thing. I've played in a number of orchestras and bands but in the past few years I've been working more on my own, with the occasional collaboration – of which *Foreshadows* is one.

I met [John LaSala](#) (co-producer of *Foreshadows*) in February 2008 through the [RPM Challenge](#) – a project where you have to record an album of 10 tracks or 35 minutes in one month. John invited me to join [clique](#), a remote collaborative project where one musician writes the skeleton of a track then passes it on to someone else who adds bits before passing it on again.

That June, John got in touch again to ask if I'd like to be part of the [Very Us Artists](#), contributing a soundtrack to a new table top role playing game (similar to [Dungeons & Dragons](#)). We'd more or less finished the music when the game's creators disappeared, leaving us in the lurch. We all felt the music should be part of something bigger, so the idea of pairing each track with a short story and illustration – and *Foreshadows* itself – was born.

I composed the closing track 'Unto the Interface' and also

contributed to two other tracks, 'Geist Threnodic 2:4' and 'Geist Eidetic 3:4'. There are four 'Geist' tracks in all and although each one is different, there are some recurring elements – a theme running through the album. 'Unto the Interface' is quite different from the rest of the album as it's quite minimal. It's kind of like the aftermath of everything that's gone before.

A lot of the tracks went back and forth, with ideas being posted online and either the original musician or someone else adding to whatever was already there. The only exception was 'Unto the Interface'. I'd come up with what I thought might be a good basis for someone else to add to, but in the end we decided not to bother and just went with what was there. It's quite sparse in comparison to some of the other tracks, but given the feel of it and its placement within the album, I think it works.

Oklahoma-based YA writers [Ruth Lampi](#) and [Jessica van Oort](#) co-wrote the accompanying story for 'Unto the Interface'. Knowing their story was inspired by the music I had an idea of how it might feel, but in the end it wasn't really how I'd imagined it at all. Once I'd started I had to find out what happened and you definitely get the feeling that the music and the story are linked, which is fantastic. As for the story itself, I shouldn't give too much away, but it's safe to say potent technology lies hidden in the unlikeliest of places...

Although many of the artists involved are based in the US, I'm not the only one flying the flag for the UK! On the music side, [Alan Norman](#) (aka Thee Crumb) lives near Bournemouth and [Colin Garvey](#) is based in Liverpool. Meanwhile two of the authors, [Don Bassingthwaite](#) and the legendary [Ed Greenwood](#), are from Canada.

The best part of doing this project was getting to know and work with a bunch of really talented people – it's great when everybody brings their own strengths and something amazing

comes out at the end. The only downside was that it took so long to come out at the end!

That happened partly because of the number of people involved and partly because we decided to take our time over it to make sure we had something of real quality. Having seen the finished product, I think it was worth taking the extra time.

If you buy the physical book and CD, you get a bunch of bonus tracks, and a portion of sales is being donated to [The Hunger Project](#). Oh, and award-winning sci-fi novelist [C.S. Friedman](#) called *Foreshadows* “truly remarkable” and “an intriguing vision of a not-so-distant future.”

You can buy the book, *Foreshadows: The Ghosts of Zero* [here](#) and keep up with them on Twitter [@Foreshadows](#).

You can also read more about the project in an interview with editor Jeff LaSala on [12 Books in 12 Months](#).