

THE AARON CLIFT EXPERIMENT

Prog rock played by classically-trained musicians from the heart of Texas.

AUSTIN, TEXAS — **ARGUABLY** the live music capital of the world — is admittedly better known for blues and country rather than progressive rock. “When I started the band in 2011 there really wasn’t much going on,” says Aaron Clift. “There were a few scattered bands here and there but there wasn’t really a scene and I kept thinking that Austin had the right demographic for this type of music to really take off. It’s got a large university presence, people who are into original music and adventurous music so I started reaching out.”

The Aaron Clift Experiment started as a solo project for the singer and keyboard player, but after 2012’s *Lonely Hills*, Clift’s creation morphed into a fully-fledged band for new album *Outer Light, Inner Darkness*. All four members share classical music backgrounds — Eric Gutierrez has a degree in classical guitar studies, drummer Joe Resnick worked with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; bassist Devin North first played upright bass, while Clift studied classical composition. “One thing that we’ve taken away from doing classical music is an approach to dynamics and composition that plays a big role in the music that we do,” says Clift about the meeting point between classical and rock. “In several of the songs on the album we’ve got a string quartet. I like to cook a lot so I just think of it as a different way of cooking. Putting strings in your song doesn’t make it a classical tune, just like putting curry on your chicken doesn’t make it Indian food.”

Clift grew up listening to 90s grunge before discovering progressive music through the likes of Queen and Pink Floyd.

“I was immediately struck by both bands. ‘Hey, it almost sounds like a symphony,’ and that was really appealing to me,” he says. “I found this term progressive rock and the description of it immediately caught my attention, like, ‘There are bands out there that write 20-minute songs? I didn’t know you could do that!’” Now when he’s writing for his own band, Clift says he finds inspiration by turning off his phone and going for a long walk, or from a great book or TV show. “One of the songs on the album, *Locked*, was inspired by an episode of *The Walking Dead*, which I’ve been obsessed with for the last two years,” he says. “Another song was influenced by *Game Of Thrones* and then *Moonscape* was influenced by current events — the war in Syria and also reading up on the history of World War 1.”

Clift is hoping that 2016 will bring The Experiment the chance to take their live shows beyond the borders of Texas. “We are trying everything we can to bring the live spirit to these songs,” he says. “There are a lot of layers of sound on some of them but I’m very much interested in bringing out the emotion of each of these songs and giving people a really good rock show.”

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PROG FILE



LINE-UP

Aaron Clift (vocals, keyboards), **Eric Gutierrez** (guitar), **Joe Resnick** (drums), **Devin North** (bass)

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CURRENT RELEASE

Outer Light, Inner Darkness is out now from Aaron Clift Productions

WEBSITE

www.aaronclift.com



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The Aaron Clift Experiment, l-r: Joe Resnick, Eric Gutierrez, Aaron Clift, Devin North.