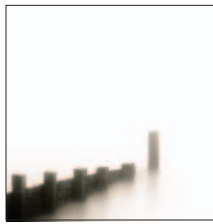
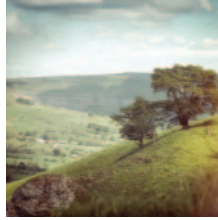


Sea
(n5MD /2006)



These Places
Are Now Ruins
(n5MD /2007)



The Safety
Of The North
(n5MD /2009)



Graham Richardson's Last Days project returns with its latest full-length *The Safety of the North*. Richardson has fully embraced his cinematic tendencies, expanding his creative palette to include spoken excerpts, a vocal collaboration with Fabiola Sanchez of Familiar Trees, and a "script-based" compositional approach. Drawing on a theme first explored in *Sea's* "Arrival at Jan Mayen" (in which its sailor is first excited by the prospect of a distant island home, then disappointed by its barren terrain), *The Safety of the North* tells the story of Alice, her parents and their relocation to a remote northern land. Disappointed with the trappings of the city, they wish for a simpler, more rewarding way of life. Their arrival promises clean air, miles of snow covered fields surrounded by forests and mountains but above all, safety and a protected existence. As dark as it is light, the *Safety Of The North* explores relationships, loss, recovery and how hope is the only certainty in life.. With a strict script in mind, Richardson divided the album into 15 "scenes," scoring each with a new focus on the emotional states of his characters and the settings they inhabit. Using the same tools he employs on his previous albums (i.e. field recordings, song titles, and album art), along with snippets of dialogue, monologue and more diverse instrumentation, Richardson guides the listener through Alice's initial departure, hopeful beginnings and eventual tragedy in what may be *Last Days* most melodic work to date.

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Last Days (AKA Graham Richardson's) music explores personal themes of stasis and flux, escape and acceptance, security and upheaval. Drawing his moniker and ethos from the bittersweet emotions that often accompany periods of transition and loss, *Last Days* contrasts the intimacy of lonely field recordings and elementary instruments (a child's accordion, a single repeated piano note) with cinematic shoegaze swells and complex, interlocking melodies created by the latest in digital technology. The resulting mixes are often melancholy, but ultimately hopeful, acting as musical elegies to the places we can no longer go.

Growing up in Newcastle Upon Tyne, Richardson pursued music sporadically, playing drums for local bands before shifting his focus and detouring south to study graphic design. Completing his degree in 1997, he applied his trade in the mental health field but, after four rewarding, yet creatively stifling, years, decided to pack up his recently acquired PC, mic and guitar, and head north to Scotland. While the mood certainly preceded the move, Edinburgh's darker, colder climate and close proximity to nature proved influential in developing *Last Days* signature blend of brooding synths and pastoral neo-folk. Inspired by the likes of Eluvium, Sigur Ros, and Jasper TX, Richardson continued writing and revising in relative obscurity until February 2006 when he was discovered in Port-Royal's Myspace friends list by Mike Cadoo (AKA Bitcrush) of the Oakland-based n5MD Records. With nine tracks already in the can, the timing could not have been better, resulting in the release of *Last Days* full-length debut *Sea* just seven months later.

Noting his penchant for writing soundtracks to lonely, isolated places, Richardson devised a unifying narrative for *Sea*, which chronicles the hapless travels of a disillusioned man who, leaving his family behind, sets sail to find a new home. Through a combination of eerie, abstract set pieces, signpost song titles, and bleak cover art by Liam Frankland (another Myspace find), *Sea* captures the anxiety, confusion and yearning of a man lost at sea with only his ill-defined desires to guide him. Released to near-unanimous praise, *Sea* cemented *Last Days* reputation as a member to watch within the UK's burgeoning electro-acoustic ambient scene.

Just months after the release of *Sea*, Richardson began writing material for its follow-up, a meditation on the inconstancy of "home." Released on n5MD in early 2007, *These Places Are Now Ruins* finds Richardson in far more personal territory, tracing a semi-autobiographical trip through the resonant locales and experiences of his adolescence. Book-ended (save the closing epilogue "Traveling Hearts") by "Stations" part 1 and 2, TPANR's main body mourns the diminishing comforts afforded by fading memories and the lonely detachment that comes with discovering your "home" is no longer tethered to a tangible place. Opting for a warmer, more "realistic" approach, Richardson cuts back on the aimless synth washes of *Sea*, anchoring the majority of these musical snapshots (like the memories they're exorcising) in the familiar realm of live instrumentation, intimate field recordings, and emotional post-rock builds.

For his third full length, *The Safety of the North* (2009, n5MD), Richardson has fully embraced his cinematic tendencies, expanding his creative palette to include spoken excerpts, a vocal collaboration with Fabiola Sanchez of Familiar Trees, and a "script-based" compositional approach. Drawing on a theme first explored in *Sea's* "Arrival at Jan Mayen" (in which its sailor is first excited by the prospect of a distant island home, then disappointed by its barren terrain), *TSOTN* tells the story of Alice, a young girl who leaves the city with her family to settle in the rural north. With a strict script in mind, Richardson divided the album into 15 "scenes," scoring each with a new focus on the emotional states of his characters and the settings they inhabit. Using the same tools he employs on *Sea* (i.e. field recordings, song titles, and album art), along with snippets of dialogue, monologue and new instrumentation, Richardson guides the listener through Alice's initial departure, hopeful beginnings and eventual tragedy.

With an approach both abstract and melodic, lo-fi and hi-tech, yearning and content, *Last Days* has consistently yielded music that, despite its largely digital origins, is all-together human.