

Still Because.

Twenty years ago, in a freezing cold but groovy little contemporary art gallery called the Context, in Derry, a former and slightly lost Chancer decided that a gloomy little magazine was required. Why was a gloomy little magazine needed? Well, we liked magazines, but didn't particularly like the magazines that we came across. We didn't want to change the literary world though. We weren't that clichéd. And besides others (or so they told us and still tell us) were busy trying to do that. We just wanted to create our own little world, an exaggerated distorted version of our experiences that looked good. We knew our limitations and the limitations of the arena we operated in. So we called the magazine 'Abridged'. The reaction ranged to from complete indifference to outright hostility. That only encouraged us. 'Abridged' was the title of a poem that described getting abused by one side of our 'religious divide', whilst walking to work across a Derry bridge in the morning and getting abused by the 'other side' on the way back home. The final

line – 'whatever you are, you're not one of us' – became a guiding mantra.

At the same time, Abridged is a product of its locality, Derry, in the same way as Joy Division are with Manchester. Had it been conceived in Belfast or Dublin, it would have been very different and it wouldn't have lasted anywhere near two decades. There's kind of a nebulous and at the same time very structural adversity here, that looks askance at anyone from the working class embracing the supposedly esoteric. We're supposed to be all pebble dash and tarmac all of the time. 'There's no room for enigmas in built up areas' indeed. The Undertones, (rather brilliantly and were on occasion criticised for it at the time) sang about cars and girls and Subbuteo at a terrible time. Abridged, twenty five years later, created and curated A4/A5-sized 'songs' filled with Troubles and Cold-War trauma mixed with fear of the future and a terror of the pseudo-political/spiritual that was tuning up online at the time. We kind of recognised

that the online world would eventually become indistinguishable from the real world. And reality and the real would become very different things. Also, relevantly and somewhat strangely, Derry didn't actually have a regular poetry publication. The Chancer, (precursor to the Abridged,) was the first in decades. We figured that needed changing. It has to be said that people expected something rather more traditional. They didn't get that. They still don't. Something we're still very pleased about.

We're not arrogant enough to believe that we've lasted twenty years on our own. We first asked our local Council for help. They weren't interested then (and aren't interested now,) so we went to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, who had faith in us and without whom the Abridged wouldn't be anywhere near the success it became. So, our deep thanks to them. We reached all parts of Ireland and the UK, so we also thank the Arts Council of Ireland and the British Council for their support. Much

appreciation to Verbal, who offered us a home and backing, when we found ourselves without an office and where we've been based for the last fifteen years. Many thanks to The Golden Thread Gallery, where we launched regularly and to The MAC, RUA RED, Void Gallery, Galway Arts Centre, the Irish Writers Centre and all the other organisations and people within them that supported us. Plus Padraig, our designer at Pure Design.

In 2011, a young person sent us an email asking about the magazine and if she could volunteer with us. Thirteen years later, Susanna Galbraith's a vital and integral part of Abridged and we can't imagine it without her. So, much appreciation to Susanna for her input and ideas and putting up with our many idiosyncrasies, one being referring to ourselves in the third person of course. Lastly, thanks to all of our contributors and readers who've stayed the course with us. We couldn't do it without you. We wouldn't want to.

Gregory McCartney