

growing up Abridged

I was only a marshmallowy seventeen year old – hardly even an ‘I’ – when I first became a small part of the ‘we’ that is Abridged, that weird voice from behind the curtain. As Abridged completes its second decade, my own time with the project has grown into a whole teenager. And here’s a confession (not something we’re known for in these parts): I’ve never committed to anything even half as long as I’ve been part of this show.

So how come I’m still Abridged? Although ambiguity is our favourite hat, the answer to this one is simple: whatever Abridged is (because we’re still keeping them guessing) it’s never stopped being fun, it’s never stopped being interesting, and it’s never stopped feeling important. I often find myself explaining that being part of Abridged is more like being in a band than having a job. And it’s not just that fondness for smoke and lights nobody ever tried to hide. In the best and most serious sense, we’re playing here. As much as it takes darkness as its torch, Abridged is adolescent to the core.

Let no mistake be made – there is only one mad library-scientist responsible for sparking this (frightening, yes, but ultimately benevolent and really quite human in the end) monster of a project into being 20 years ago, and making sure the cogs kept turning (and yes, he’s the one in the shades speaking in *Sisters of Mercy* lyrics). But because of Greg McCartney’s radical generosity, I was welcomed in and have shared in the sensational privilege of pushing Abridged along the crumb trails of my own curiosities ever since.

In a lot of ways, Abridged is the house I grew up in, and as such I’m not sure I could tell us apart now. Which, granted, is where that ‘we’ comes in handy. But I’m not talking about a ‘we’ of personnel. No, behind the scenes both of us know that Abridged couldn’t have become what it is if it weren’t for one thing: every time we call into the dark, there are so many howling back that even the night changes shape. This legion is the ‘we’ of Abridged, its voice and vitality. For this, we can only say thank you.

Susanna Galbraith