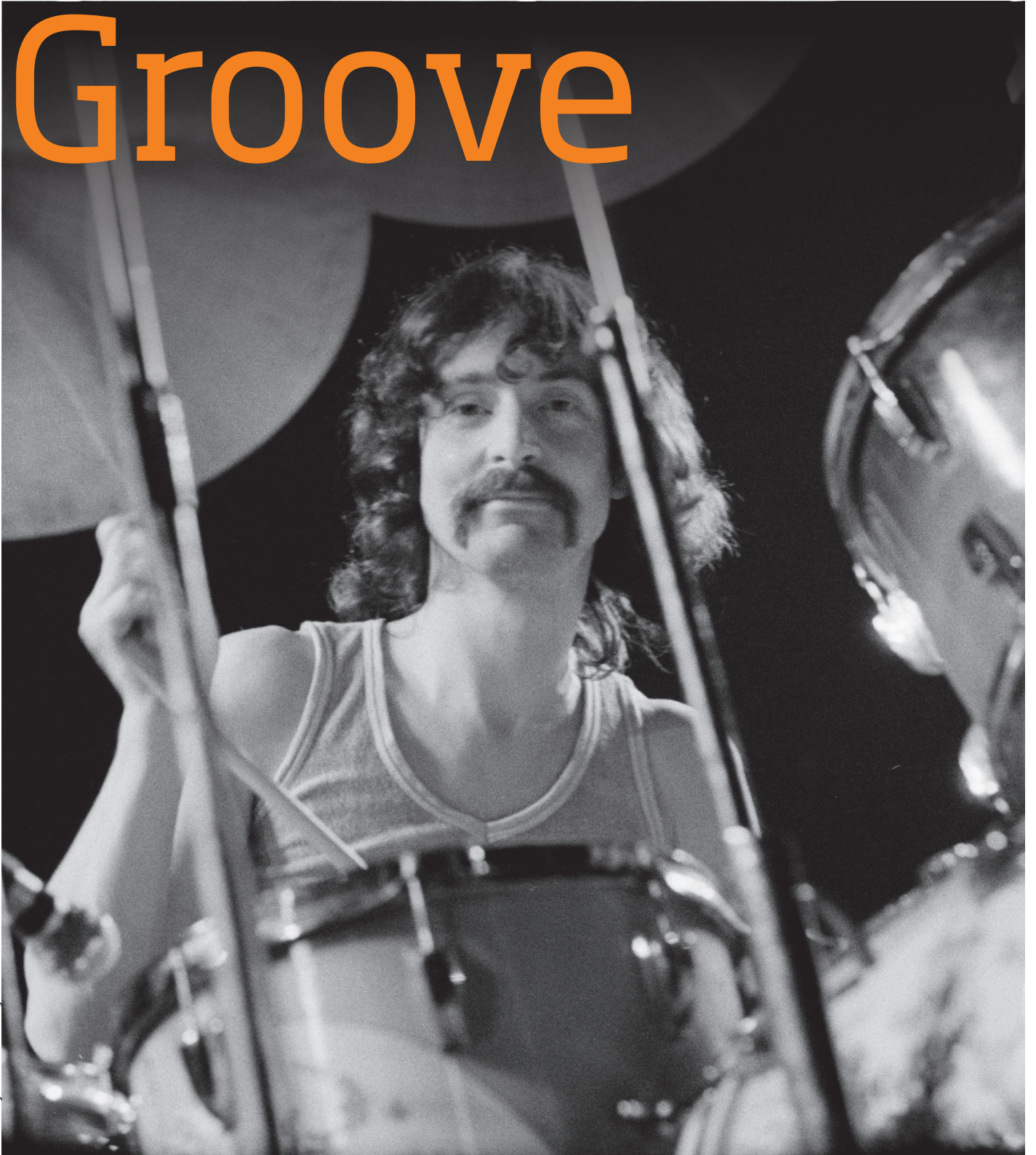


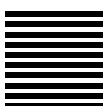
December 2023

Volume 2

# In the Groove



Credit: ©Jill Furmanovsky



VERTERE™



[vertereacoustics.com](http://vertereacoustics.com)

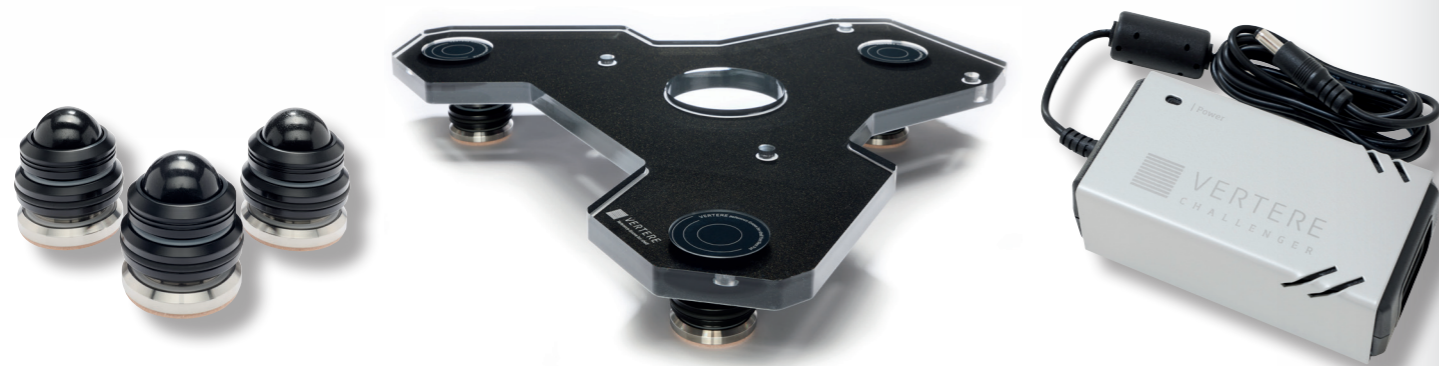
# Elevate your listening experience with Vertere accessories

In our ongoing pursuit of sonic objectivity, small details matter.



## Techno Mat

Designed to provide as neutral a support for your vinyl as possible, the Techno Mat's top fibrous layer offers an almost air-cushion like support, while the lower layer sustains an inert connection to the platter.



## Silencer

Silencer support pods reduce unwanted noise and vibration by both coupling and decoupling the equipment to and from its support surface.

## Iso-Shelf

The Iso-shelf provides an elegant support and matching mechanical impedance for all Vertere Record Players.

## Challenger

A dedicated DC power supply, used to transform the performance of our award winning DG-1 record player and Tempo motor drive.

# Welcome to another edition of In The Groove!



I can scarcely believe that it's been a full year since Volume 1. It's been a remarkable (and busy!) year for us here at Vertere.

Most recently, we launched a new generation of cartridges with the XtraX MC and Dark Sabre MM - both of which you can explore in this magazine. I also had the immense privilege of visiting Asia this year, showcasing Vertere products to a whole host of dedicated partners and music lovers. To step foot in listening rooms from Singapore to Hong Kong and witness such passion for Vertere was an honour - you'll find a roundup of that journey on page 20.

One of the biggest highlights of the year came when we installed a unique Vertere MG-1 MKII record player in Pink Floyd's iconic drummer, Nick Mason's personal studio.

Our trademark turntable was adorned with two special designs: celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Dark Side of The Moon, the ubiquitous light-splitting prism front cover design, and celebrating the successes of Nick's newest musical project, the logo for his band 'Saucerful of Secrets'.

Nick's work with Saucerful of Secrets is as fascinating as it is musically stimulating, and so I was keen to sit down with him and learn more about this new creative endeavour. You'll find my interview with Nick on page 14 - it's a conversation that's not to be missed! My warmest thanks go to Nick for finding time in his busy schedule to talk to me. As you'll see from our interview, he was incredibly generous with his time.

I hope you find plenty to interest you between the covers of this magazine. All of us here at Vertere wish you a happy Christmas, and a healthy and peaceful 2024

Best wishes,  
Touraj Moghaddam

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# All the latest news from Vertere

It's been a big year for us here at Vertere - and 2024 looks set to be even bigger still. Here are the highlights of 2023 in brief, and an exciting look at what the future has in store.

## NEW PRODUCTS

In October, we introduced two new, next-generation cartridges to the Vertere line; the Xtrax Moving Coil and Dark Sabre Moving Magnet. You can take a deep dive into these two new cartridges - why they're here, how they sound, and what's happening under the chassis - over on page 6.



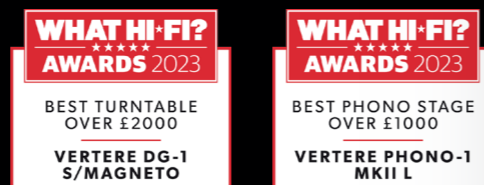
## AWARDS

We were honoured to receive some incredible product awards throughout 2023. Here's just a few of the highlights.

### DG-1S & PHONO-1 MKII L

#### What HiFi "Product Of The Year"

The DG-1S and PHONO-1 MKII L maintained their respective places at the summit of What HiFi's prestigious Product Of The Year awards - for the fourth year in a row!



### MG-1 MKII

#### The Ear 'Best of 2023'

"The only word to describe the sound from this record player is epic."



### DG-1S

#### AudioGrade "2023 Best HiFi"

"Loaded with modern materials and innovation to show why vinyl's enduring appeal is still thriving in high-end audio."



### RG-1 & Reference Tonarm

#### Mono & Stereo 'Best of 2023'

Analogue listening specialists Mono & Stereo chose to highlight the RG-1 Reference Groove and Reference Tonarm among their 'Best of 2023'.



### DG-1S - HiFi + Awards 2023

#### "WINNER - Turntable (mid-price)"

"It's the sort of turntable that could happily drop into a starter system or grace one where every single component costs twice as much"



## EVENTS

Heading into 2024, our Running The Groove tour rolls on! Here's a look at when and where you can see Vertere in action over the coming months.



### Audio Show Deluxe

23rd - 24th March 2024

We're delighted to be exhibiting at 'The Audio Show Deluxe' - a show dedicated to premium HiFi at its absolute finest, held at Whittlebury Hall Estate.



### MotorWorld Munich

9th - 12th May 2024

Throughout the world-renowned High End Munich Show, Vertere will be exhibiting at MotorWorld - a jaw dropping space dedicated to German automotive engineering opposite the MOC.



### North West Audio Show

22nd - 23rd June 2024

Come and see us at De Vere Cranage Hall in Cheshire, where we'll be joining the exhibitor list for one of the biggest and best UK HiFi shows in the calendar.

We'll also have a host of international retailer events in the diary throughout 2024 - follow us on social media to ensure you don't miss your local event!



Updates from our incredible roster of Vertere artists.



Caesar

Joe and JJ have been hard at work on a follow-up to their debut album 'Time' for a while now. After a near two-month recording stint in a studio in the Scottish Hebrides earlier this year, Caesar will be returning in 2024 with their hotly anticipated second LP - HOME+



Elles Springs

Everyone's favourite Dutch songsmith has recently been collaborating on an exciting new project with labelmate Joe Donnelly [Caesar]. Read more about this, and Elles Springs' fascinating career to date, in our interview on page 22.



Will McNicol

At the time of writing, Will and Innotet are busy in the studio recording and mixing their next album, ahead of a half-speed master by Miles Showell in the new year. Will hopes to put this record out into the world in 2024.

# Introducing...

## XtraX and Dark Sabre

The next generation of Vertere cartridges

We take cartridge design very seriously. From the earliest point of product conception, each cartridge in our range is expected to earn its place, meeting exacting standards of objective record reproduction. Put simply, we don't introduce additions to our cartridge product line lightly.

That's why we're especially excited to announce the introduction of not one, but TWO brand new cartridges to the Vertere family - XtraX and Dark Sabre. With **XtraX**, we've exceeded all our previous expectations for moving coil cartridge design, achieving a level of musical clarity unmatched by any cartridge we've produced. With **Dark Sabre**, we've built on the successes of Sabre to create one of the most cutting edge and technically proficient moving magnet cartridges ever built. But why introduce these new additions now? It all comes down to our pursuit of perfect objectivity.

### Our Passion

*The pursuit of perfect objectivity*

Every one of us experiences our record collection with some degree of unavoidable subjectivity. Whether we're listening on a £100 wireless speaker, or through one of the world's most technically sophisticated HiFi systems - each component we put in the way of our music increases the distance between us and the true, intended sound of the source material.

Our products are built to close that gap. To strip away every last inessential component from our audio hardware, and create fundamentals-focused listening equipment that reproduces a wholly honest reflection of the sound - as intended by the people who made it.

Put simply, our aim is perfect objectivity. Perfection may prove ultimately impossible to attain, but in the pursuit of perfection, we intend to get as close as possible to that end goal.

### Vertere Cartridges

*Moving closer to perfection*

So what does this pursuit of perfection mean to our cartridges? Absolutely everything.

The cartridge is a fundamental element of vinyl reproduction - the foremost point of contact established with your record. At Vertere, we believe this foundational connection between the music and the hardware to be pivotal. We see it as our first opportunity to preserve and nurture its purity.

### Meet The Vertere Cartridge Range

The Vertere cartridge range has been created to offer solutions to music lovers of all stripes, catering to an array of budgets, systems, and preferences.

Move through our cartridges one by one - from the entry level Magneto to our new XtraX at the summit of the Vertere range - and with each step forward, you'll move unmistakably closer to that goal of total sonic objectivity. But whichever cartridge you choose, you can do so with the comforting knowledge that Vertere has elevated its performance capabilities to its highest possible reaches.

Let's take a look at the Vertere product range, paying close attention to our two new additions.

### Introducing XtraX

*The new pinnacle of cartridge design*

The XtraX represents a significant leap forward in the design development of Vertere cartridges - the most sonically defined and audibly flawless moving coil cartridge we've produced. Internally, XtraX features a brand new micro-elliptical stylus, toolled from solid, nude diamond and fitted to a telescopic cantilever for ever more precise control. In order to match the rich refinement of these new components, the XtraX outer shell has been completely designed from the ground up, machined from a single piece of aluminium. XtraX 'floats' its generator at four fixing points that are precisely calibrated for peak performance, and an alignment ridge perfectly matches XtraX with any of our tone arms.

The result is, truthfully, jaw-dropping. XtraX has reached a previously unachieved level of musical connection and presence, with a vastly elevated and more clearly defined harmonic structure. The XtraX makes your music feel truly alive - as if you're listening to the final take from behind the studio glass, or sat metres from the live performance.



X T R A X

### Mystic

*An uncompromising musical experience*

Setting a high watermark for moving coil cartridge performance, Mystic delivers a staggering degree of accuracy and carefully optimised detail. Utilising a samarium-cobalt magnet and copper cross coiling, alongside a micro-elliptical, bonded diamond stylus and aluminium tube cantilever - it treads the perfect balance between surface grip and frequency response.



DARK



### Introducing Dark Sabre

*Transformational design, stunning reproduction.*

Both Sabre and Dark Sabre share the same generator, but a new fixing technique and cartridge stylus in Dark Sabre allows for a profound performance improvement on its sibling. A quad point screw formation on a newly designed, single-piece aluminium chassis allows Dark Sabre to distribute its weight much more evenly and effectively. To complement this new design, Dark Sabre employs a steeper cartridge angle, resulting in a much more consistent contact with the vinyl surface.

The design improvements don't stop there. With Dark Sabre, we've further elevated product specifications by employing the same nude diamond micro-elliptical stylus and telescopic cantilever found in XtraX. It makes Dark Sabre one of the most forward-thinking and cutting edge moving magnet cartridges ever built.



### Sabre

*Take your listening to the next level*

Balance, meticulous design, and granular attention to detail - it's made Sabre one of the most revered moving magnet cartridges in the world. Sabre delivers superb sonic clarity for a remarkably honest, objective, and accessible listening experience. Sabre also represents a perfect upgrade option for owners of the DG-1S record player.

### Magneto

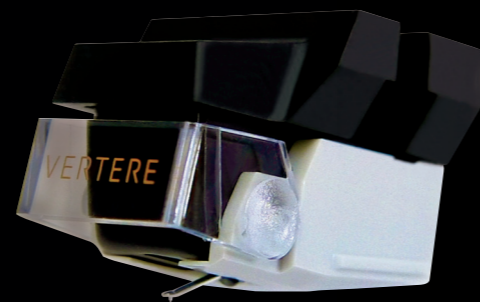
*A class-leading cartridge for any system*

The Magneto is our entry level moving magnet cartridge, offering reliable performance and excellent build quality. It's a great option for music lovers exploring elevated record reproduction for the first time, and the perfect partner to the award-winning Vertere DG-1S.

So which cartridge is right for you? Ultimately, the proof lies in the listening. But whichever cartridge you choose, we believe a Vertere cartridge represents a substantive and significant upgrade to your record player.

**The only question that remains is, how close to your music do you want to be?**

[Click here to read more about Vertere's range of cartridges.](#)



# Go West...



## Retailer Spotlight KJ West One



### There's only one place in the UK where you can experience the flagship RG-1 turntable on permanent demonstration and Ed Selley went along to experience it...

Located not far from Marylebone station and a fixture of the UK HiFi industry for over fifty years, KJ West One has carved out an enviable reputation as one of the UK's pre-eminent high-end dealers. Established in 1965 and originally called KJ Leisuresound, it has been present in London's Marylebone since the early seventies; first on nearby Wigmore Street before moving to the present premises in New Cavendish Street in the early eighties.

Even judged by the standards of a part of London possessed with some exquisite retail spaces, the store is an impressive one, set over two levels and providing 3,000 square feet of space across two floors, including two demonstration rooms; one described as compact by KJ standards but a very respectable space that can genuinely do justice to truly high-end systems. While a great many customers live in the surrounding area, a significant number will travel a considerable distance to benefit from the experience and the treasure trove of equipment therein.

This is because the equipment that populates the premises is smart and rather special too. Many hi-fi retailers have some serious hardware in their inventory, but it is the strength in depth that KJ West One offers that sets it apart. Without ending up with an overabundance of any one product type, the ideal that the team works to is offering considerable choices at varied price points, whilst other dealers often provide single models. You can demo a small selection of carefully selected components and decide on the one that suits rather than picking something as the default.

Vertere's relationship with KJ West One stretches back nearly a decade and when it began, the RG-1 was the only turntable in the range, and it was the flagship that secured Vertere's place in the store. Since then the DG-1S and MG-1 MkII have joined the roster as well, bringing some of the same admirable qualities to their price points, the RG-1 remains on permanent demonstration; the only place in the UK where this is the case.



For Jason Forde, the store manager, there is never simply a 'best' of any category because each brand brings something specific to the portfolio and it is his job to find you your best rather than claiming that any one model is the single universal truth. For this reason, Vertere joins a formidable range of high-end turntables, each of which brings different attributes to the store. In the case of Vertere, Jason loves the speed and openness of the RG-1 which, even in the exalted company it keeps here, is hard to surpass. To show how the RG-1 works in the KJ inventory, Jason demonstrated it in two different systems, one where it would be a 'marquee' item and one that is more price comparative throughout.

It has to be said that even the system where the RG-1 is the premium component still contains equipment that would very much be at the top of the tree for most dealers. The RCM phono stage, Dartzeel integrated amp and extraordinary looking Franco Serblin Ktema speakers all complement the RG-1's uncompromising embodiment of everything that Vertere values in turntable design.

This would be a system with truly phenomenal presence in any room, even if it does happen to be sat in one of the few places in the UK surrounded by more extraordinary equipment lurking downstairs.

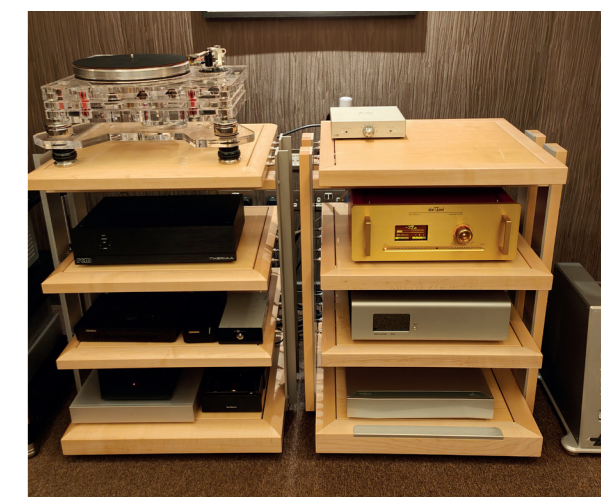
Their physical attributes are entirely secondary to their sonic ones though. As an ensemble, they deliver a performance that has you questioning whether you truly *need* two kidneys or could muddle through with one if it helped you own it. Jason has a record collection every bit as enviable as the equipment he oversees and it's a test pressing of The Who's *Who's Next* that grabs the attention of what this system can do. I've heard *Behind Blue Eyes* a great many times and my expectation that a degree of compression appears in the recording as the Moon's drumming begins. Here it's absent. The RG-1 simply takes this sublime record and keeps the space and three dimensionality around the band wholly intact.

An equally stunning copy of Elton John's *Madman Across the Water* demonstrates the tonality on offer is astonishingly tangible.



There's no showiness to the presentation here, simply a perception that when you close your eyes, the man himself is smack bang in front of you behind a piano and with Paul Buckmaster's superb string section off to one side with nothing so trivial as a chain of electronics in the way. The RG-1's unwavering desire to get to the core of the recording is readily apparent even with this 'more affordable' equipment.

In fact, you kid yourself that things cannot possibly get better, and this lasts right up to the point where the RG-1 goes into the big system with flagship RCM phono stage, Soulution pre and mono power amps and Wilson Audio Alexia V speakers. Having unpicked *Behind Blue Eyes* in the first system, now the RG-1 sets about actual time travel, pulling you back to those early seventies recording sessions with all the bombast and excess stitched into the sound you hear. We kid ourselves that most of our equipment is 'full range' right up to the point where you listen to something like this and realise it's only a facsimile. A good facsimile but one, nevertheless.



And do you know what? *Madman Across the Water* is even more extraordinary. For most of us, we have to accept that Elton has quit touring and, all power to him, he quit while he still had it. For people lucky enough to own gear like this, they will inhabit a world where he's never had to call it a day, where every time they cue up the record, they'll be granted a concert performance by Elton John at the peak of his powers. What this system does is calmly and completely breaks down what you think you know about the difference between 'reproduction' and 'performance.'

The good news is that Jason and his team's expertise in creating systems like this extends down to ones fronted by the DG-1s and more price-relative components. The same commitment to unparalleled musical experiences; a world where 'good enough' is a mortal insult never changes though. KJ West One's unwavering commitment to creating some of the best systems on offer anywhere in the world is readily apparent and Vertere's role in this is one that simply has to be experienced for yourself.

[Click here to read more about KJ West One](#)

# Vertere: The Story So Far



**2006**

**VERTERE (TMsystems)**

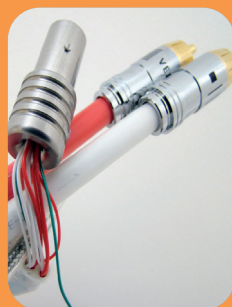
Original Hand-Built Interconnect & Tonearm cables. Roskan founder Touraj Moghaddam starts the Vertere journey by developing his own, hand built interconnect and tone arm cables. The pursuit of total sonic objectivity begins.



**2010**

**Pulse-R, Pulse-B Interconnects**

The reference Pulse-R and Pulse-B interconnects build on earlier designs to become two of Vertere's inaugural products - both developed to improve upon what is typically the weakest link in the reproduction chain.



**2011**

**Pulse-C Interconnect**

Vertere Acoustics is officially born! Following the launch comes the release of the popular Pulse-C interconnect - adding to our range of high-end analogue cables that improve system performance.



**2012**

**Pulse-X Speaker Cable, D-Fi Cable**

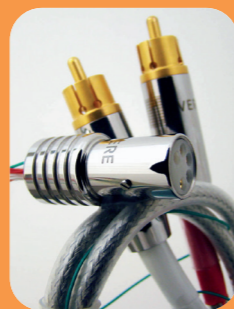
Vertere's burgeoning reputation grows further, with the release of two new cables. Pulse X, our first speaker cable, and the versatile D-Fi - designed to optimise a range of portable electronics.



**2015**

**MG-1 Record Player, HB Loudspeaker, Mains & USB cables**

The pioneering MG-1 joins Vertere's line of premium record players. The HB range is expanded with the addition of hand built mains, USB and loudspeaker cables.



**2014**

**HB Ethernet cable, New HB Interconnect cable**

Vertere introduces its fundamentals-focused philosophy to the world of digital streaming, with the release of the Hand Built (HB) Ethernet Cable, alongside a new Hand Built Interconnect.



**2013**

**Reference Tonearm, RG-1 & SG-1 Record Players**

Vertere takes a big leap toward its goal of true sonic purity, with the release of the Reference Tonearm, as well as two groundbreaking new record players - the RG-1 and the SG-1. All receive wide critical acclaim.



**2016**

**PHONO-1 & STAGE-1**

Compatible with any high-end record player, the PHONO-1 preamp and STAGE-1 Reference Isolation Platform redefine premium vinyl listening - both bringing the musical experience closer to the original recording.



**2017**

**Pulse-Xmini & Reference Motor Drive**

The Pulse Xmini joins the Vertere line of high quality speaker cables. The Reference Motor Drive makes the energy source from the flagship RG-1 accessible to any listener and system.



**2018**

**HB Mains Distribution Block, Pulse-XS speaker cable, HBS Mains**

An all new reference-level speaker cable is born in the Pulse-XS. Power supply and distribution is augmented with a new, Hand Built Mains Distribution Block and the reference HBS Mains Cable.



**2019**

**DG-1 Record Player, Magneto MM, Mystic MC, Redline IC & Mains**

The entry level DG-1 is launched alongside the Magneto MM cartridge - a combination that will go on to win four What HiFi Best Product Awards. Redline IC and Mains make Vertere cables more accessible than ever.



**2023**

**XtraX MC & DARK Sabre MM**

Vertere's commitment to sonic purity is taken to the next level with the release of the XtraX MC and DARK Sabre MM cartridges - two of the most technically sophisticated cartridges ever built.



**2022**

**DG-1S record player & SG-1 PTA tonearm**

The DG-1S builds on the performance of the award winning DG-1. The Reference Tonearm Gen III further fine tunes an industry leading product, and the SG-1 Precision Tonearms offer incomparable performance at almost any class.



**2021**

**Tempo, Imperium, MG-1 MkII, PHONO-1 MKII L, Sabre, Verum & XminiS**

A busy year! The motor drive range is expanded to include the Imperium and Tempo, the MG-1 MkII makes its launch, and the PHONO-1 MKII L takes Vertere preamps another step forward. The Sabre MM cartridge is released, and two new cables join the line - the Verum and XminiS.



**2020**

**PHONO-1 MkII**

The PHONO-1 MkII builds on the incredible success of the MkI with several significant design improvements. The MkII will go on to win four What HiFi Best product awards, back-to-back.

# A Saucerful of Secrets

## The Nick Mason Interview

CEO and founder of Vertere, Touraj Moghaddam discusses music, touring, inspiration, car collections and future plans with the legendary drummer, Nick Mason CBE, from the iconic band Pink Floyd.



Credit: © Jiji Furmanovsky

T - What made you think of reincarnating the early Floyd music, and was there a connection with the band members (Lee, Guy, Gary and Dom)?

N - Yes. The main thing is that, it wasn't my idea, but actually Lee Harris'. What he did was very sensible. He didn't ask me because I didn't know him and would have probably refused to work on the project. Instead, he went to Guy Pratt, who said it was a great idea, and I thought we could achieve this with Guy. I have great respect for Guy's playing and his sense of whether we can make a show out of it. Many have asked about how we auditioned people for the rest of the band, but we didn't. Guy and I were talking about it in front of Gary Kemp, a friend of ours, and then Guy suggested Dom [Beken] as a keyboard player, who was ideal because he'd worked with Rick [Wright] on his solo stuff. Dom already had knowledge of Pink Floyd's keyboards and Rick's playing. So that was how our band was put together in a very old school way with people we knew, much like Pink Floyd and The Rolling Stones were.

T - Does the early stuff resonate with you because of Syd [Barrett] or because it was the beginning of Pink Floyd?

N - I think both are relevant. It was the beginning of Pink Floyd and Syd, but I knew Syd the least out of all the other band members. Syd had connections with other band members from living in Cambridge. I loved the idea of the music because it reminded me of how we were fifty or fifty-five years ago, in that it was about the feel of the music. The first night we ever played as The Saucers, I remember sitting at the drum kit, looking up and thinking, "My God, I've been here before, and that's how it was in 1967, with my friends playing together". I had gotten so used to being on stages as big as football fields.



Credit: Paddy Balls/Martin Griffin, 2020

T - The Roundhouse must have played a role, because, in those days, the Roundhouse was really the place to be.

N - Well, Pink Floyd did their first ever public gig in the Roundhouse in 1966, which was chaotic and coincided with the launch of The International Times, an underground newspaper. All sorts of people were there who were important in the culture of the late 60s. It was chaotic for us because we only had one power supply, one thirteen-amp plug which led to an office some fifty metres away from the Roundhouse. So, the playing time by Pink Floyd was minimal, but we were there, and we were noticed. That was when it all happened and started coming together, because record companies saw what happened with The Beatles, and they wanted the new thing. It was different to everything that had gone before, short-term pop songs. We were so new to it all, and a lot of what we did was different and experimental because we didn't know any better.

T - It was new. It brought a different aspect to psychedelic blues, and you name it, it was in there.

N - I am tempted to say we didn't really know what we were doing. We thought we wanted to be like some of the other bands of the period like The Move, who seemed incredibly professional compared to the way we operated.

T - When I went to the concert, you could hear the sound of the era but also the differences. Was there any difficulty getting the sound that you wanted?

N - No, I don't think so, but you're right. The drums don't come into this because they sounded like they did 100 years ago. Of course, the technology means you've got access to incredible keyboard effects that are exactly as they were. Farfisa Duo, for example, which is now in the V&A Museum, the sound can be recreated exactly with the new



technology. As far as the guitars are concerned, a Telecaster will sound exactly the same as it did fifty-five years ago. So, the guitars tend to be of the period and not very difficult. It's one of the issues I'm least bothered about because we can take certain liberties with the solos, the tempos and so on, but I'm not anxious that it must sound exactly like the record. In fact, for me it's one of the reasons we're not doing Dark Side and all the later things. Firstly, you're never more than five metres away from someone who can play the solo from 'Comfortably Numb'. What we want to do is to have the feel and spirit of 1967 without being anxious about the music sounding exactly like it did then. I think in that we have generally succeeded. People often come up and say they enjoyed the show because it reminded them of something from a long time ago.

T - Yeah, I must say, I came to Floyd from Ummagumma onwards. So, although I have both albums - A Saucerful of Secrets and The Piper at the Gates of Dawn - and listened to them, it wasn't until I went to the first Roundhouse tour with Miles [Showell], where I was just blown away. It was like different material, but it wasn't.



What your Saucerful Of Secrets has brought to the early material is exceptional, some subtle, some quite bold changes. We are now listening to these songs anew and not unlike what you did with the Pink Floyd Pulse tour. I remember when I went to that concert in Earl's Court, almost every song was slightly different, not that you wanted to make it different, but another dimension had been added to it - like the construction of the drums in 'Money', the bass and, obviously, Guy Pratt was there. Was this something you did intentionally?

N - I don't think it's intentional, I think it's inevitable. I don't think many musicians want to replicate exactly what's on the record. The opportunity to play live is an opportunity to do a little bit of exploring, enjoying, and moving things around. 'Money' is quite a good example, because it was always open to another solo or a different solo.

T - We all know how successful the first tour was, it just blew everyone away. At the end of it we got a double LP set, which was great. Is there a prospect of another LP or something with the second Echo tour, because in some ways the Echo tour is even more successful than the first one?

N - Oh, definitely. The answer is that we haven't decided how to do that yet, but, without a doubt, we would like to see Echoes available on vinyl. What we really want to do is an EP, something from the era. Ideally, I'd like to do another live album once we have more new material.

T - When I saw your website, the logos and all the colours, it was so striking, and everybody comments on it. It's not something you'd expect to see on someone's website.

N - Well, the big thing was that we took one leap into the dark, which was to not use Hipgnosis. I'm a huge fan of Hipgnosis, and I think what Storm [Thorgerson] and Po [Aubrey Powell] have done over the years is truly wonderful, but for this we didn't want it to be too close to Pink Floyd graphics. So, we went somewhere completely different and mainly took inspiration from 1967/1968, the whole San Francisco Summer of Love. We coupled this with the Hokusai wave, which has always been something I've liked. The original drum kit with the wave on it was from 1971 I think, and that is in the V&A Museum. I thought I'd like to redo that because I've got some lovely kits that were painted by DW [DWDrums], but I thought this one would go back in time. I'm still in touch with Kate Hepburn, who painted the original drum kit, and she said, "I'd love to do it". So, we had a refresh of that design.

T - One thing that nobody can deny is whenever we saw you and the band on the stage, off the stage, between songs etc., you could see so much joy radiating from the band. Performing live is one part of it, and I was wondering is there anything else coming that we can look forward to?

N - The answer to that is, I really don't know. We're all quite interested in where we can go next, but it's difficult to decide what that would be. There are a couple of options like doing a film score or something like that. The problem is we're all at an age where we can't really set off on a two-year trip around America to try and break a new band. I'm fond of saying that I look forward to an award ceremony, where we get given "Best Newcomer" and "Lifetime Achievement" on the same night.

T - Well, you absolutely deserve it. It was really unexpected.

N - What we'll probably do is take one more trawl through the catalogue of the older stuff and see if there are a couple of songs we can justify putting into it. Then think about introducing some other elements of new material.



Credit: ©Pink Floyd Music Ltd



Unique Pink Floyd Vertere MG-1 MKII record player

**Funnily enough, I've just thought about what Roger [Waters] has done and is doing with Dark Side is interesting and almost an add-on. A lot of people have said, "Is he trying to make it a substitute for the original record?" I don't know if you've heard it. I don't think it's released yet, but he's taken Dark Side and developed it a bit, particularly the lyrics. It's got a totally different feel to it. It's not another version of Dark Side, but leaning on Dark Side for influence. I really enjoyed it, and I don't think anyone's really done it before. That sort of thinking might lead somewhere.**

T - So it's not released yet?

**N - There were a lot of issues. Sony were worried about releasing it because they thought it would conflict with the fiftieth anniversary of Dark Side. It doesn't conflict at all in my opinion. It's not for me to decide whether they can or can't release it, but if that's not an issue, it could probably go ahead. I think it makes for interesting listening.**

T - Well, we'll be keeping an eye out for when it comes out. We know how much you love art and classic cars, etc., getting into the drums - knowing what you know now and going back, anyone would say they'd love to be one of the top drummers in the world - but, at the time, if those meetings had not happened, do you think you would have pursued music or were you thinking of a different direction and the music aspect came as a coincidence?

**N - I don't think it came as a coincidence, but I think if it hadn't been for meeting Roger and Rick in college, I would not have found a career in music. I wasn't that committed to playing the drums, but I became committed to being in a band and that's still true. What I like is the whole thing rather than wanting to be a drum great. The reality is if things hadn't worked out in the band, I probably would have carried on with architecture. I'd done four and a half years of it, and I enjoyed it.**

**It's interesting to do. I could very much see myself going down that route.**

T - So, you still have that enthusiasm there?

**N - Yes, I still have interest in it. I had this wonderful thing last year, where I ended up working with one of my old tutors on an exhibition he was doing in Bilbao at the Guggenheim. That was fantastic. It was Norman Foster, and I hadn't seen him for about fifty years, but it was so good to work with him.**

T - And what did that entail? What was it about?

**N - It was really about him particularly and about architecture, art and cars and the automobile. He has an interesting collection of cars - not racing cars or anything like that, but cars like the Dymaxion that Buckminster Fuller developed. The cars were more about advances in design rather than being great road cars.**

T - One thing I've been told that I didn't know about - are you the custodian of the Flying Pig?

**N - No, I am not. The closest thing to it is a white elephant. It takes an enormous amount of space, and it probably leaks a lot of air. No, I have enough trouble just keeping my drum kits in reasonable order. And the last thing I need is either an inflatable pig or an inflatable anything.**

T - Is there anything you think people should know about?

**N - Yes. How did you get involved in making turntables?**

T - I just like music and it was a real coincidence because I'd sold my car to buy my first hi-fi system. Luckily, I lived close to college so I could walk there easily and didn't need the car.

**N - So, what was your first hi-fi system?**

T - Well, the very first one was a Russian open-top plastic thing when I was in school. This one was when I was doing my postgraduate studies at university.

By that time, I was living very close to Imperial College, and thought I really like this hi-fi kit and there was one for sale second-hand. It was a system I could afford, so I sold my third-hand VW Scirocco and bought the system. I was enjoying it until one afternoon, there was a programme about Thelonious Monk. As I was watching the programme, I thought wow! Every touch on the piano sounded so much more delicate and there was much more musicality than I was getting from my LP. I thought, "It can't be," so I put one of the tracks on my record player and of course the sound was a lot better - more resolution, depth, bottom-end, top-end - but it didn't quite capture the way he was playing - the way he was holding off on a note, for example. Then I put in a VHS tape and recorded the programme. Later, I plugged the video recorder into my system, I put the mono-switch on, and listened to it. It sounded the same! The quality of the fidelity was lower on the VHS, but musically it was much more engaging, and I couldn't fathom out why. Obviously, it wasn't the electronics or the speakers because the VHS was sounding better than the deck. So, it must have been the deck, and that inspired me to look at why I chose this deck in the first place. What does it do, and how does it work? I got involved in how it functioned and so on, and, again by accident, I came across an anomaly when running a computer simulation, which in those days was using punch cards - we didn't have computers like we have today! The simulation was against in situ measurements of the strain gauges. The anomaly then lead to an idea that a record player should be designed in a particular way and index everything to the stylus, since that is the one thing in contact with the groove. If I know the question, I can find the answer. The most difficult part is finding the right question to ask in the first place. This was all coincidence and that was how I



Credit: Paddy Balls/Martin Griffin, 2020

got into turntables and design. I would have ended up working for an engineering company, perhaps doing what I was doing before, which was wind turbines. Nowadays, everybody wants one, but in those days, we thought we were just shouting like rebels.

**N - It's interesting to hear how people get caught up in the business of improving the aural experience. In a way, the trouble with being in a successful band is that you're completely ruined for listening to things because you've heard it in the control room with 2 inch tape, an SSL Desk, and incredible speakers. Whenever you take it out of the studio, you're always thinking it doesn't sound as good as it did.**

T - Absolutely, but we've come a long way since 1985 when I started.

**N - Yes, it's extraordinary! One of things I keep coming across is the sound of Dark Side because it was fifty years ago. The recording from then still sounds good now. Now everyone is wandering away from CDs because they're almost too sharp.**

T - If at one point in time you set up a system that does justice to the music you're playing, then there are components today that can't replace what you get live, but they have an amazing ability of disappearing and you can just get into the music itself without worrying about the system and its dynamics. There is stuff out there but it's expensive, like anything else.

**N - Do you remember which Thelonious Monk album it was?**

T - It was a programme, but I had a boxset and I remember the song, how it was stopping and starting and resembling a waltz. I can't remember the title.

**N - "Little Rootie Tootie?" I love Thelonious Monk, I went to see him live at the Village Vanguard. The support act was Mose Allison, it was most peculiar. I've always said Thelonious is one of my favourite drummers because of the way he plays piano. I love The Thelonious Monk Orchestra at Town Hall, it's one of my favourites.**

T - Yes, I have quite a collection of Thelonious Monk. Now that you've said it, it was a percussion that he was playing. He knew when to hit and when not to hit. Lastly, I know you love your Ferarri cars and just wanted to know if you'd ever tell Roger about your new Ferarri?

**N - Actually, Roger's had a couple of good cars, but I think he's sold them. He had a BMW M1, but I think he's downsizing now. But who knows?**

Nick Mason CBE, Thank you so much...

# On The Radar...

## Distributor Spotlight Radar Audio, Hong Kong



### 1. Tell us about Radar Audio and how it was founded?

Radar Audio was originally established back in 1986 by respected audio expert Michael Wong. Over nearly four decades, Michael has been a guiding force, turning Radar Audio into one of the most respected high end audio distributors in the region.

### 2. This is our second trip to the Far East this year. Tell us why it's so important that a brand visits your market?

Vertere's product line is incredible - we've long been admirers of what they bring to high end analogue listening. These visits are ideal for us to showcase Vertere products to a wider market - we're keen to help foreign businesses like Vertere improve their brand awareness and exposure in our region.

### 3. What do you love most about Vertere and how does it compliment the other brands you distribute?

Vertere has such unique ideas when it comes to product design - every product in their range really stands out with eye-catching finishes. Crucially though, this is backed up by outstanding performance. It makes Vertere incredibly attractive to our customers, regardless of their age or listening habits.

### 4. What is your favourite Vertere product and why?

The RG-1 Reference Groove and Reference Tonearm Gen III is the most innovative and sophisticated vinyl playback combo we have experienced. The setup procedure is quite complex, but once operational it is well worth it as the sound reproduction is marvellous.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Radar for taking part in the second issue of *In the Groove* and for their hard work and enthusiasm in the China and Hong Kong markets.

[Click here to read more about Radar Audio](#)

### 5. How popular is vinyl in Hong Kong and do you see its popularity growing?

The vinyl market is still growing here, with more and more young people turning away from portable and digital streaming products and instead looking for a more intentional and hands-on listening experience. When they visit our showrooms, we always guide them to our range of 2-channel audio products to give them a taste of vinyl reproduction. The results are always incredibly positive.

### 6. Tell us about your most unique retailer and what makes them special?

One of our Vertere retailers in Guangzhou China is a serious audiophile and turntable expert. He has an amazingly large vinyl collection in his demonstration room, including some expensive and hard to find items which he loves to share with his customers. It's made him extremely well respected amongst his customer base - people who shop there immediately know they're purchasing from someone who believes in what they're selling. This is an important, and often overlooked, factor in finding success in high end audio retail.

### 7. We're currently here to support you with the Hong Kong Audio Show, tell us why this show is so important to your business?

The Hong Kong Audio Show is a major show in the China market. Most of our retailers and audiophile customers in China will come to the Hong Kong Audio Show and visit our room every year. It's the best opportunity for us to make a proper demonstration of the brands we distribute.

# Running The Groove - Asia Tour 2023

Earlier this year, Touraj Moghaddam took Vertere to Asia, in a whistlestop tour of some of the biggest cities in the Asia Pacific region.



### SINGAPORE

We began in steamy Singapore with a turntable masterclass at Audio Exotics - one of the finest HiFi retailers in the region.



### BANGKOK

Next to Thailand, for another incredible round of retailer training and packed out press events with Hi End Audio (1979) Co.



### HONG KONG

Next we headed to Hong Kong, to visit our distributor Radar Audio. Touraj did an interview with HiFi Review magazine which you can read [here](#).



### HONG KONG

Back to Hong Kong to participate in one of Asia's biggest exhibitions - Hong Kong Audio Show. Featuring RG-1, Ref. Record Player, Stage-1 and HBS cables.



### TOKYO

Next stop, Japan's metro capital. and what better place to add WADA-san's Home system.



### TAIWAN

We wrapped up the tour with a final stop in Taiwan, and a fantastic visit with our local distributor, Soundray Electronics.

# Vertere Records

## In Conversation with Elles Springs

“First off, sorry about my English. I’m a little out of practice”.

**Dutch Singer-Songwriter Elles Springs joins us via video call from her home in The Netherlands. This opening mea culpa over her English (which is excellent, by the way) neatly sums up Elles and her music: charming with a hint of self-deprecation, and brilliantly, disarmingly honest..**



Over recent years, Springs’ soulful voice and distinct brand of jazz-inflected country-folk have garnered a dedicated international following - leading to the release of ‘Reveal’ on Vertere Records in 2018.

We’re here to find out more about her fascinating career, and so we start at the beginning. Where did Elles’ love of music originate?

“It was my Dad”. She tells us. “He was a guitarist and a singer in a band for 40 years”. Elles’ father flooded their home with a deeply diverse music collection. “Elvis Presley, Dire Straits, Bee Gees...but also Gypsy Kings, Sade, Jazz Fusion”.

From 14, Elles was performing regularly in local cover bands. It didn’t take long for her beautifully distinct voice to turn heads, and she soon came to the attention of music industry tastemakers in Holland. This industry heat led to record releases, Dutch and US tour dates, and a string of high profile radio plays.

In 2012, Elles met guitarist and songwriter Mark De Grauw. She didn’t know it at the time, but this meeting was when “the pieces really fell together”.

It was the beginning of a deeply productive creative relationship - one that would give life to a new record, and springboard Elles into a richly rewarding phase of her musical career.

A few years of co-writing followed, where Springs and De Grauw allowed themselves to be instinctively led by music they were making. “We met making country rock, but we started to notice our creative collaboration was resulting in these small, really intimate acoustic songs”.

“This collaboration between me and Mark is what became ‘Reveal’”.

‘Reveal’ is a fitting album title in many respects. It’s a profoundly honest record, with lyrics that disarm the listener through their heartbreaking intimacy. We ask, how difficult is it to be this honest in your songwriting?

“Some of the songs are really personal. Unfamiliar Road and Two Months, Eight Weeks were written about my nephew who died of cancer...it’s a little bit of therapy for me to write these songs.”

## We sit down with the Dutch songsmith to chat about her fascinating career to date.

That’s a good feeling, but then you play it to an audience... and people connect with it in their own really personal ways” “One guy told me ‘you don’t know it but you were singing that song for me’. And that means so much. That’s what music should do.”

‘Reveal’ was recorded at Sound Vision Studios in Arnhem, and produced by George Konings. It was Konings who introduced Elles to world-renowned mastering engineer Miles Showell. “George said, ‘I think we need to send this to Miles at Abbey Road Studios.’”

A trip to London and Abbey Road followed. “When I met Miles for the first time, he shook my hand and said ‘Hi Elles, I really love your songs’...it meant so much for him to love my music”.

The belief shown by Showell was a transformative moment. “For the first time in my life, I was making my own music, not with the idea of making a big hit, just to make something beautiful. The fact that this incredibly talented and successful guy loved it...it made me feel like I was doing something right.”

It was through Miles Showell that Elles was introduced to Vertere Records. “Miles told me ‘I know this guy called Touraj Moghaddam ...I think he might be interested in putting this out on vinyl.” A record deal with Vertere Records followed, and a half speed master of Reveal by Miles Showell at Abbey Road for vinyl release.

The relationship with Vertere Records has gone on to create many musical opportunities. A meeting with label-mate Joseph Donnelly from Caesar gave rise to another compelling project; “Joseph and I met performing at HiFi shows...we started writing together for fun.” Elles tells us. “Over time, we got 7 or 8 really nice songs out of it, and now we’re in the process of putting them together for release”.

We finish our conversation as we began, with a trademark piece of Elles Springs’ charming humility. “I’m so thankful that Vertere and Touraj believed in me...he gave us such a great opportunity to put this record into the world. A lot of beautiful things came out of that.”

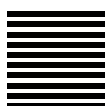


[Click here to read more about Elles Springs](#)



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