

# Zanias Bio

## **Short Version:**

Since 2014, Zanias has existed as the unrepentant creative venture of Alison Lewis, born in Australian, raised in Southeast Asia, and also known for her vocal work with Linea Aspera, Keluar and a record shelf's worth of collaborations with the likes of Black Rain, Ancient Methods, Dax J and I Hate Models. As the sole custodian of Fleisch Records she spent many years attuning herself to Berlin dancefloors through the timely collision of techno and electronic body music, but her true passion is for understanding the modality of emotions through songwriting. Sound is her psycho-spiritual catharsis, expressed through an intense and ethereal vocal performance, evocative melodies and heavy rhythmic components. With dark synth sounds at the fore, a pop sensibility commands the structure of her work, while authenticity and vulnerability subsume the core.

## *Notable performances:*

*Kalabalik Festival, Alvesta, Sweden (2016)*

*Bozar Electronic Music Festival, Brussels, w/ Black Rain (September, 2017)*

*Wave Gotik Treffen, Stattdbad (June, 2018)*

*Synth Fest 3, Mexico City (November, 2018)*

*Berghain Klubnacht, Berlin (April, 2019)*

*Oil Club, Shenzhen, China (October, 2019)*

*Katzenklub, Munich Olympiastadium (September, 2020)*

## **Long Version:**

Zanias is the sometimes solo and often collaborative project of Alison Lewis, an Australian-born multidisciplinary artist with a background in archaeology and keen interests in anthropology, psychology, neuroscience and entheogenic exploration. In 2011, while studying in London, she crossed paths with Ryan Ambridge while playing a minimal synth DJ set at a bar in Camden, and darkwave history was made with the formation of Linea Aspera. After the project's swift ascent into underground recognition, largely due to the captivating quality of Alison's voice and carefully crafted emotive lyrics, it went on indefinite hiatus in 2013, and she then teamed up with Sid Lamar of Schwefelgelb to form Keluar. It was in this collaboration that a fierce DIY spirit was forged, as the band booked all their own tours, made all their own videos and even created their own custom merch by hand. This became a template for all of Alison's future endeavors: controlling all facets of creativity with total authenticity.

After relocating to Berlin, she co-founded the Fleisch collective with new friends & artists Phase Fatale, Agency, Halv Drøm, LGHTWGHT and Primary. Over the next six years they hosted a basement breeding ground for what would become the world standard of the Electronic Body Music revival, and eventually founded the Fleisch record label that went on to release some of EBMs most progressive and distinctive artists: Forces, Kontravoid, Imperial Black Unit, Reka and Fractions.

It was in 2014, following psychedelic-induced revelations of the fragility of existence, that Alison committed to music full-time and made the decision to take control of her creative output through a single entity, and so Zantias was born. Her debut EP, 'To the Core' (Noiztank, 2016), was co-produced with her mentor and close friend Alex Akers of Forces, and featured what would become core components of Zantias's sound: body music percussion, multi-layered ethereal vocals and a heavily atmospheric approach to production and performance.

'To the Core' was followed by a full-length album, 'Into the All', (2018, Candela Rising) through which Zantias and Alex treaded further into the tropical rainforests of Zantias's upbringing and spilled forth a parable for humanity's spiritual evolution (a philosophical healing process for the trauma of learning some heavy things too soon) in an ethnic fusion of ethereal body music and darkwave.

Between her own releases Zantias flowed with a steady current of collaborations, including an ongoing association with Black Rain which involved appearances on their releases on Blackest Ever Black as well as joining the band on stage at Bozar Electronic Arts Festival in Brussels for a largely improvised set. Her voice, awash with reverb, proved an effective addition to euphoric moments in the darker realms of techno, and so it resonated frequently through the aural pillars of 4/4 kick drums via the works of techno heavweights Dax J, Kobosil, Ancient Methods, I Hate Models and Nur Jaber. In April 2019 her techno affiliation culminated in the showcasing of her live set at Berghain's Klubnacht, alongside Regis and a cohort of Monnom Black artists, whom she also joined on the label's compilation releases in 2018 and 2019.

In 2020 she self-released two entirely self-produced and engineered EPs, 'Extinction' (Fleisch Records, 2020) and 'Harmaline' (Rune & Ruin, 2020), just as the world as we knew it came to an end. 'Extinction' in particular had come at a serendipitous time: a body music lament of climate anxiety completed at her family home in Queensland during the deadly 2019 bushfire season. With all tours cancelled by a virus seemingly unleashed by environmental degradation, and despair for the future mounting, Zantias threw herself into production once again and emerged from the first pandemic lockdown with a second album, titled 'Unearthed' and released on Fleisch Records in 2021, along with a set of self-produced music videos.

Zantias's work has always been defined by a search for higher meaning, an exploration into the modality of human feelings and how these complex experiences of consciousness play into our evolutionary story as a species. Writing and performing through sound is her way of simultaneously investigating her psychological interests and ultimately basking in awe of music's intrinsic connectivity. By fusing our emotions with vibrations we can share deeper realms of our experience than we even can through language – another vehicle for connection that she employs with acuity, through lyrics that are deftly woven for flow and imbued with multiplicities of meaning.

Her next steps involve the music production and visual talents of Toni Quiroga, aka Donna Haringwey, with whom she has been working on her third full-length release. This new work is the truest expression of Alison's musical spirit thus far, detached from external influence and galvanized by a deeper passion for sound design. Zantias remains an ever-evolving expression of vulnerable and authentic emotional catharsis, unbound by any predetermined desire to fit into any particular place. As with all her work from 2020 onwards, this new album shall be self-released.