

## **TARRASKA Full Biography**

Tarraska are a new hard rock band from the south coast of England. The core of the band gigged acoustically from 2014 and steadily wrote and played their original material. This included hundreds of performances at a multitude of venues and a major festival appearance. As they started recording in 2019, the tracks demanded a heavier sound and TARRASKA was born.

Their original acoustic/electric duo was formed in May 2014 by lifelong friends Ben Parker (Lead Guitar) and Jack Lande (Vocals and Guitar).

They had a serendipitous start, coming about as a bit of an accident. Ben was the guitarist in a jazz combo with a gig booked at a prestigious venue in Sandbanks, Dorset. When the female singer pulled out at short notice, he asked his friend of 18 years, Jack to step in and learn 30 jazz standards in 2 weeks! Jack was more than happy to help his mate out and they quickly re-designed the whole set to suit Jack's voice and their acoustic duo was born.

From 2014 they played sets of mostly crowd-pleasing covers, spanning a range of genres. Their popularity got them invited to play at better venues and to make live appearances on local radio, requiring them to write and perform original songs. They began the writing process in 2016 and immediately realised that their influences (and therefore their own music) directly mirrored their shared musical history and tastes of hard, heavy, classic and modern rock. One song was even finished in the back of the car as they parked for a local radio show!

In 2016 they started gigging originals separately from their covers circuit. As an acoustic/electric duo they played at a number of local music 'institutions' like Chaplins (Boscombe), Lighthouse (Poole), Railway Inn (Winchester), The Festival Sessions (Southsea) all resulting in festival appearances including 2019's Victorious Festival (which won U.K.'s Major Festival of the Year award) on the same bill as Fun Lovin' Criminals and others.

By the end of 2019 they had played more than 300 gigs in all manner of venues - pubs, clubs, restaurants, festivals and at private events.

Tarraska's musical style is a blend of classic and modern hard rock, focusing on heavy riffs with accessible melodies and lyrics. Ben's lead guitar and solos have been described as 'sublime' and Jack's rhythm guitar as displaying a 'deep musicality and pinpoint timing'. Jack is also an enigmatic frontman with a voice that people actually stop to listen to.

Their influences are wide-ranging and include Alter Bridge, Slash, Metallica, Iron Maiden, Foo Fighters, Van Halen, Tremonti, FFDP, Guns N Roses and a multitude of others. Tarraska's vision as a band is to blend their disparate musical influences and bring their music to the amazing rock audiences and community, hopefully leading to tours in Europe and beyond.

Tarraska's 2019 plan was to independently release a series of singles, followed by a debut album, but COVID lockdown hampered that process. 'Trailblazer', their debut single was recorded pre-

lockdown and then mixed, mastered and released during the initial pandemic. The recording of the subsequent tracks had to be put on hold until August 2020.

Tarraska eventually got back in the studio and released their second single, 'Renegade' on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The second U.K. national lockdown again put their ongoing recording process on hold until 2021 when Tarraska were able to re-enter the studio with a new drummer, Allan Varnfield.

Allan's power and precision drove Tarraska on to find a live bass player, Ollins Lande and finish writing the rest of their debut album. In preparation the band secured the services of multiple Grammy Award-winning mastering engineer Brad Blackwood at Euphonic Masters in Memphis TN to master 'Prose' and the forthcoming album.

December 2021 saw the release of the third Tarraska single, 'Prose', to critical acclaim. Recording was then completed in April 2022, with 'Tarraska' the debut album dropping on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Reviews and accolades can be found below.

A fourth single 'Getting Out Alive' was released as a precursor to the full album on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2022. Over 450 radio spins in the first three weeks followed, including a three week run on the Unleashed show on Kerrang! Radio.

Full details of the single and album releases can also be found below.

June 2022 saw Tarraska take to the stage as a 4 piece band with Allan Varnfield on drums and Oliver Lande on bass. Their debut album launch show and party on 16/06/22 was a roaring success and spawned the Getting Out Alive music video.

2023 started with the band playing at the Railway Inn, Winchester and progressed with festival slots at the award winning Teddy Rocks in Blandford Forum and LoveRocks in Dorset with Allan and Ollins now permanent members. All upcoming confirmed shows can be found on their website and social media channels.

## **BEN PARKER**

Ben's earliest musical memories are of his grandfather's Neil Diamond obsession and his dad's techno and trance tunes.

He started playing guitar when he was 13, mainly loving and learning rock. Once he won battle of the bands at school he started taking music seriously and progressed into more technical rock and metal. He then started taking his Rock School grades and eventually received a distinction at Grade 8.

Ben remembers the first album he ever bought with his own money (accompanied by Jack) was a copy of 'Hybrid Theory' by Linkin Park just before he entered his teens.



Following school, Ben attended Southampton Solent University to study Music Performance. It was here that he discovered John Mayer and fell in love with the blues and many other musical styles. Working with brilliant tutors he then went on to learn jazz, mastered the blues and soon his days of playing only heavy metal began to fade.

He then became the guitarist with the band Into The Falls, supporting bands like Room 94, shooting music videos and learning valuable skills in music technology and sound recording. Ben then joined

post hardcore band Saint The Sinner, gigging with them in London and supporting Romeo Must Die and Funeral For A Friend. Despite being signed to a UK label, Ben realised this particular music wasn't for him and parted ways with them.

Ben subsequently moved back to Bournemouth and started studying Popular Music at Bournemouth & Poole College. During this time he played with solo artists who were signed to AM Management in Ferndown, Dorset. In 2013 he started playing gypsy jazz with his tutor Paul Stevenson.

Ben is influenced by all genres of music from classical to metal and loves playing, experimenting musically and constantly pushing his limits. Whilst gigging with Jack, Ben rediscovered his hard rock 'heart' and his heavy riffing and technical shredding now drive the Tarraska sound.

He is also a serious gear and guitar-a-holic!

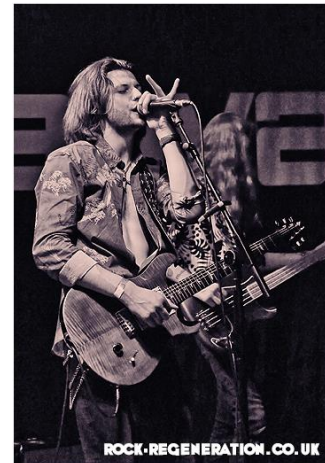
## **JACK LANDE**

Jack started playing guitar at age 10 whilst living in Scotland, with much help from his first tutor Gavin Dixon.

His first public performance was at age 11 in a primary school production of the Sound Of Music as Captain Von Trapp - both singing and playing acoustic guitar as a soloist.

He (along with his younger brother) was always playing and singing at all manner of family functions, spurred on by their mum, who was an accomplished singer herself.

On returning to Bournemouth and joining Ballard School, Jack quickly secured the lead role in Oliver the musical at age 13. He then went on to play main cast roles in Joseph and His Technicolour Dreamcoat and The Boyfriend and culminated his Ballard performing arts journey playing Danny Zuko in Grease with great aplomb in 2012.



During this time at Ballard Jack took peripatetic guitar lessons and performed many times as both a soloist and in collaborations on guitar and vocals, eventually gaining an A\* in Music and an A in Performing Arts at GCSE level. His Ballard guitar teacher, Jonny Hepbir brought him on immensely and broadened his repertoire from mainly rock beginnings. Also during this time Jack was put forward by the Ballard performing arts department for a casting session for an independent British feature film. He made the final shortlist, but the movie is still to be made.

On leaving Ballard at age 16 Jack gained a place at Bournemouth School to study A-Levels. During the following two years he didn't formally study music in any way but continued to play at family events in a number of leading Bournemouth hotels.

Jack then achieved a BSc in Music & Sound Production from Bournemouth University, studying from 2015-2018, whilst gigging with Ben in their acoustic duo.

Jack has known Ben from the day he was born, as their mums have been best friends since their own school days, and Ben was with Jack when he discovered his first taste-defining album 'One Day Remains' by Alter Bridge in 2005.

## **ALLAN VARNFIELD**

Allan began playing a little later than most musicians; at the tender age of 14. It was clear from his very first drum lesson the career choice he was going to make. Everything else in life took a back seat to his first beloved drum set, a royal blue 70's Beverley and the decision was made to pursue a life in music. Just 2 years later Allan had his place assured at the prestigious music college, The Academy of Contemporary Music. 3 years later Allan had graduated with an HND and BA Honours degree in Contemporary Music Performance and was ready to take on the world!



Fast forward more than a decade and Allan has forged a strong career as a performer, session musician and teacher. During this time Allan has had the immense honour of working with some incredible musicians and producers along the way, such as Louis Delort (The Voice, France), Alex Hedley (Saturday Sun), The Nordic Giants and John Cornfield (Muse, Oasis) to name but a few.

As a session musician Allan had the honour of playing on the 'Band of Sisters' album project with famed songwriter David Mindel alongside such names as American Soul legend PP Arnold and Jamie Moses (Tom Jones, Queen).

Allan recorded and performed original music with The Longest Day, before joining The Story Of The Guitar Heroes as their touring drummer.

Allan was hired as the Tarraska drummer initially to record 'Prose' in 2021 but impressed so much on the first day in the studio, that he was immediately signed up for the full album. He appeared live with the band for their debut gig at Canvas, Bournemouth on 16.06.22 and continues drum for Tarraska in 2023.

## **OLIVER 'OLLINS' LANDE**

Oliver was born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 2000. He started singing as soon as he could talk and was putting on little 'concerts' for family and friends with his brother Jack before even starting school. He first picked up a guitar (his older brother's ½ sized acoustic) at the age of 8. This guitar was eventually signed for Oliver by Scottish singer Paolo Nutini on stage at a sound check for one of Paolo's sold out shows on his second UK tour, giving Oliver a glimpse of what a professional musician's life looks like.



Ollins (his stage name) released his first original single at age 14 with a full album dropping on his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. He went on to complete a BTEC level 3 in Songwriting and Musical Performance at the Bournemouth Academy of Modern Music. Although his solo music is of a different genre, he brings a multi-instrumentalist wealth of recording and gigging experience to Tarraska adding a certain crunch and groove to their low end. Playing bass in a heavy rock band marks a new chapter in Ollins' musical journeys.

He appeared live with the band for the first time at their debut album launch gig at Canvas, Bournemouth on 16.06.22. Ollins also helps with the band's social media, visuals and marketing efforts as part of the Tarraska Family.

## **TRAILBLAZER**

'Trailblazer'; Tarraska's first single, was released on all digital formats on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2020. Since release, 'Trailblazer' has had 500+ radio airplays in the U.K., U.S., Canada, Spain, South Africa, South America and beyond, been on TV and has had an organic reach of over 100k in 50+ countries, with positive reviews. In Dec 2020 'Trailblazer' was voted as one of the 'greatest hits of 2020' by listeners and DJs at independent music radio station, Radio Wigwam. 100k Spotify streams achieved to date.



'Trailblazer' draws inspiration from a wide range of musically disparate sources, resulting in a classic hard rock sound that, hopefully, is also listenable. The lyrics detail the struggles of a trailblazer who is outcast and looked down upon for their unorthodoxy, loosely based on the life of Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister.

'Trailblazer' encapsulates Tarraska's identity and best represents the sound of the album to come.

## **RENEGADE**

Tarraska's follow up single 'Renegade' was released on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. Despite the holiday season and a subsequent U.K. national lockdown, 'Renegade' has had more positive reviews, radio airplay in 4 continents and continues to gain more fans and admirers throughout the rock world.



The timing and rhythm changes of 'Renegade' got the band noticed enough to secure a booking at Wildfire Festival 2022.

Commenting on 'Renegade', Jack says: *"For me, Renegade is our most ambitious and musically expansive track to date, incorporating so much of the music we love and outlining what we want the band to become in the future. As for the song itself, the lyric tries to capture the intense and confusing emotions felt when caught up in a whirlwind love that, whilst genuine, may have or lead to destructive consequences."*

## **PROSE**

Tarraska re-emerged from the studio with their third single 'Prose' taken from the forthcoming debut album. Following on from their first two energetic and attention-getting singles in 2020, the choice of 'fan favourite' 'Prose' was the obvious choice for their next release.

'Prose' was always a reflective moment in their sets with its lilting lullaby-like qualities and waltz rhythm. This emotive ballad regularly elicited a passionate response from listeners, with requests for videos and the lyrics of the song commonplace.





Tarraska decided to record 'Prose' with their full rock sound and the resultant track is arguably one of their best yet. New drummer Allan Varnfield was brought in to initially record 'Prose' and another new album track. On his first session he gelled so well with the music and band that he was immediately booked to record the rest of the debut album.

'Prose' was released on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 and has already secured hundreds of radio plays on a multitude of channels and shows across 4 continents.

In May 2022, 'Prose' was selected for the compilation album 'Modern Rock Volume 3' produced by Great Music Stories.

## **GETTING OUT ALIVE**

'Getting Out Alive', Tarraska's fourth single was released through Earache Digital Distribution on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2022, as a precursor to the full eponymously-titled debut album 'Tarraska' dropping later the same month.

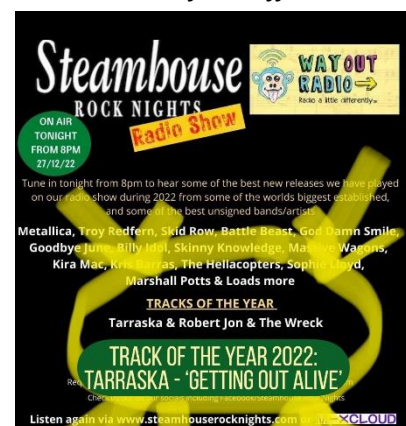
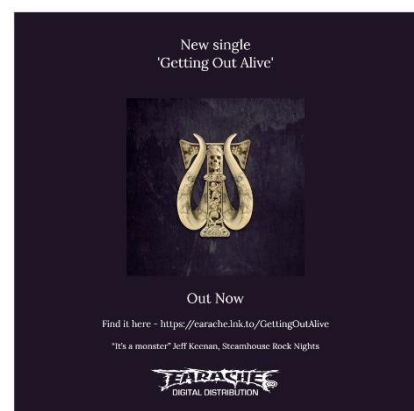
With Slash-like riffs and soaring vocals, 'Getting Out Alive' was immediately selected for radio airplay on a host of stations worldwide and went on to have over 450 spins over its first month of release. The highlights of these so far is the three consecutive weeks on the Unleashed Show with world famous Johnny Doom on Kerrang! Radio. Johnny commented on the song, "big rocking riffs" and "Some damn fine hard rock".

Starting life as a series of upbeat riffs and licks paying loose homage to some of Ben Parker's major rock influences, 'Getting Out Alive' was then crafted and expanded with Jack Lande, in the Tarraska home studio, as a full demo for their debut album. Once Allan Varnfield's driving drums were added for the full recording, the song flourished into the sing-along monster it now is.

Commenting on 'Getting Out Alive', vocalist Jack Lande says, *"Getting Out Alive has been through a process of iterative changes that have seen the song transform from a basic idea of the riff and chord structure into a fully realised driving, groovy rock song. I hope that we've managed to create something that sits as a contemporary of modern classic and hard rock tracks that is both bursting with energy and sticks in the mind of the listener."*

Ben Parker (lead guitarist) comments on the 'Getting Out Alive' writing process, *"it started life as a bit of a pop/punk song, but after 15 minutes with Jack we had transformed the structure and chord progression into the song it is now."*

In December 2022, 'Getting Out Alive' was awarded one of the **Tracks Of The Year** on Steamhouse Rock Nights Radio Show.



## Debut Album 'Tarraska'

The full debut album 'Tarraska' was released through Earache Digital Distribution on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2022. This 12 song opus includes the four previous singles, 'Trailblazer', 'Renegade', 'Prose' and 'Getting Out Alive', some reworked songs from the original acoustic duo days and a few brand new tracks.

Before release wins **Great Music Stories 'Album Of The Month' for June 2022:**

*"This amount of graft gives a band fluency and it plays out on this debut album. There's no computer trickery here, or magic producers making songs sound better than they actually are; this is a performance album where the band knows exactly what it's doing. There's a direction and a purpose in these songs borne out from the chemistry and the years spent learning their trade. The time is right for this fine album. They are ready and what is unleashed is an intuitive tour de force."* and *"Some bands spend a career evolving to write an album this good – debutants Tarraska strike gold with their first release."* <https://greatmusicstories.com/2022/05/24/tarraska/>

*"Overall – A sterling album, on all levels, 'Tarraska' showcases the band, in all their glory. Whether high or low moods, heavy or light, powerful or soft, groove-soaked or poignant, nothing fazes Tarraska and no challenge defeats them. A classic example of the limitless expanse of their repertoire, 'Tarraska' is performed and produced with gold level quality and infectious catch. Destined for greatness. 10/10 \*\*\*\*\*" (Rock Queen Reviews | Rock and Metal Reviews (wordpress.com)*

*"I'd suggest heading out to see them but first pick up this record as it's a impactful debut which features influences from some of the most accomplished bands in rock."* ([Musipedia Of Metal: Reviews: RXPTRS, Made Of Teeth, Tarraska, I Fight Bears \(Reviews By Matt Bladen\)](#))

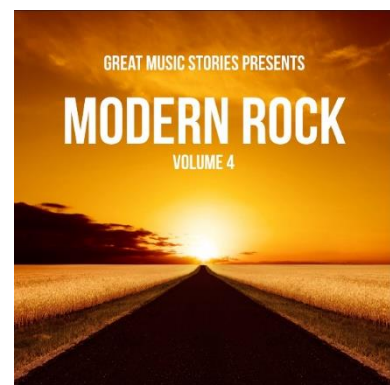
*"an album of beautifully crafted songs"* [Album Review: "Tarraska" – Tarraska – Platinummind.net](#)

*"the material on offer is not only of the highest quality, but the variety is at times staggering" and "Chimera' is a dark, brooding beast of a track that brings this fine album to a thrilling end. Live dates are required – stat. In need of a young band to wax lyrical about? Then strap on (oooh Matron) Tarraska for size. Unsigned? Yeah? Surely you jest?"* [Review: Tarraska - 'Tarraska' - Devil's Gate Music \(devilsgatemusic.co.uk\)](#)

*"It's hard to comprehend that this is only the band's debut album, it is a complex piece of work that has shed blood, sweat and tears in the making of it."* [Rock Regeneration - Album: "Tarraska" by Tarraska \(rock-regeneration.co.uk\)](#)

*"A huge colour palette \*\*\*\*\*"* [ERB Magazine, Issue 11](#)

Autumn 2022 saw the Tarraska album track 'Requiem' included on the Great Music Stories compilation album 'Modern Rock Volume 4', the second consecutive appearance by one of the bands' tracks on these influential releases.



In December 2022 'Tarraska' was awarded **Album Of The Year** by the Rock Queen Reviews website, *"the tracks featured have stayed with me, unforgettably"* and *"it's as near to a perfect rock album as you can get"* [2022 Album Of The Year – Tarraska – 'Tarraska' | Rock Queen Reviews \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.rockqueenreviews.com/2022-Album-Of-The-Year-Tarraska-Tarraska/)



#### **Whole album credits:**

Tarraska are Jack Lande (vocals and rhythm guitars), Ben Parker (lead guitars), Allan Varnfield (drums) and Ollins Lande (bass)

All songs written by J. Lande & B. Parker

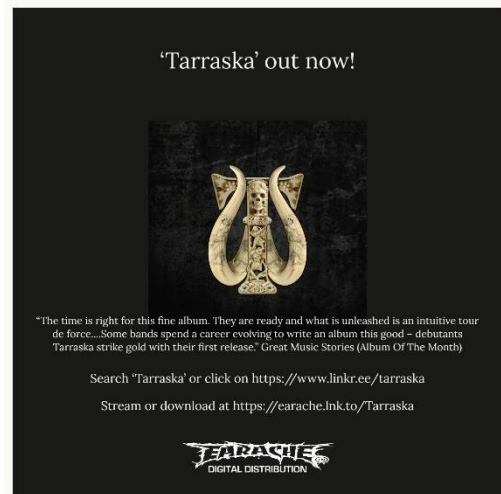
Recorded by Gareth Matthews at Absolute Studios, Bournemouth UK

Mixed by Gareth Matthews at Absolute Studios, GMMix, Bournemouth UK and Echotown Studios, Dorchester UK

Mastered by Brad Blackwood at Euphonic Masters, Memphis TN

Produced by Tarraska and Gareth Matthews

Synth Programming and additional production by Jordan Ayriss



#### **For Fans Of:**

Alter Bridge, Slash, Tremonti, Iron Maiden, Foo Fighters, Van Halen, Aerosmith, FFDP

#### **Tarraska Musical Influences:**

Myles Kennedy, Tremonti, Slash, Aerosmith, Iron Maiden, Alter Bridge, Foo Fighters, Whitesnake, FFDP, John Mayer, Van Halen and a host of others.

All things Tarraska (website, socials, music links) can be found here: <https://www.linktr.ee/tarraska>

Please contact Tarraska via email at [Tarraska@aol.com](mailto:Tarraska@aol.com)



