



**AL ROSS & THE PLANETS ANNOUNCE *BLUE CRYSTAL* ALBUM,
SHARE NEW LYRIC VIDEO "CHECKIN' OUT THE VIBE"**

Lyric Video on YouTube: ["Checkin' Out the Vibe"](#)

**LONG-RUNNING LONDON BAND'S STYLISTICALLY DIVERSE SECOND LP
FEATURES DEEPLY FELT NEW POP CLASSICS, BLUESY ROCKERS,
SOUL-INFUSED GOSPEL, AND SAMBA-TINGED JAZZ GROOVES**

**Recorded at London's legendary Abbey Road Studios, *Blue Crystal* is augmented
by a stellar array of session players, including guitarist Norman Beaker
(Jack Bruce, Chris Farlowe, Van Morrison) and keyboardist Lyndon Connah
(Level 42, George Michael, Joe Cocker)**

**"Checkin' Out the Vibe" is out today digitally with *Blue Crystal*
following September 10; The album will be available on
CD and download via AFR Records/Wienerworld**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / June 22, 2021 — Al Ross & the Planets today release "Checkin' Out the Vibe," the latest digital single and lyric video from the group's upcoming second album. *Blue Crystal* follows September 10 on CD and download via AFR Records/Wienerworld.

Bold and brass-driven, "Checkin' Out the Vibe" is a modern take on the bluesy classic rock strut of The Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and Dr. Feelgood. Alex Ward provides stringing guitar licks while David Brammer and Jamie Wall's brass arrangement is straight out of the Muscle Shoals songbook. "During lockdown, I wrote lyrics about being stuck inside all day, but that was just depressing," said bandleader and main songwriter Al Ross (real name Alan Ramirez). "In the end, I

went for a more positive message, expressing an urge to ‘fly away from this dead-end town,’ namely Covid-19.”

The core lineup of Al Ross & the Planets is Al Ross (lead vocals, bass), David Brammer (saxophone), Terry Mascall (drums), Alex Mungo (ex-Then Jericho, vocals), Julian Mungo (acoustic guitar), and Marc Rapson (piano, Hammond organ, keyboards, percussion).

When the band entered the legendary Abbey Road Studios to commence recording in January 2020, they never guessed that a pandemic was about to turn their plans upside down. Members would soon be sidelined by the virus, travel around London became forbidden, and — when sessions did finally resume in May — there was a long list of safety measures.

As band members became unable to take part, Ross realized that he would need to hire session players to fill the gaps. He asked his longtime friend Lyndon Connah to play keyboards and assist with production. Connah’s extensive resume includes work with Level 42, George Michael, Squeeze, Joe Cocker, Thomas Dolby, Nik Kershaw, and Go West. Next, Anthony Broza at Wienerworld suggested blues guitarist Norman Beaker. A native of Manchester, Beaker has been involved with the British blues scene since the 1960s and has toured and/or recorded with Jack Bruce, Chris Farlowe, Van Morrison, Chuck Berry, and B.B. King, among others. Additional musicians on *Blue Crystal* include Tansy Garrod (violin), Paul Jefferies (double bass), Jamie Masters (guitar), Holly Petrie (backing vocals), Jamie Wall (trumpet), Alex Ward (lead guitar), and the Sing Gospel Choir.

The wide array of talent involved in the collaboration yielded spectacular results. The warm and lustrous “Faith” is a radio-friendly standout, a love song caressed by piano and light samba rhythms. “All the Things We Started” shares a similar glow, featuring a soaring, emotive vocal by Ross. “Crossroads” and “In the Middle of the Night” venture into gospel territory, slowly building in intensity in a manner that recalls vintage sides on Apple Records, as well as more current artists like Primal Scream and Spiritualized. “Sweet Memories of You” has echoes of Pink Floyd as Petrie’s voice interplays with Brammer’s saxophone. “Blue Crystal” is another slow build with a melody worthy of Noel Gallagher. And finally, “Something Changed My Mind,” says farewell to a lover as Rapson’s Hammond organ adds charms to an uptempo country stroll.

The Abbey Road sessions were engineered by Lewis Jones and Andy Maxwell, with additional sessions at Echo Studios in Buckinghamshire engineered by Jamie Masters. The entire *Blue Crystal* album was mixed by Chris Bolster at Abbey Road. Bolster also mixed the band's debut album, *The Planets One* (2018).

Each of *Blue Crystal*'s eight tracks were written by Ross and Mungo in collaboration with either Connah or Rapson. Gary Wonfor and Alex Grayson also share writing credit on "Something Changed My Mind."

"Facing huge obstacles in a horrendous year — with two members getting Covid — we managed to produce a truly great album," said Ross. "It was a great way to pass the hours rather than staying at home feeling depressed! We were able to create something positive out of 2020."

***Blue Crystal*: Tracklist**

1. Crossroads (Ramirez, Mungo, Connah)
2. Something Changed My Mind (Ramirez, Mungo, Connah, Gary Wonfor, Alex Grayson)
3. Faith (Ramirez, Mungo)
4. Blue Crystal (Ramirez, Mungo)
5. In the Middle of the Night (Ramirez, Mungo)
6. All the Things We Started (Ramirez, Mungo, Connah)
7. Checkin' Out the Vibe (Ramirez, Mungo, Rapson)
8. Sweet Memories of You (Ramirez, Mungo)

Album produced by Marc Rapson. Additional production by Lyndon Connah. Engineered by Lewis Jones (Abbey Road), Andy Maxwell (Assistant Engineer, Abbey Road), and Jamie Masters (Echo Studios, Buckinghamshire). Mixed by Chris Bolster (Abbey Road). Mastered by Tim Debney (Fluid Mastering Studios, London).

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