

MUSIC: Xavier Rudd, Dark Shades of Blue

By [Danny Nordstrom](#)

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With his new Dark Shades of Blue album, released August 19 on SaltX records, Australian singer-songwriter Xavier Rudd now stands with big-name acoustic artists like Jack Johnson and Ben Harper, for whom he was once an opening act.

Rudd's latest work differs from his usual acoustic guitar tracks and takes a turn for the darker and distorted sounds of his electric guitar. Rudd teamed up with sound mixer Joe Barresi, who is known for his work with acts like Tool. The result is a powerful and psychedelic sound similar to artists like John Butler and Ben Harper. While the album is much more aggressive than Rudd's previous work, he still manages to lyrically convey his optimistic perspectives and progressive politics through the music.

Tracks like "Edge of the Moon" mix Rudd's relaxed lyrics with his new electric sound. "Edge of the Moon" features a catchy, distorted guitar riff accented by some upbeat, anthem-like vocals. Also excellent are "Up in Flames" and "Black Water," which showcase Rudd's incredible slide guitar skills.

Rudd belts out strong vocals over the mellow arpeggio of his electric guitar on "Shiver" for a relaxing change of pace from the rest of the album. The track's vocals tell a meaningful story of a young man at an important crossroad in his life, and help make it the best song on the album.

Overall, Dark Shades of Blue is a very good album, and Rudd's new sound proves he can do much more with a guitar and belongs next to great guitarists like Keller Williams and John Mayer.