

**Vraell** (real name Alessio Scozzaro) makes music in the quietness of spring and summertime dusk. For that one hour of cerulean sky, the London-based musician's ideas come to life, illuminated by the poignancy of evening as it turns to night. He wrote much of his forthcoming debut album "**Once a Blue Hour**" during these bewitching moments, filling the silence with music that delves into the darkness and beauty of healing. With his deft guitar skill at the center, *Once a Blue Hour* paints an intimate picture of letting stillness birth something new.

"Once a Blue Hour" builds on Scozzaro's genre-blending ethos, mixing ambient electronics, beats, and his agile guitar technique to trace a trajectory through his personal growth. He wrote the album while working through his own inner turmoil, connecting to his Sicilian heritage, and seeking to get to know himself in a deeper manner. The music reflects that sense of solitude and wistfulness, building around looping, simple guitar melodies that interweave poetic phrases and laid back rhythms. Much of this music feels like a person in the process of coming to an understanding, using his instruments as a path forward through the twists and turns of life.

Guitar has always been central to Vraell's music, and "Once a Blue Hour" highlights its presence and his deep understanding of the instrument. He began playing as a child, studying classical music, and later went to conservatory. But after beginning to busk, he discovered his passion for experimenting on the instrument. That led him to begin writing his own works that infuse the sensibility of '10s indie folk, like Sufjan Stevens and Bon Iver's "For Emma, Forever Ago", into his picking style, while simultaneously drawing on the rich sound of composers like Olafur Arnolds, Max Richter and Portico Quartet and Szun Waves' Jack Wyllie. His chops often peek through on "Once a Blue Hour", coloring in his lush arrangements with a pointillistic attention to detail. Tracks like "Fever Call" emphasize this patterning, blending a dark, oscillating guitar melody with breathy falsetto, while "Ladybird" similarly builds from a tingling loop, only this time adds rich strings around it, creating a pillowy resonance that echoes with optimism.

Throughout, Scozzaro blends his eye for heart-wrenching songwriting with his guitar technique, crafting gently layered songs that bleed out from the center. Tracks like the earworm "Watercolour Blush" mix a rippling beat with feathery vocals and ambient meditations. In the middle is Scozzaro's guitar, guiding a light forward through the murkiness. "Rib:Cage" echoes and calls back to this style, blending the album's sweetest plucking with wispy high pitches. Scozzaro's guitar bubbles like water under ice, as his vocals soar above, looking outward. In these songs, Scozzaro shows how his guitar — informed by the tenets of classical and indie alike — is the flexible core of his music, a tool to constantly and continuously explore.

At its heart, "Once a Blue Hour" celebrates the guitar's malleability. Scozzaro sees the instrument as something that can hold the universe within it. In his music, he seeks to show this — its guts and glory, its gentleness and darkness, the way it takes the color blue and unravels all its insides. "*Guitar has endless possibilities,*" Scozzaro says. "*I love figuring it out.*"