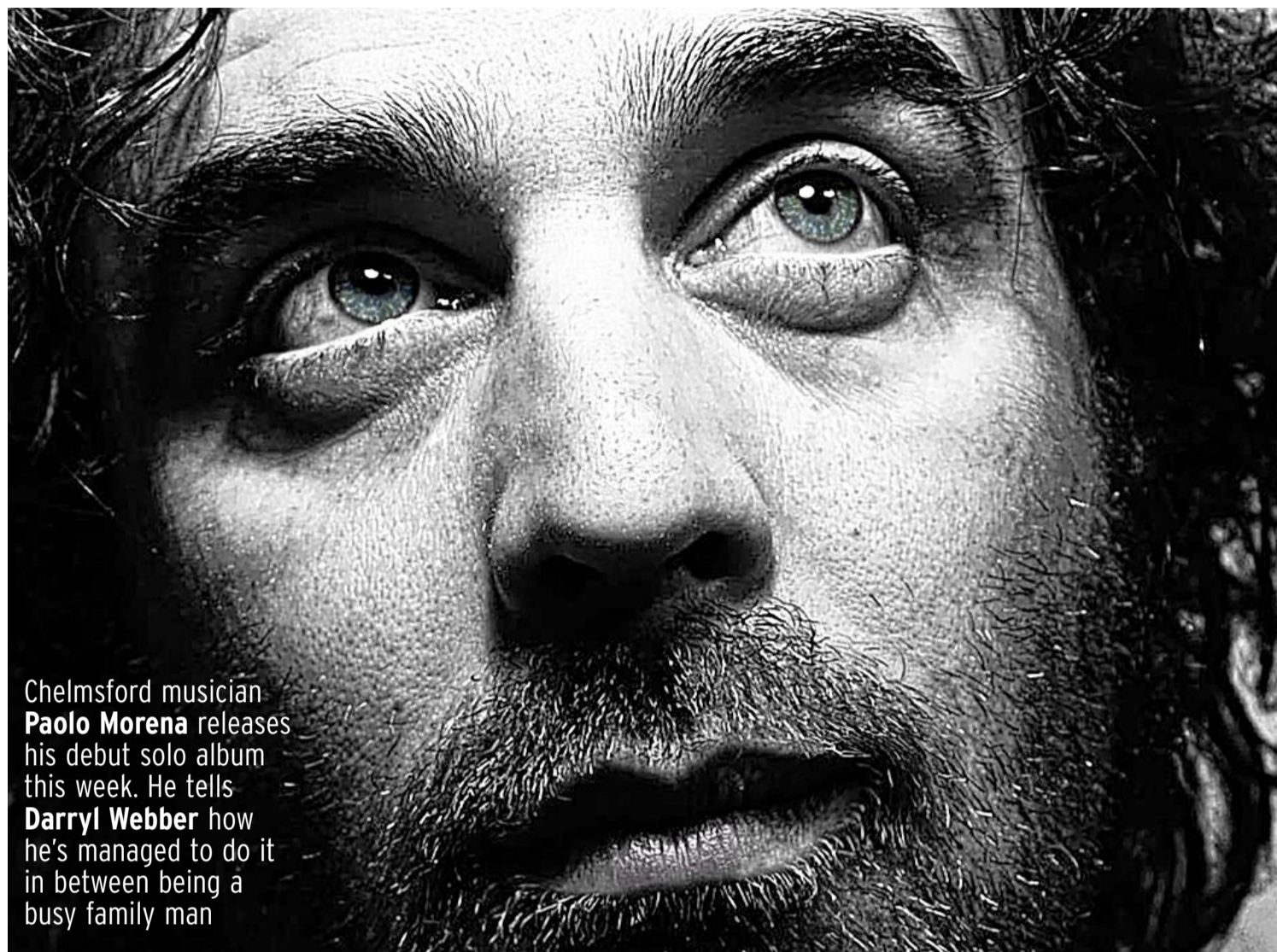


# INTERVIEW



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Chelmsford musician **Paolo Morena** releases his debut solo album this week. He tells **Darryl Webber** how he's managed to do it in between being a busy family man

## DEDICATED to the cause

In between the school run and his household chores, Paolo Morena is telling me about life as a musician, husband and father of three.

Getting the balance between those things – and trying to make a living as well – is tricky, but Paolo is as determined as he is talented, and has an unshakeable belief in what he's doing. That's how he's managed to write, record, mix and produce his debut solo album while also being a family man.

Paolo's album, *The Mighty Small*, is released on Sunday, October 26 through the Pledge campaign, a fundraising website that allows artists to offer up exclusive packages and offers in return for money in advance.

With this going on as well as relentless gigging, it's been a hectic year for Paolo but he's as upbeat and positive as ever as we chat about just what it's taken to make the album happen.

Paolo has had some of the songs for years, but the recording process started late February, early March when he went in the studio with Simon from Chelmsford band Mantango, who was on engineering duties.

"He's got incredible ears," says Paolo, referring to Simon's engineering

abilities. "I trust him. We worked on it for eight months. We could only do Sunday and Monday nights but because things were going so well, we would carry on through the night.

"We had 15 tracks down by the end of May so we went through a culling process. It was difficult, we took out some of the heavier songs and I've set them aside for another project."

That culling is all part of the process, of course, but Paolo wanted to make sure the album captured the range of styles his music encompassed but still hung together as a record.

"I'm conscious of the different styles I play," Paolo explains. "I had a list of 20 songs I wanted to record and

I kept in the ones that worked. I never really paid attention to writing an album as such.

"I've always played rock or blues or whatever suited the environment I was in. Now I'm not in a band environment, I go with the style of the song as it's written. When I sat down and listened to the album when it was mixed, it all hangs together, nothing seems out of place."

I was lucky enough to get a preview hearing of the album and it certainly does hang together. It's a wonderful mixture of rock, pop and soulful blues with nods to dance and electronica, but it's all distinctly Paolo. One of the interesting things for Paolo has been how the

songs have developed over the years, not just musically but also in his understanding of them.

"Musically, as I've got better on the equipment I've made the songs work as live looping songs. They quite often take on a life of their own."

"Some of the songs have matured in a really interesting way," Paolo says. "I've realised what I was trying to say. It takes time to realise sometimes, it's subconscious. The story comes out in the telling."

An example is Katherine's *Undone*, the sixth track on the album, a hauntingly beautiful ballad about Paolo's wife.

"Katherine's *Undone* has been around for years. I always thought it was it about her coping with me being an artist but it's evolved into being my perspective on how she's coping with me."

Which seems a good point to ask Paolo how he manages to balance his creative life with what he needs to do as a husband and father. It must be tricky at times and Paolo admits it can be stressful but he says he has always had the support of his family.

"I've always been into music since an early age and I've got a very understanding wife. She's in the process of figuring out what she wants

to do herself. She's on her own creative journey. We're both creative people so she gets it, she knows what I need to do.

"When we sit down after the dust has settled, we'll be where we want to be."

For now though, there's the small matter of promoting the album when it's released and spreading the word. Paolo is rightly chuffed that the Pledge campaign for his album reached its target within just a couple of weeks of launch. By the time it's released, it will have more than doubled the amount of money Paolo set out to raise.

"Pledge campaigns are a fantastic way of finding funding," he says. It's very exciting now the album is almost out. It's all about getting it out there. It's been a learning process for me, not just recording it but using social media, blogs and marketing as well."

"This is the first body of work I feel completely proud of so I'm happy to stick it in front of people and get them to listen to it."

You can still pledge for Paolo's album at [www.pledge.music.com/projects/paolo.morena](http://www.pledge.music.com/projects/paolo.morena). The album is out on Sunday, October 26. Find out more about this and what else Paolo is up to at [www.paolomorena.com](http://www.paolomorena.com)

## Brownstock in the running for two festival awards



**CROWD-PLEASER:** Dizzee Rascal performs at this year's Brownstock Festival

BROWNSTOCK Festival has been nominated for two prizes in the UK Festival Awards.

Known as the Oscars of the festival industry, the awards recognise large and small music events around the country.

This year, Brownstock is up for Best Small Festival and Best Grassroots Festival.

It's the only festival in Essex that has been nominated for these two categories.

They are up against other small festivals across the UK such as the Cambridge Folk Festival, the Eden Festival and Lollibop.

Brownstock Festival was a huge success this year. The three-day event held at the Brown family's farm in Stow Maries saw 6,000 visitors come along to see headline acts such as Dizzee Rascal, Razorlight, De La Soul, Pendulum and Sigma.

There were hundreds of other acts from Essex and beyond who played across the eight stages over the three days. As well as traditional music acts, there were also DJs, comedy shows, silent discos, painting fighting and extreme sports.

Festival director Adam Brown, said: "To get to the last five in the country was great, but to win would be a real triumph and something Essex can really be proud of. We have had such amazing feedback for the festival since it finished in September and so we hope people will really feel that they want to have their say and vote." *Clare Youell*

Fans of Brownstock Festival can now vote for the event on the UK Festival Awards website at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/Z85F2BB](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Z85F2BB)

Brownstock 2015 will be held at the earlier date of July 10-12. Earlybird tickets are now on sale at [www.brownstock.co.uk](http://www.brownstock.co.uk). Standard tickets go on sale on February.



**FAMILY MAN:** Paolo with his wife and children

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