

PICTURE: AL STUART

Green Park inspires Randy's album

when bombs fell nearby?

"Certainly not peaceful thoughts, yet I always sensed a serenity there. Perhaps that's simply my own hope surrounding this magical place.

"I thought about writing something for years but never seemed to find the time. When I finally did, the music emerged in a style that suggested a different era entirely. I don't truly know why – but here it is."

Edelman, who is married to singer Jackie DeShannon, is joined on the album by Trey Henry (bass), Grant Geissman (guitar), Brian Scanlon (saxophone), Susan Winsberg (flute) and Till Richter (drums).

As a songwriter, Edelman's compositions have been recorded by artists including Barry Manilow, The Carpenters, Dionne Warwick and Olivia Newton-John.

He has scored more than 100 films and television productions, earning him the BMI Richard Kirk Lifetime Achievement Award and an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the University of Cincinnati.

Edelman is preparing to perform in the UK later in the year, followed by a show at Carnegie Hall in New York on December 19.

■ Randyedelman.com

'Unknown' Benji sold out concert in Tel Aviv

BY SIMON YAFFE

BENJI Miller is used to singing about emotional vulnerability.

But as the 22-year-old prepares to release his debut EP and becomes the first artist signed to Parallel Skies, the new record label launched by klezmer band Oi Va Voi, he admitted opening up through his music still feels like a leap of faith.

His first single *Hey Darcey* — part of the six-track EP *Love or Pain* — tells the story of watching someone else struggle with depression, powerless to help, rather than focus on heartbreak from his own perspective.

Benji told me from his London home: "*Hey Darcey* is about watching someone you love disappear into themselves.

"It tries to capture the particular helplessness of being close to someone going through a depressive episode, seeing them lose their own grip on who they are, fading in and out of presence."

It is a theme that runs throughout *Love or Pain*. The 22-year-old charts the emotional rollercoaster of early adulthood, beginning with carefree university life before gradually moving into a darker and more reflective territory.

"The whole point is that the first few songs are happy, light, chill," he explained.

"They are about the vibes and



DEBUT EP: Benji Miller

social life at uni.

"*Shots of a Time* and *In the Ocean* are about getting through the ups and downs of university, while *Be My Remedy* is about the excitement and thrill of a holiday romance, which a lot of us experience."

The emotional centrepiece, however, is the title track.

London-raised Benji said: *Love or Pain* was my personal favourite to make. It is about looking back at situationships and the regrets you have about love, but also just regrets about life when you're young."

Ending with *Hey Darcey* was deliberate, however.

"It is coming out of this mindset of feeling sorry for yourself," he added.

"It is going back to that

positive, energetic, youthful soul that you once were."

Music surrounded Benji from childhood.

His father, Malcolm, is a classical musician and music professor, and Benji spent years immersed in formal musical training, playing the clarinet and piano from a young age.

And, while his friends were listening to chart music, he was equally at home performing opera and playing in orchestras.

As he grew older, jazz became the bridge between his classical education and the music he wanted to make himself.

And songwriting soon followed.

Benji recalled: "I started writing my own songs when I was 15 or 16. I was learning the piano, just playing chords, and that was really fun.

"Pop songs were what I wanted to do, and then I combined that with jazz."

His relationship with Oi Va Voi began long before Parallel Skies existed. While in Year Seven he joined a music project called My Band, run by the group's drummer Josh Breslaw.

Years later, after developing his own music, Benji decided to get back in touch.

He explained: "I had done a gig in Bristol and showed him one of my demos.

"We were looking for a producer and after a while we found the right guy in Plymouth, and it went from there."

When Oi Va Voi decided to launch Parallel Skies as a label

dedicated to creating a welcoming home for Jewish artists alongside musicians from every background, Benji became its natural first signing.

And the timing could hardly have been better.

Fresh from graduating last month with an economics degree from the University of Bristol, he now faces the familiar crossroads confronting many young musicians — pursue the secure career his degree offers or throw everything into music.

He said: "I just want to make songs, perform for a living and create stories. That would be incredible, but it is what I am going to try and do for the next few years."

There is evidence the gamble could pay off. Benji has already sold out two headline shows in Bristol, steadily building an audience before releasing much recorded music.

Ironically, his first-ever concert took place hundreds of miles from home.

During his gap year in Israel, he organised a gig in Tel Aviv despite not having released a single song.

Benji added: "My friend and I got a band together and we sold out. It was an amazing experience. It was the first time I realised I want to do this."

He describes his sound as "conversational, blending raw and expressive vocals with really cool harmonies and production".

■ Follow him on TikTok @benjillermusic

The Touch of Kim CD

archive footage and the video for Laurent Voulzy's French hit *Les Nuits Sans Kim Wilde*.

Australia-based Julian worked on bonus tracks *The Touch* (seven inch version) and *The Touch* (extended version).

The record producer and audio engineer also worked with Kim on her 1988 hit *Never Trust a Stranger*, featured on her sixth album *Close* — which was given the Cherry Red deluxe treatment earlier this year.

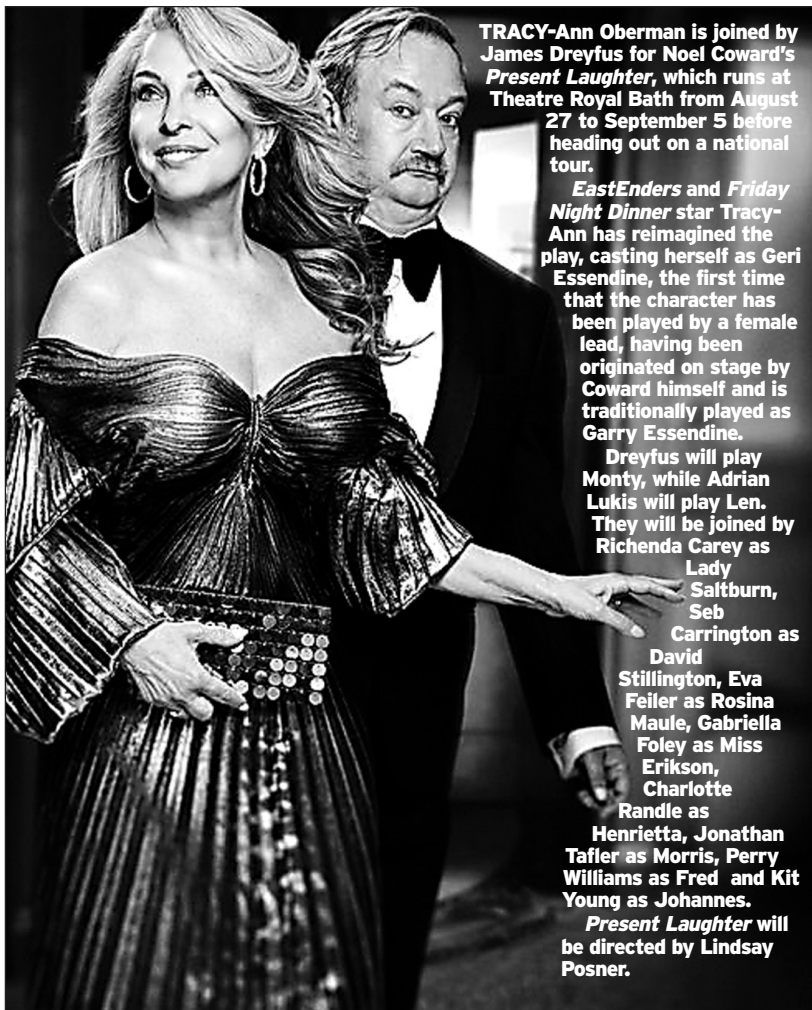
Julian also worked with Pet Shop Boys, Level 42, Liza Minnelli, Paul McCartney, Tasmin Archer and Dusty Springfield, among others.

He was nominated for Producer of the Year at the 1988 British Phonographic Industry awards.

The *Teases & Dares* reissue also features tracks remixed by the late Jewish DJ Mark Kamins, with Jay Burnett.

Kamins, who was instrumental in launching Madonna's career, remixed two versions of *Go For It* and *The Second Time*.

Next month, Kim's 1986 album *Another Step* is released in a three CD/DVD edition, including her number one American hit *You Keep Me Hangin' On*.



TRACY-Ann Oberman is joined by James Dreyfus for Noel Coward's *Present Laughter*, which runs at Theatre Royal Bath from August 27 to September 5 before heading out on a national tour.

EastEnders and *Friday Night Dinner* star Tracy-Ann has reimagined the play, casting herself as Geri Essendine, the first time that the character has been played by a female lead, having been originated on stage by Coward himself and is traditionally played as Garry Essendine.

Dreyfus will play Monty, while Adrian Lukis will play Len. They will be joined by Richenda Carey as Lady Saltburn, Seb Carrington as David Stillington, Eva Feiler as Rosina Maule, Gabriella Foley as Miss Erikson, Charlotte Randle as Henrietta, Jonathan Taffer as Morris, Perry Williams as Fred and Kit Young as Johannes.

Present Laughter will be directed by Lindsay Posner.

Minister Zohar boasts about stopping funding for films showing Israel in negative light

JUST before the Jerusalem Film Festival opens, and only a few months before the national elections, Israel's Culture and Sport Minister Miki Zohar has released a video boasting about how the changes he initiated in the Cinema Law have stopped Israeli filmmakers from making movies that show the country in a negative light.

In the video, a director and his assistant, clad in keffiyehs, are making a film that consists of scenes of Israeli soldiers and West Bank settlers abusing a Palestinian child by popping his pink balloon and harming other Palestinian civilians.

As they film each scene, they

reach for an ATM that gives them piles of shekels.

Zohar appears, preventing the assistant from withdrawing more money from the cash machine, and says, "Cut".

He adds: "For years, the formula was simple — defame Israel and get a cheque from the government. No more. The cinema reforms that I initiated take our money away from movies that Israel haters love, and give it to movies that we, Israelis, love.

"The era of defaming IDF soldiers at the taxpayers' expense has ended. Not on my watch!" (Jerusalem Post)

Harrison leads Emmy nominations

A NUMBER of Jews are up for awards after the Emmy nominations were announced on Wednesday.

Harrison Ford, for *Shrinking*, is up for outstanding supporting actor in a comedy series for, while Hannah Einbinder's role in *Hacks* sees her nominated for outstanding supporting actress in a comedy series.

Lisa Kudrow, for *The Comeback*, is up for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series. *The Beast in Me*, co-created by Gabe Rotter, is nominated for outstanding

limited or anthology series.

Nominated for outstanding drama series are Debora Cahn's *The Diplomat*, *Paradise* — created by Dan Fogelman — and Jonathan Tropper's *Your Friends and Neighbours*. *Nobody Wants This*, about a relationship between a non-Jewish woman and a rabbi, is up for outstanding comedy series, as is *Hacks*, co-created by Jen Statsky, and *Shrinking*, co-created by Brett Goldstein.

The ceremony will take place on September 14.