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Title: Remember When Things Were Better Tomorrow

Artist: Jonah Parzen-Johnson

"Nostalgia can seem comforting, but I think it should be incredibly unsettling.... maybe that's what I should've titled the album," says Brooklyn based baritone saxophonist, Jonah Parzen-Johnson, of his first album-length collection of songs for solo saxophone and analog synthesizer. He thinks a lot about titles. "I wrote these songs around the idea that the best period in my generation's lifespan was gone, but after a few nights on the road, looking people in the eye with that idea in mind, I saw how lazy I was being. It doesn't feel good to be devoting so much time to counting the ways we've failed, and ignoring the hundreds of little ways I could be fixing this mess. I've had the same conversation all over the country. **Its time to stop drowning in nostalgia, and start finding ways to make our lives about repairing our broken systems. That's what I was thinking about when I was getting ready to play these songs in the studio.**"



Jonah plays lofi experimental folk music for solo baritone saxophone and analog synthesizer. **Imagine the raw energy of an Appalachian choir, balanced by a fearlessly exposed saxophone voice, resting on a strikingly unique combination of analog synthesizer components sitting on the floor in front of him.** It all breathes together, as Jonah uses his feet to weave square and sawtooth waves into a surging base for folk inspired saxophone melodies, overblown multi phonics, vocalizations, and patiently developed circular breathing passages. Every element is performed and recorded at the same time, by one person, without any looping, overdubbing or recorded samples. "I want to make music that has texture, and depth, but most of all I want it to be direct and grounded. Performing completely live with all analog instruments, helps with that. **For me, playing solo is all about being connected to the folks listening. I want you to feel like I'm looking you in the eye while I'm playing.**"

A Chicago native, Jonah grew up immersed in the music community built around the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. "I remember dragging my parents to see the Art Ensemble of Chicago at Mandel Hall, when I was a teenager," recalls Parzen-Johnson. "That show got me exploring musicians like Roscoe Mitchell, Fred Anderson, and Mwata Bowden, who were big proponents of solo music. I love their playing and writing, but their solo music always felt kind of distant." Jonah stumbled upon Neil Young's live at Massey Hall Concert later on. "Sometimes I just listen to the talking tracks in between the songs on that record. He makes those moments a central part of his performance. That's something I wish people thought about more with experimental music. **I want to be a story teller, and to make that happen I have to create an environment where people feel comfortable diving into the songs with me as I play them, an environment where they can understand the stories behind the compositions. That has to happen live, so touring is really important to me.**"

Since the release of his debut album, Michiana, in 2012 Jonah has spent a lot of time on the road. He's toured over twenty thousand miles across the US and back, playing in venues like **The Stone and Zebulon in NYC, The Velvet Lounge in Chicago, The Royal Room in Seattle, and The Center for New Music in San Francisco** and sharing bills with **Celestial Shore, Landlady, Steve Lehman, and Brian Chase among others.** "Touring is a really fun way to get my music out there, but its become about more than that for me. **Musicians are around because they are pollinators. Hopping between towns, grabbing ideas that stick with them and sharing them with new people.** I know folks everywhere are wondering how we're going to fix these broken systems, but they don't always want to talk about this stuff, it's easier to just get nostalgic. I want to interrupt that cycle, get some conversations going, and help jump-start some solutions. That's what I'll be thinking about when I hit the road this spring."

Track Listing

1. I Keep Thinking Sit Down
2. If You Can't Sleep, Just Shut Your Eyes
3. Never Stop Counting
4. Eyes Like Paddles
5. I Wrote A Story About You Without You
6. Stay There, I'll Come To You
7. On The Way Home (Neil Young Cover)

Press Quotes

"The ideal soundtrack to a scene in an offbeat indie where the two protagonists come together and have violent weird-sex followed by tender snuggles."

- Noisey (Music By Vice)

"A far-ranging solo performance."

- The New York Times

"His unaccompanied playing captures the sentiment of an old Polaroid, long-ago happiness fading into the melancholy of memory."

- Philadelphia City Paper

"A folk music for a new tribe of people, one that has access to new technologies and uses them as opposed to being used by them."

- All About Jazz

Format: LP, CD, Digital

SLP: \$17.99 (LP), \$9.99 (CD)

Barcodes: 616892256659 (LP), 616892256540 (CD)