



### Press Quotes

*"Saxophonist Jonah Parzen-Johnson tells stories in sound."* - **The Boston Globe**

*"A poetic horn-smith and master manipulator of melodic sounds."* - **The Village Voice**

*"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 (Vice Magazine)**

*"He writes engrossing, accessible melodies that do indeed convey a folksy simplicity and directness."*

- **Chicago Reader**

### Three Reasons To Live Here Volume 1

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### Remember When Things Were Better Tomorrow

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In the introduction to his travelogue, *Three Reasons To Live Here*, Brooklyn based saxophonist and composer, Jonah Parzen-Johnson, starts pretty big. "I want to be part of a community of people whose first allegiance is to empathy and mutual understanding." **After the release of his album *Remember When Things Were Better Tomorrow* in June 2015, Jonah spent 9 weeks on tour, mostly by himself.** "I wanted something to do on the road that would mark the time, and immediately connect me to people I ran into as I hit different cities." By the end of the summer, Jonah had collected three reasons to live in 34 cities in the US and Canada. "In the end, the idea is pretty simple. **Empathy and mutual understanding can spread from the tiniest affirmation: *I could live where you live.***"



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. **Touring and 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.**"

Jonah has spent a lot of time on the road, more than thirty thousand miles in the last three years, including a massive, five week, 27 city solo tour in support of *Remember When Things Were Better Tomorrow* last June. He'll hit the road again in November, playing shows around the east coast and midwest. Since 2012 he's brought his solo music to venues like **The Stone, Zebulon, and Silent Barn in NYC, The Velvet Lounge, Elastic Arts and Constellation in Chicago, The Center for New Music in San Francisco, and The Portland Improvisors summit.** "Touring is a really fun way to get my music out there, but its become about more than that for me. **Musicians are idea pollinators, and we have the power to play a role in making the world a better place.** I think we all have a nostalgia problem. Folks everywhere are wondering how we're going to fix these broken systems that are making life so hard on so many people, but its hard to talk about this stuff, especially when, not too long ago, things seemed so much better. It's easy to get nostalgic, and let that be a substitute for fighting for progress. I want to interrupt that cycle and help all of us admit we have a nostalgia problem. Its time to get to work on rebuilding empathy and mutual understanding."