

James Wyatt Crosby – Here We Are in Heaven

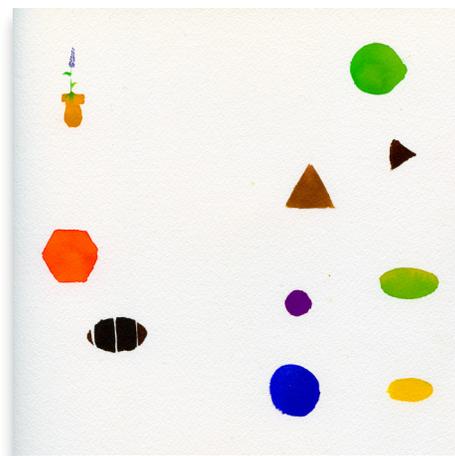
James Wyatt Crosby's 2017 debut album *Twins* was an odd and varied collection of bedroom-y dreampop and indie electronica, evolved out of a decade of demos and experiments. That album had a calculated shiftiness to it, with songs co-existing like friendly neighbours rather than part of the same bonafide family. Likewise, the songs on Crosby's latest release ***Here We Are in Heaven*** all have their own unique character, but now it's as if the neighbours have started to sleep with each other.

"Each track borrows a little bit of something from another track [on the EP]," explains Crosby. "I asked my friend Angel to send me a bunch of different takes of him playing guitar in different styles, and I ended up using the best of those takes in almost every song." Lead track "**Sinking Sand**" blends together warm snapshots of angelic guitar textures while a subtle pulsing groove shifts in the background. Crosby's processed voice looms somewhere in the distance, while metallophones ring out like long-forgotten doorbells. At the halfway point, the track gushes with Yamaha DX7-led 80s ballad textures, while the words "Be alright... be alright..." slowly fade into a reprise of the cryptic lyrics of the first verse. The track is bookended by Avalanches-esque classical guitar samples, while a solitary omnichord plays the part of the song's signature.

All the songs on *Here We Are in Heaven* feature the warm synthetic chime of the omnichord in some way or another, but "**Respond**" is the only track on the EP to feature strings. The double bass provides a rich classical texture as it slowly creeps beneath a swath of 70s soft-rock-inspired instrumentation à-la Tame Impala. A tongue-in-cheek call-and-response vocal is anchored by a cascading vibraphone line and is mirrored by a forlorn electric guitar. The song's second movement brings things down to a simmer before breaking into a Broken Social Scene-style epic indie rock-out. The vibraphone line comes in one last time while Crosby repeats "Respond to me! Respond to me!" as the vocals fade farther and farther into the depths of someone's unread messages.

Although Crosby is fond of all of the songs on the release, the opening track "**All Mad**" is his personal favourite. "It changes day to day, but some songs you like more than others. 'All Mad' is a jam that I've been working on for ages. It was so much fun to record it. I just love playing that main riff." Sunny hopeful early 90s guitars dominate this uplifting and upbeat dreampop gem. "All Mad" fondly remembers early Smashing Pumpkins and Dinosaur Jr., but also isn't afraid to rock out to Third Eye Blind if they're on the radio. "My label was especially excited about [All Mad] because it was my old crummy demo of that song that got them interested in my music in the first place. It's cool to have things come full circle like that."

From the first jittery ambient swell of "All Mad" to the final drum fill of the nostalgic chillwave-inspired instrumental closing track "**I Will Always Be With You**," *Here We Are in Heaven* provides proof that Crosby is in the prime of his own solipsistic journey of sonic self-discovery. Addictive melodies, carefully curated sonic backdrops and a variety of enticing rhythmic textures all come together to make this a collection of songs that truly satisfies.



LABEL: Maisonneuve Music

RELEASE DATE: October 18, 2019

GENRE: Art Pop / Experimental Rock

RIYL: Ariel Pink, Atlas Sound, Toro y Moi, Modern Nomad, Vansire, Craft Spells

TRACK LISTING

- ▶ **01 All Mad - 2:27**
 - 02 Hamburger Highway - 1:51
 - 03 Here We Are In Heaven - 0:45
- ▶ **04 Sinking Sand - 2:40**
 - 05 Halfway Down the Valley - 1:55
- ▶ **06 Respond - 3:20**
 - 07 Spin - 5:32
 - 08 I Will Always Be With You - 4:59

All songs written and performed by James Wyatt Crosby.

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James Wyatt Crosby currently lives in the rural township of Oro-Medonte, Ontario (Canada).

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