



HIGH WATER

MUSIC / FEATURE / DAVY REED / 08.11.13

554 WORDS

APPROX READING TIME: 3 MIN

If you're looking to soundtrack this seasonal transition from autumn to winter, then we'd recommend the *The Beautiful Moon*, an amazing release from NYC based experimentalist Will Epstein.

The EP is out on his friend Nicolas Jaar's Other People imprint, a new subscription style 'serial label' he formed after dissolving his Clown & Sunset label, and Jaar's supportive role is a subject Epstein speaks of with illuminating passion. "In the end, music is about people, community and trust. This is something that Nico understands. Musicians need to fortify each other in order to survive and I can't imagine anybody I'd rather be working with", he tells us.

As well as collaborating on various tracks, Epstein has assisted Jaar in his live shows, performing saxophone, keys and programming duties. The pair met at Rhode Island's Brown University, and it was in fact Epstein who introduced Jaar to Dave Harrington ("A huge inspiration – he's my ember-haired brother") who'd go on to form the currently huge, stunning prog-dance project Darkside together. While Epstein was a a freshman at college, Harrington scouted him to play with his band called, erm, Spank City. "Spank City was an amorphous beast with a strong midnight power", he explains. "We played almost exclusively late night parties in dewy basements. espousing a strange mix of psych-rock and free-jazz – all instrumental. I think the best thing we did was a version of Heart of Glass and frankly, I think it put Blondie to shame. Well, I mean, I guess the jury's out on that one, but there was always an awesome bass solo."

While the High Water music sounds nowhere near as... well, as balls-out crazy as Spank City presumably did, the expansive, texturally rich songs are feel contemporary and truly innovative. So as an artist who's happy to intellectualise our relationship with music, does he propose we write about it in a more figurative way rather than resort to restrictive genre tags? "When someone is put in one of those categories it can sort of feel that this intimate and personal thing has been desecrated", he admits. "Having said that, I get why people use genres to talk about music, and shit, I do it all the time myself. Everyone's just trying to communicate! And that's what genre is – an ok linguistic tool. But yeah, I guess I'd be happy if someone wrote about how my music reminded them of their girlfriend's hair at 10 AM on a Sunday."

And while Epstein's career so far has been most prominent with his involvement Jaar's awe-inspiring live incarnation, he confesses that the playability of the songs wasn't a concern when he recorded The Beautiful Moon EP. "That wasn't even a blip in my consciousness, that I started making music on the computer in part out of frustrations I was having extracting a colour palette out of a band I had that was as deep and wide as the one that I was hearing. So when I sat down to make these songs, it was more of a painterly process about harnessing a kind of rainbow ether and cultivating an interior space. Now, however, I'm in a completely different space. All I want to do is play with other musicians again."