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TRACK LISTING:

SIDE A

1. Jaded Lover, Shady Drifter
2. Daylight
3. Murmuration Song
4. Boom and Shake
5. Yonah

SIDE B

6. No Recover
7. Waylaid
8. Wild Azalea
9. Dead and Gone

There was something sinister about Crooked Fingers, both the name of the project and the music that Eric Bachmann wrote at the helm of its ever-shifting lineups over 15 years. He retired the moniker a couple of years ago, but with his third album under his own name, the transformation feels gorgeous and final and irreversible: *No Recover*.

The drunken louts and red devil dawns are a thing of the past now, monuments to a different time. Bachmann, husband and recent father, has some new lenses through which to view the world.

Eric Bachmann of 2018 seems to view life with a sort of disgruntled maturity and righteous resignation. *No Recover* is both harrowing and beautiful, and its mellowness can be deceiving. The album is mostly just him, a classical guitar, some treated rhythm tracks, and otherworldly drop-ins from singer Avery Leigh Draut and guitarist Eric Johnson, Bachmann's old pal from their Archers of Loaf days. He's got a lot on his mind, only some of it pretty.

The sunset on the album's cover might be the end of a cruel world for the duo in "Jaded Lover, Shady Drifter," who introduce *No Recover*; they feel like flip-side lovers, both sonically and lyrically, of the couple at the center of *Bring On the Snakes'* "The Rotting Strip." But that dark sentiment is quickly reversed with "Daylight," one of Bachmann's most stunning vocal performances ever: For a guy who earned his stripes by shredding his vocal cords in the '90s, he sure can croon. And though the words cast some shadows—"fight for your life," he implores—ultimately there is hope. "If you try, you can be loved."

Same goes, to a less direct degree, for "Waylaid," the record's jauntiest song, and a meditation on failure and love that leaves room for Johnson's bright-but-mournful electric guitar to take center stage. But leave it to Bachmann to save the best for last: *No Recover* ends with one song for his wife and another for his son. "Wild Azalea," for Liz Durrett—who also makes a brief appearance earlier in the album—is pure '70s AM gold, including the tinge of sadness that the best of that era embraced. And "Dead and Gone" offers wistful, Bachmann-style comfort to a child. It's vulnerable and giving, a lifetime promise that somehow intertwines regret and hopefulness.

In that way, it perfectly encapsulates *No Recover*—and Bachmann himself—circa 2018. He's got a lifetime of experience behind him, and a catalog that runs the gamut from fiery to scary to simply beautiful, sometimes all at once. But it also feels like a new beginning. Here's to another 25 (or more!) years of watching him grow.

MRG 628

Eric Bachmann

No Recover



67385506280 8

Peak LP



67385506281 5

LP



67385506282 2

CD

7 September 2018

vinyl is non-returnable

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