

# MOON BROS.

## *These Stars*

### ABOUT THIS RECORD

It's difficult to follow the fragmented life and musicianship of Matt Schneider. His twofold path has always embraced both an abiding love for Chet Atkins and Nashville session virtuosity, and a begrudging though fruitful flirtation with Chicago's post-rock underground and middleground. In his native McHenry County as a young teenager, he was a guitar phenom, an engine of local pride who played old-timey anthems and oldies for an audience of delighted townies in a button-up shirt and short dweeby haircut. The press took note and his clipping book is filled with adulatory front page praise lavished on his performances at Dobbyn's House along the Fox River. That he made it through high school is due in part to the fact that he provided the soundtrack for many of his teacher's drunken evenings and they let him slide through. In a parallel universe he was roped into playing with bands like Adhesive and Filament (two different bands who shared members and lovers) who had more in common with Seam and Tortoise than Chester or Les. Finally out of high school in 1998, Schneider hadn't lost his zeal for the Nashville studio system and during a several week trip there that summer he found more of a ghost town than a warm welcome for a burgeoning session player; Chicago's fecund melting pot of jazz and rock was far more inviting. He moved to Wicker Park with his Adhesive bandmates and a succession of acts followed: The Exciting Trio, then Toe (where he and Griffin Rodriguez replaced, respectively, Jeff Parker and Doug McCombs of Tortoise), and then ex-Codeine Doug Scharin's large fusion ensemble HiM. After touring Europe with HiM, Schneider returned to basics: he retreated to his mother's empty house in Marengo, Illinois and woodshedded for six months. He recalls "I wanted to learn the instrument."

Maintaining his convoluted trajectory, Schneider never quite returns to the road, rather he burrows in Chicago, creating ever more complicated methods and tunings for his acoustic guitar while otherwise focusing on his children and his carpentry. He becomes, in a classic sense, the best kept secret of Chicago music. Encountering his playing, stalwart performers are consistently stunned. Without ensconcing his work in dubious spirituality he channels something somehow simultaneously poetic and mathematical, like Kepler's "music" of the spheres. Each composition is instantaneous, improvised and launched from the aether fully formed, making sense only in relation to the spontaneously formed rules of interaction... Songs aren't so much finite concepts but endless ragas that he taps in and out of; consequently these pieces cannot be entered mid-stream, the listener must participate in the universe as it's created in order to live in it. His reputation is such that top collaborators need not be sought, but are intrinsically curious to participate. On these recordings, he is joined by Dan Bitney (of Tortoise fame), Matt Lux (Iron & Wine), and Sam Wagster (Cairo Gang). Producer and engineer Brian Sulpizio (Health & Beauty) records and mixes. It is possibly the sixth recording by the ever-shifting entity called Moon Bros (named for turn of the century engineers at the Moon Bros. Carriage Company) but the first three have all been lost, likely forever, possibly irretrievable from a broken CD-R in the bottom of a box of tools and flotsam hardware. Only Dancehall Sound and Frijolillo made the jump to internet download-ability, and only *These Stars* has ever seen wide, intentional release. Will you hear more about Matt Schneider? Yes, but whether in the context of the great and unknown, or the at-last recognized, remains to be seen.



### TRACK LIST

01	These Stars	2:47
02	Pitch	6:11
03	El Conejo	2:43
04	Oh so cold	3:44
05	Corrido	5:14
06	Wool Blankets	4:47
07	Blues	6:10
08	AC/DC	3:46

### PRESS QUOTES

"Schneider's song structures seem so loose and spontaneous that they must, you think, be improvised, while the dexterity and effortless lyricism of his playing attests to untold hours of woodshedding, to the point that such tossed off virtuosity has become his standard."

- **Tiny Mix Tapes**

"...unpredictable...lovely...elaborate constellations of fingerstyle guitar."

- **Chicago Reader**

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