

UTOPIA TEASED

by

STEPHEN STEINBRINK

ABOUT THIS RECORD

Stunned with grief in the months following the Ghost Ship fire, Oakland-based Stephen Steinbrink ate LSD daily, bought a synthesizer, and locked himself in his shipping container studio, refusing to sleep for days as he wrote and recorded what would become *Utopia Teased*, as a means of working through his overwhelming feelings of cynicism and loss.

Recorded in between stints touring as a member of Dear Nora, and then as a touring member of Girlpool, *Utopia Teased* is Stephen Steinbrink's followup to his critically acclaimed 2016 album *Anagrams*. Unlike the pristine production of *Anagrams*, on *Utopia Teased*, Steinbrink embraces the rough edges, as he shifts his focus from the craft of production to the art of processing and capturing his experiences with honesty. He explains, "I was driving the preamps a little too hard, mixing down to tape, bouncing back to the computer, and repeating the process over and over again. I wanted it to reflect how fried my brain felt at the time, totally pulverized. The songs just poured out of me, it hardly felt like work to make them up. It was like turing on a spigot. I don't write often, maybe once or twice a year, but when I do, a lot comes out. To me my craft is less about putting in the hours physically playing music – the real work is getting my soul right so that when the holy wave of pure creative energy moves over your house, it will recognize you as worthy enough. If it does, maybe it'll give you a song."

In an interview with *North of the Internet*, Steinbrink recalls a video he came across on his phone, which was taken the day after the fire, "It sent me spiraling and thinking, it's almost been a year...I could only only react to the future at a remove because the horror of everything was inescapably tying me to the present. The idea of doing laundry or driving across the bridge to San Francisco to work was too abstract, so I just didn't do it...Two days after the fire I woke up, walked to P's porch and sat there for hours alone and cried without a jacket on until the sun started going down. Geese were flying across power lines at dusk and I took a video of them on my phone. I imagined one of the birds was my friend." He goes on to share some insight provided by a friend he reached out to when trying to finalize the album: "Finishing the thing puts a limit around something that comes from an infinite well; this is uncomfortable." True.

- Album features vocals by Melina Duterte aka Jay Som
- Limited edition transparent mint green vinyl
- Stephen Steinbrink has toured as a member of Girlpool and Dear Nora
- R.I.Y.L. Elliott Smith, Jose Gonzalez, Nick Drake, Iron & Wine, Sufjan Stevens
- Hometown: San Francisco
- Key Markets: San Francisco, Brooklyn, NYC, Chicago, Austin, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Philly



TRACK LIST

01	Bad Love	2:58
02	I Wanna Be Free	2:29
03	A Part of Me is a Part of You	2:51
04	Empty Vessel	2:05
05	Maximum Sunlight	3:27
06	Zappa Dream	4:08
07	Coming Down	1:16
08	Mom	2:05
09	In Another Kind of Dream	4:11
10	Become Sphere	2:54
11	You Could Always Leave	3:31
12	I'm Never Changing Who You Are	5:44

PRESS QUOTES

"Recalls the magic pop purity of Arthur Russell... its minimalism manages to feel enlightened and transformative."

-Pitchfork

"Lushly arranged pop songs, the listener can tie and untie Steinbrink's vivid and unrelated images into something meaningful"

-NPR

"Melodic and self-assured. Steinbrink delivers his knotted lyricism with a smooth lilt."

-Stereogum

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