

Spanish Prisoners - Songs to Forget

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In 1987, a few short years before the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, a three-year-old Leonid Maymind, his parents and twin brother left behind their lives in Latvia---a small Baltic country that had been swallowed by the USSR, and was struggling to maintain its identity—and departed for New Orleans, LA. In the face of uncertainty, the family had the task of trying to create an identity in a new and unfamiliar world. This journey began with the contents of four orange suitcases, which was all the authorities “allowed” the family to bring.

Twenty years later, the theme of finding oneself amidst a large and unknown world is still apropos to Maymind, the main songwriter, singer, and orchestrator of the musical collective Spanish Prisoners, now based in Brooklyn, NY. The music created by Maymind is as unique and varied as the cities where he has lived---and the journey embarked on all those years ago is apparent throughout. Using an expansive arsenal of instruments (ranging from banjo, accordion, dobro, wheezing harmonica, electronics, etc.) and an extensive cast of collaborators, Maymind’s music conjures up the quiet anger of **Neil Young’s** “On the Beach,” the lyrical mysticism of **Leonard Cohen’s** “Songs from a Room,” **Dylan’s** oft-discussed “Basement Tapes,” and the pseudo-psychotic musings of one **Charles Thompson**.



The debut record, entitled “Songs to Forget,” contains songs that were mostly recorded alone in a meager basement studio in Columbus, Ohio, after the hours of ten PM, when the neighborhood traffic slowed and the joyous screams of children slowly drifted off. Other songs were recorded with such analog luminaries as **Jack Mckeever** (Rufus Wainright), **Jim Diamond** (White Stripes). One final song was recorded with **Todd Tobias** of Guided by Voices fame. While naming

an album “Songs to Forget” may appear at first to be a common indie-rock form of self-deprecation---don’t be fooled! The songs contained herein will not allow you to forget the music but, rather, time, place, and age; they stand their ground in a world of quick fixes and plastic synthetic futures.

In the past year Maymind spent considerable time on the road, including shows with such luminaries as **Califone**, the **Rosebuds**, **Castanets** and a special show in NYC supporting and backing the legendary songwriter **Daniel Johnston**. Look for Spanish Prisoners to support **John Vanderslice** this spring. Now with a steady, full-scale band behind him, Spanish Prisoners are able to recreate the richness and depth of “Songs to Forget” live, in a most memorable way.

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