**Sad Park – *No More Sound* bio**

*No More Sound*, Sad Park’s third full-length, begins with an ending. More specifically, with its own ending. Because the short, just-over-a-minute-long “No More Songs” is kind of a stripped-down reprise of the title track that closes this record. In one way, it means this album—the band’s first for Pure Noise—travels back in time over its 38 or so minutes, but in another it’s also travelling forwards. Because while “No More Sound” is a more fleshed-out version of “No More Songs”, it also contains melodic and lyrical throwbacks to the eleven songs that sit between them. Perhaps more importantly, as everything comes full circle on the record, it offers something that the opener doesn’t.
“I wanted you to really hear the song’s darker lyrics in the beginning,” explains vocalist/guitarist Graham Steele, “then once you hear them again at the end, there's maybe some sense of hope—a sense that you’ve kind of gone through something and have learned something from it. So once you get to the end, those lyrics take on a little bit of a different meaning. This was the first album where we really thought through everything and tried to create some sort of story.”

It’s not that Sad Park—who formed in Los Angeles in 2015—weren’t capable of that before, but on *No More Sound* the band worked with AJJ’s Sean Bonnette, who oversaw production and collaborated with Steele on the lyric writing process too. He helped Steele, bassist/vocalist Sam Morton, drummer Grant Bubar and guitarist Aidan Memory not only create a record that flows, musically and thematically, from beginning to end, but which also sees the four-piece truly discover and become who they are as a band.
“With our previous records,” says Steele, “I was listening to a lot of bands and then trying to write like them, like ‘We really like FIDLAR and Together Pangea, so we're going to write music that really sounds like that.’ This album feels a lot more like us as a band, like really sitting down and writing whatever was in *us*. It’s the first album where we found what our sound is as individual musicians.”

Recorded across ten days at Balboa Studios in Los Angeles, *No More Sound* is, in fact, the sound of a band really coming into their own. It was, says Steele, the most fun he’s ever had recording an album, and you can hear that in these 13 songs. “Always Around”, for example, is a perfect slice of jaunty, off-kilter indie, while the frantic, frenzied, gritty pop-punk of “Art Will Be Gone”—replete with a joyously mournful, ska-punk-inspired horn section—and the jittery, nervous energy of “Money In The Bag” sparkle with the band’s distinctive fizz. But even the songs that are more melancholy in tone sparkle with that underlying enthusiasm: “OMW!” is a slow-motion but energetic chug that wrestles with the struggles of life in a touring band while simultaneously reveling in it, while “Carousel” begins life as a minor chord lament before blooming into an effusive crescendo. It ends with a guitar solo that’s split between Morton, Memory and Together Pangea drummer Erik Jimenez, which sums up the sense of purpose, pleasure and excitement that holds this record together—even if it didn’t *always* feel that way.
“I fucking hated that song for a long time,” chuckles Bubar, “because I just didn't feel connected to it. I find it hard to connect with Graham's words sometimes because he’s my friend and it's hard to make that transition. So I wasn't sure about that song or the drums for it, so I wanted to do a practice take and that was the one we ended up using, which is cool, because it breathes life into the song. And then that solo at the ending just sounds like three dudes having fun late at night. How that song came about was probably like the biggest turn around for me.”
“We weren’t actually going to put it on the record,” adds Memory, “but Sean was like, ‘I like that one!’ so we decided to try to figure it out. And I think we did.”

They did. And in fact, it captures their chemistry perfectly. But as much fun as the band had on that guitar solo, and making then record in general, *No More Sounds* still manages to convey the band’s distinctively peppy sense of melancholy. Just listen to the desperate urgency of “I Can’t Fight It”, the shimmering emotional strength of “Watch The World Fall Down” or the frazzled, *carpe diem* rush of “Death”, which serves as a reminder to make the most of the time we have and the people we love while they (and we) are still here.
“That’s probably one of my favorite songs ever,” says Steele. “I'm very inspired by AJJ and Sean, and I've always had that thing when listening to them where I'm like, 'Why didn't I think of that?!'. “Death” kind of feels like one of those songs where I had this idea and I basically just spoke words into the song and those are the lyrics. And it means a lot to me because that was kind of the thing that I had been feeling through writing the entire album. So to just put it all in that one song was my favorite thing ever.”
In fact, that existential depth courses through the entire record. While Sad Park have always tapped into the human condition with their songs, they do so even more profoundly on this record. That’s something Steele puts down to allowing the lyrics to pour out. While that’s not a new technique for him, Bonnette’s guidance really allowed him to capture everything he was feeling.
“I've never written lyrics down,” he says, “and I go into the studio with nothing. Having Sean there was great for this because we got the chance to really work out the theme of the album. We both understood what we were trying to say. So once the music was done, me and Sean were outside just cranking out lyrics for the thing that we just recorded. I think it really puts the album in this specific place and time—as opposed to, ‘Well, I wrote these lyrics two years ago in summer and I wrote those during winter when I was going through this thing.’ We wrote these lyrics during this time for this moment.”

This record doesn’t just sum up Sad Park’s present, though. No longer a DIY band—though very much maintaining their DIY sensibilities—Sad Park have crafted an album that, while starting at its end, also flings the door wide open for their future. Each of them poured their heart and soul into these songs, and the results don’t just speak for themselves but which defies and transcends their modesty.
“This is the first time we had a budget,” says Bubar, “and the first time we rented out a studio instead of sneaking into whatever one Sam was working at at night to record stuff. Making this album has been wonderful.”
“It feels, for the first time, like I'm like playing in my favorite band,” Steele says. “I get to play and sing in the band that's writing the music that I've always wanted to hear. So I hope there's somebody that really needs this album and they get to hear it.”
“Well, I'm hoping for number one!” laughs Memory. “We're going platinum with this one!”