



Starter Car Afterlight

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CD / LP / digital



‘Bandmates Wanted’ posters may be old school, but when songwriter Oisean Burnett moved to London from Glasgow in 2024 the homemade approach was what worked. Fast forward to now and Starter Car have established themselves as darlings of the South London music scene with their unique brand of country-influenced indie. This year sees the release of their debut album, *Afterlight*, a hooky collection reflecting on life’s beauty and struggles. Recorded and produced by Joe Futák (Ilo, Piglet, Baggio), the album’s sound grew organically through the core band plus collaboration with fellow scenesters, including vocals from Christie Gardner (Ilo), fiddle from Sophia Bartlett (Tugboat Captain) and banjo from Michael Rhea (Symbol Soup).

The result is a warm and nostalgic sonic world, clearly a natural progression from Burnett’s childhood surrounded by Sparklehorse, Sufjan Stevens and Wilco. Despite this glow of familial comfort, *Afterlight* doesn’t shy away from dark themes of anxiety, death and drugs. “If you’re experiencing a little discomfort while writing something, it’s probably good,” says Burnett. “Music has that ability to elevate the cringey into something meaningful and pretty.” Throughout the album, songs born of introspection unfold with lush harmonies offering hope and a contrast to moments where Burnett’s vocals are honest and exposed.

Opening track and lead single “Throwing Down” is a blunt examination of spiralling out when you find yourself alone for the weekend. The recklessness of going out drinking is anchored by steady drums and laid back licks akin to MJ Lenderman, with Burnett singing “I drink double when I’m not around you.” This reflective approach continues in “Avert,” which addresses the feeling of not wanting to socialise, before the high-octane “Safety Net” captures Sparklehorse’s driven side and references the late Mark Linkous. Death is covered again in “Watered Down,” a loving reflection of Burnett’s grandfather following both grandparents’ passings in a short period. Burnett’s father Seori sings backing vocals on the track, while a melancholic backdrop is set by interwoven fiddle and guitar.

The album wraps with “Kicking,” a barnstorming rallying cry for forward movement in the face of life’s obstacles. There’s a raw, driving energy, with cranked guitars nodding to Teenage Fanclub and a rousing fiddle solo by Sophia Bartlett. *Afterlight* is sticking your head out the car window: exhilarating but breath-taking. It’s the cusp of anxiety and excitement, the nauseating sense of something beautiful coming.

Tracklist

A1 Throwing Down
A2 Avert
A3 Safety Net
A4 Watered Down
A5 Wisecrack

B1 More Me
B2 Dumb Luck
B3 Know What to Say
B4 Stranger
B5 Kicking

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