**Sam Evian, *You, Forever***

As it has been said: no matter where you go, there you are. With his new album *You, Forever*, Sam Evian, the project of New York-based musician, songwriter, and producer Sam Owens, is here to add some eternity to that sentiment.

“This is you, forever,” he says. “It’s about accepting that you are responsible for you, that you’re in charge of your actions. Everything you do affects others and yourself, so, no matter what you choose to do, be there and learn from it.”

It’s a mantra that powers self-starter Owens, a producer and sound engineer by trade who entered the scene with his debut Sam Evian full-length, *Premium*, in the fall of 2016. The notion takes on a dual meaning that is echoed across *You,Forever*.

“There’s a ton of romance on the record,” he says. “Maybe it’s all romance.”

*You, Forever* is Owens’s first foray into a more soul-baring sensibility and places the artist directly in the sightlines and heartlines of his listeners. The album (as well as 2017’s “Need You,” a collaboration with the multi-hyphenate musician Chris Cohen) was written on the heels of his experience touring *Premium* with his band and was recorded across the latter half of last year. The tours—which included opening shows for bands like Whitney, Teenage Fanclub, Luna, Nick Hakim and Lucius—taught him much about feel and interaction. Further fueled by a desire to escape from the glow of screens and to embrace a sense of limitation, he quickly developed a new set of instrumental songs written for a band rather than just himself and recorded them on a Tascam four-track cassette recorder in his parents’ house in North Carolina.

“Just like most people, my recording studio day job had me staring at a computer eight hours a day,” he says. “I just needed to get away from the glowing rectangle. The only way to do that was to work on tape. The four-track is so limiting; you’re forced to get only the bones of the song down. You can’t do any overdubs, so it was fun to work on that with the experience of the live band behind me. And something about playing my family’s instruments in the garage where I grew up spurred a set of songs that became the new record.”

Inspired by these limiting techniques, Owens borrowed an eight-track reel-to-reel tape recorder from a friend, rented a house in upstate New York, and took his band – Brian Betancourt (bass), Austin Vaughn (drums), Adam Brisbin (guitar), and Hannah Cohen (backup vocals) – there to record the new album in July of 2017. Focusing on instrumental grooves and the vibe he had achieved on the original four-track recordings, Owens found the process so enlightening he decided to up the ante yet again by banning tuning pedals from the house.

“Tuning pedals make it so easy to sound good together, so when you eliminate them it takes everything back to the ’60s, which is when all my favorite records were born,” he says. “It makes everything more questionable, weird, and unruly in a really simple way.”

Dreamy album opener “IDGAF” explores the notion of embracing one’s passions and pursuing one’s goals no matter the impositions in their path. On one hand a subtle stand against the current political climate and on another a call to be responsible, Owens calls it a romantic song that embodies his act of self-mixing his record: “I had to put myself aside and let the music happen.”

“Health Machine” is a crunchy, slow-burning but deliberate stomper glowing with warm electric guitar noodling, saxophone wailing, and Owens’s reverb-laden lyrics that he says detail an abstract version of how he relates to his own physical form. “It’s about the unattainable health that I would like to imagine for myself on tour. The line ‘We slither out on a Tuesday feeling tired and hopeless’ is such a hilarious picture: four people in a minivan slithering out of Atlanta, Georgia, stopping at a CVS and getting a bunch of Zicam. Health is your job if you’re touring as a musician, although it’s a job I don’t do so well.”

“Country” is a fleet, nimble driving song written after Owens and his girlfriend (Hannah Cohen, who also sings throughout the album) took a cross-country road trip and encountered what they perceived to be a dust storm in rural Nevada. “For a hundred miles we didn’t see a person or even a tree, then all of a sudden this giant dust cloud appeared which turned out to be ten cowboys on horses lassoing cows. It was the most real thing I’ve ever seen.” In fact, Owens wrote every song on the album with the act of driving-while-listening in mind, and says many of the lyrics came together following that life-changing road trip—the only time he has ever driven across America without anyone waiting on him to show up for a soundcheck. But despite the allure of the transient life, his heart belongs to one place.

“The record is about romance, and about my love for living in New York and trying to separate myself from any idea I had previously of living in New York,” he says. “I’ve kind of designed my own world there.”

Whether behind the wheel in the dust bowls of America, navigating the bustle of his adopted home, playing festival stages with rock legends, or getting back to basics in his parents’ garage, no matter where Sam Evian goes, there he is…forever.