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Battleme (2012) Big Score (2011)

BATTLEME

PORTLAND, OREGON | TRASHY MOPED RECORDINGS

Battleme is the story of an artist's re-birth and re-discovery. It is the timeless sound of an artist coming of age. A view from the other side. Songs with no boundaries. Battleme is Matt Drenik, an artist who has always grown up in music environments from his early days in the Cincinnati suburbs, to his life in Austin, to his current residency in Portland. His early influences came from his brothers -- one was in a noise band, the other with a keen taking towards New Wave. "You had the Jesus Lizard in one room and The The in the other. I was just a kid. I didn't understand the difference between the two." While he didn't understand the differences, these would be key stepping stones to the evolution of Battleme.

Battleme really began in 2009 on accident when Matt Drenik, the frontman of the Austin-based band Lions, was diagnosed with uveitis, an auto immune disease that affects the eyes of which there is no known cause or cure. At the time of his diagnosis, Matt was coming off of four years recording and touring with Lions who exploded noise and energy -- touring nationally and internationally with the likes of the Toadies, Local H, and Monster Magnet. Fans gravitated towards their raucous live shows as spectacles of Drenik's heavy state of mind.

After he got sick, things began to change. He fell in love all over again with the songs on the Rolling Stone's Sticky Fingers, Beck's Mellow Gold, and Flaming Lips' Clouds Taste Metallic. With his head full of ideas and a refreshed outlook toward songwriting, Drenik set out to create something different. The music is a clear departure from what he was doing in previous projects. He decided to call this new project Battleme.

Soon after, his songs began to show up in FX's Sons of Anarchy. He was asked to open for Joe Ely at the famed Cactus Cafe. His version of Neil Young's "Hey Hey, My My" saw over a million hits on YouTube.

Wanting a change, Drenik moved to Portland, OR in the summer of 2010. He spent the next several months recording over 40 songs in his girlfriend's basement, bending from one genre to the next. He eventually narrowed them down to an 11 song record. After burning a few CDs for friends, Thomas Turner from Ghostland Observatory got a copy and responded. Drenik thought Turner might offer him a show with Ghostland. Instead, Turner gave him a record deal.

With Turner signed on to produce, the two lived and breathed the songs for the next six months. They sent mixes back and forth, collaborating on the sound. Drenik's songs took on new forms -- powerful hooks, bottom heavy grooves, and ethereal textures blended effortlessly with drifting, falsetto vocals to create an adventurous mix of post-modern rock and soul that would come to define the record. Synthesizers generate "Touch." A solitary guitar builds into a wall on "Trouble." The cosmic call to kill the quiet in "Wire" gives way to the sweet satisfaction of a "Killer High." Genres coalesce, dividing lines disappear, and Battleme allows the sounds to create their own field of vision. A view from the other side. Songs with no boundaries.