

EmptyMansions

"Some things can take decades to arrive at. In this case I'm speaking of songwriting—Even within the simplicity of a typical rock band configuration: guitar, bass, and drums. Not highly original or too complicated—Nonetheless, what this 'thing' can be is highly illusive, hard to grasp, and even harder to wrangle into a worthy song. This might be why, we as fans and musicians alike, return to such a common voicing repeatedly—New or old, it's familiar, it's comfortable, and at times, it's the only fucking thing that feels right. Thus far I've spent more than half my life playing in many different rock bands, in return for nothing but the satisfaction of doing what I wanted to do, not what I was expected to do. For the past twelve years (and still counting) I've been fortunate enough to dedicate a vast amount of time and energy to playing drums in the band Interpol. In November 2011, at the completion of a fifteen month long tour supporting the band's fourth, self-titled effort, I found that I had finally arrived at EmptyMansions. A long time coming; not without effort, but rather without force—This alone took years to figure out. I'd finally written some songs that, I not only liked, but that I had to sing myself. There was no choice in the matter. To do it any other way would have rendered the whole endeavor dishonest and pointless."

-Sam Fogarino, Marfa, TX November 2012

The eight songs that make up *snakes/vultures/sulfate*, EmptyMansions debut full-length, fell into the 'familiar' mode: guitar/bass/drums—unwittingly creating a true rock-sounding record. Employing the stylistically versatile Duane Denison (The Jesus Lizard, Tomahawk, Th' Legendary Shack Shakers) who's unique approach to guitar playing defies comparison or labeling, only aids in taking the rock convention of EM a few degrees to the left. At the controls, Producer Brandon Curtis (Secret Machines, Cosmicide, Interpol) possesses the production sensibilities that serve as a balance—keeping the tracks inviting, but not without leaving a bit of challenge for the listener. Along with producing, recording, and mixing *snakes*, Brandon also plays bass, keyboards, and sings backing vocals.

EmptyMansions' founder/primary songwriter, Sam Fogarino (Interpol) wrote most of the songs for *snakes* while on tour promoting Interpol's fourth and self-titled album, from mid 2009 to late 2011. Lyrically, the songs are the result of, Sam, reading much postmodern fiction by writers such as Hubert Selby Jr ('Sulfate'); discovering an appreciation for aerial dance and a fascination with outer-space ('Lyra'); the TV-drama *Justified* ('Up In The Holler'), and Black Francis of Pixies fame ('That Man'). Musically, Sam drew upon classic heavyweights; Neil Young (The closing track on *snakes* is a cover of 'Down By The River'), The Stones, Zeppelin—filtered through his affinity with the likes of Sonic Youth and Pixies. It was after a show in Rome, Italy, that Sam and Brandon forged a bond resulting in Brandon taking on the role as producer and bassist for the future EmptyMansions debut record. Curtis was a part of Interpol's live configuration, playing keyboards on the globe-spanning run.

On that tour, while on a break in Mexico City, the two hung out in a hotel room, and began a discussion of how an idea becomes a song by pulling from random musings, life experiences, and various sources of inspiration.

In February of 2012, the two began recording basic tracks, with Sam handling lead vocals, guitar and drums, and Brandon on bass and keyboards, at Normal Studio in Athens, Ga.

Later that spring, Duane Denison, joined the fold. With empathy and simply by being one phenomenal musician, Duane broadly widened the voice of EmptyMansions' rock approach in two separate sessions, each lasting a mere four hours, but filling enough tracks to build an entirely separate album.

By September 2012, the final mixes were completed.

EmptyMansions is now an entity; not the just a moniker for Sam's solo work, definitely not a side project, but not exactly a band either. Time will reveal what happens next, and what sonic form EmptyMansions will take next.

snakes/vultures/sulfate is slated for an April 2013 release via Riot House Records.

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