

steven kattenbraker

Many years have passed since the needle finally had its way w/ the worn grooves of the Beatles, Dylan, and Kinks albums that Steven 'borrowed' from his parents. Now they inhabit the tattered trunk of experience, memory, and perspective that has accompanied his journey—one filled w/ a rich mine for his timeless gems depicting love and loss, joy and grief, envy and disdain, birth and death.

Raised in the deep south, Steven witnessed the intriguing paradox of 'southern hospitality' with the enmity brought about by religious, class, racial, and gender misunderstanding. It was perhaps at this point that his desire to observe and intent to portray the subtle ironies of human existence was germinated.

Steven spent most of the 90's in the Midwest touring regionally with outfits playing music ranging from math rock to jazz. A time of immense musical discovery, Steven benefited by collaborating and sharing stages (from coffee houses in Iowa City to legendary clubs in Chicago) with a host of talented musicians. With a voracious musical appetite Steven digested and studied styles ranging from Mahler, to Wes Montgomery, to Bill Monroe; all of which have melded to influence his unique compositional approach to harmony, melody, and counterpoint. With a literary interest no less varied, spanning from Sholokhov to Salinger to Sandburg, his verse is ripe with cryptic wit and enchanting imagery.

Continuing his 'journey' to the left coast Steven spent several years in the border region of New Mexico training and working as a paramedic. He witnessed and shared in the full spectrum of human emotion: from the sheer terror of a violent injury, to the shock and dread of suddenly losing a soul mate, to the exhilaration of hearing a newborn's first cry. For better or worse, countless scenes are firmly emblazoned in his memory; some that haunt, some that inspire, but all adding to the human experience of which Steven endeavors to illustrate.

Now safely in the beautiful Northwest, the time and travel worn portmanteau is now being mined of its rich and boundless material. Steven's self-titled CD has received steady airplay on such stations as the world-renown KEXP while his recorded and live performances have been met with handsome press. His melody and wordplay humbly garner comparisons to Elliott Smith, Sam Beam, and Leonard Cohen. Complicating today's genre boxing, his complex and dynamic instrumentation and recording techniques have drawn comparisons to a diverse list of bands such as Red House Painters, Gravity and Henry, and early Azure Ray.



"...songwriter to take seriously...poetic lyrics... expertly played acoustic guitar... Check him out now; he'll restore your faith in the singer-songwriter genre." (earvolution.com)

"...Pinus has a strange and slow electronic freakout section in the middle of it which is more Red House Painters or American Analog Set than Elliott Smith...that hushed atmosphere in which his songs exist is at once both familiar and intricately unique..." (shmat records shmat.com)

"...part Elliott Smith, part L. Cohen, as run through the production wringer of Daniel Ash...Kattenbraker's baritone voice is pleasant and soothing. The guitar work sweet and mellow and, might I add, deftly played..." (Portland's Music Liberation Project)

"...Throughout this self-titled album, he prods gently but insistently, persistently. The tension you feel during your first listen is his dusky but irrepressible voice loosening your mind and body... The strange, wispy sounds that occasionally permeate the soundscape... as in the excellent instrumental ["Finally"], help him to work you all over. He gets the low end. He gets the murky things. He hits all the important places...You'll listen a second time just to extend the feeling you got as you finished your first spin, and you'll listen a third time because there's a lot to love here." (splendidezine.com)