



Aux.78: Sun and Shadow Past the Border

A car coasts across the flats of west Texas, all horsepower and tailfins. Near El Paso, near Juárez, you glimpse the license plate: it reads **Aux.78**. Inside rumbles the music of **Nicholas Matta**, cryptic and unclassifiable, a blend of urban grit, desert solitude, and what one might

describe as a backwards echo of some future moment.

It sure doesn't explain itself to you.

On that lonesome road Matta unveils *The Sun Decays Them*, a mélange of folk and electronica, strident street poetry, and bedrock spiritualism infused with Latino and Native American accents. From the funereal "A Colorful Death" to the matter-of-fact "I Love You But You Make Things Harder" to the pastoral title track, *Sun* shines warmly, illuminating its remote spot on the continuum with a sort of mortal optimism. Yet much remains in shadow in the world of Aux.78.

Matta was raised in El Paso, not far from a contentious juncture of the U.S.-Mexico border, and lived there for most of his life until relocating last year to Portland, Oregon. The move was key to creating the new record, his first for a label. "I'll always love El Paso, but Portland is home now," he says. "The DIY aesthetic and personal touches to everyday life make Portland vibrant and exciting, free-thinking and accepting... My father was a guitar player and opened my world to music and art early on. So I have been speaking that language ever since."

A bit of a contrarian and purist (by his own admission), Matta entertains scarce interest in the machinations of the music business. "I don't need to sell a billion downloads," he says. "I just do what I do. My audience is there to crowd around my work. I am not here to coddle them. I don't care what the trends are or what people are listening to. I don't care

what sells. I don't expect my listeners to expect anything more of me than music delivered from the heart, in all of its incarnations."

Produced by Matta and recorded in El Paso and Portland, *The Sun Decays Them* joins a Wampus Multimedia roster that includes recent and coming releases from

Waterslide, Big Bus Dream, The May Bees, Johnny J Blair, the matthew show, Kowtow

Popof, The Crowd Scene, and **tvfordogs**, as well as the compilation albums *Hurry Home Early: The Songs of Warren Zevon*, *After Hours: a Tribute to the Music of Lou Reed*, and *If I*

Were a Richman: a Tribute to the Music of Jonathan Richman.

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