

## GEOGRAPHER

"I want to make soulful music from outer space," singer Mike Deni of Geographer says. Backed by cellist Nathan Blaz and drummer Brian Ostreicher, both graduates of the Berklee School of Music in Boston, the band aptly navigates the songwriting process creating sounds and textures to support their otherworldly aspirations.

The band formed as a kind of catharsis for lead singer Mike Deni. After a series of tragedies struck his family, Deni left his hometown in New Jersey for San Francisco where he eventually met band mates Blaz and Ostreicher. "We met through a mutual friend at an open-mic at The Hotel Utah, shortly after we all moved to San Francisco. I feel like it was like a rite of passage," Deni says. "I didn't have a lot of friends here, and I didn't have a job, so I was just playing all day long. I feel like that really was when I found myself as a song writer."

Their debut LP *Innocent Ghosts* captures these feelings of loss and loneliness, but also manages to bring out a sense of hope and exuberance. The marriage of Deni's lush falsetto, Blaz's romantically textured cello and Ostreicher's pulsing rhythms exude a maturity of craft and cohesion often found in bands that have been playing together far longer. The self-released record immediately caught the attention of local and national critics, prompting *SPIN Magazine* to dub the trio "One of the Three Bands You Should Hear Now."

A graduate in English, Deni often develops lyrics as a complement to the music, relying on abstract devices to convey a concept. "The way I listen to music, the music always comes first for me, but I need to have something meaningful to say as well. I'm a strong believer of the subconscious," he continues, "that's where I get my favorite lyrics."

In 2010, the band released the *Animal Shapes* EP along with a 7" single for the song *Kites*. The EP merges Geographer's aptitude for crafting beautiful, haunting melodies with a knack for ethereal, layered sounds, marking an evolution of their distinct style. The EP garnered considerable praise, landing on several 'Best Of' lists including the *SF Weekly's* 'Best Local Version of Radiohead' nod.

With *Animal Shapes*, the band honed their live performance, putting on shows that spontaneously make a crowd pulse with energy or stand enraptured by the music. They ramped up their touring schedule in support of the EP with a 3-week US tour with Canadian indie-rock band *Stars*, a sold-out headlining slot at the 2011 *Noise Pop Festival*, an epic 9-show binge at Austin's *SXSW Festival*, and a 10-city West Coast tour with UK synth-pop band *Ladytron*, culminating with a triumphant return to San Francisco opening the *Treasure Island Music Festival* in October.

Amidst the flurry of live performances, the band took a break only to hit the studio to record the collection of songs that were to embody their next full-length album: *MYTH*. The band returned home, enlisting producer Eli Crews to man the helm at John Vanderslice's fabled *Tiny Telephone Studio* in San Francisco. The album was to be their most ambitious record yet. Deni says "We tried to make every note count in a way we didn't necessarily do before." This more refined process is evident on the opening track 'Life of Crime,' which explodes with engulfing synths, soaring cello leads, and a massive, tom-laden backbeat to drive the song.

*MYTH* proves that the band is taking their sonic exploration to new levels. Utilizing each member's multi-instrumental backgrounds, the record finds Geographer creating distinctive sounds through varied instrumentation. Dynamic head-bobbers such as 'The Myth of Youth' and 'Lover's Game' highlight the band's ability to weave driving rock anthems with romantic nostalgia. "I wonder if I'm here for nothing. I wonder if I'm here at all. I wonder if I'll ever love you for who you are," Deni laments on *Lover's Game*. Songs like 'Kaleidoscope'

and 'The Boulder' showcase a darker, sexier approach to groove that brings a more intimate element to the record.

Of the name Geographer, Deni says, "What a cartographer does mapping out a place is what a musician does mapping out an emotion." With Myth, Geographer continues to navigate new territory, leaving us in anticipation of what will be revealed next. With such a bold album and an electric live show that breathes even more intensity into the songs, the journey seems to have only just begun.

Geographer are: Nathan Blaz, Mike Deni, and Brian Ostreicher