

## = New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light =

New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light is the fourth studio album by Canada @-@ based saxophonist Colin Stetson , released by Constellation Records in 2013 . It is the final part of a trilogy of albums that also encompasses New History Warfare Vol . 1 ( 2007 ) and New History Warfare Vol . 2 : Judges ( 2011 ) .

Stetson , whose contributions to the album were recorded live without overdubs or loops , is the sole musical performer on the album , with Bon Iver 's Justin Vernon later providing vocals on four tracks . Production on the album was undertaken by Stetson in collaboration with Ben Frost . New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light was met with critical acclaim upon its release in April 2013 and was shortlisted for the 2013 Polaris Music Prize three months later .

## = = Background and recording = =

Stetson 's original concept for the New History Warfare trilogy was largely skeletal , and developed as the albums were recorded . New History Warfare Vol . 1 was released in 2008 and had a narrative concept of a story of people who had been living at sea for generations . New History Warfare Vol . 2 : Judges , released in 2011 , told the story of one of these people finally arriving on land . New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light expanded on this , with Stetson stating that " it ? s a war story . It ? s finding your way to this shining beacon on the mountaintop , " and that it " deals with death and love . "

Stetson 's playing technique includes multiphonics and overblowing , and he uses circular breathing to produce continuous tones without interruption , allowing him to perform an extended stream of notes . The physical and technical demands of this style of playing require Stetson to adhere to a fitness routine that includes running , yoga , breathing exercises and meditation . During the course of his career , his playing proficiency had been developing and each album in the New History Warfare trilogy marked a musical progression from the last . By the time he recorded New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light , Stetson 's playing capability had improved to such a level that he claimed " there ? s almost nothing in there that I could have played when I recorded Vol . 2 . "

Stetson 's parts on Vol . 3 were performed and recorded live without overdubs or loops in various studios in Montreal , where he had wanted to use the large rooms to provide more reverb . Using an arrangement of microphones placed in strategic places including on the side of the saxophone , on his own throat , hanging from the ceiling and at different points around the studio , Stetson captured not only the sounds of the instrument but also the percussive sound of the keys and the sounds of his own breathing and vocalizing through the horn . Producer Ben Frost , whom Stetson had previously worked with on New History Warfare Vol . 2 : Judges , mixed between fifteen and twenty recordings of the same performance into a cohesive piece of music at Greenhouse Studios in Iceland . The vocals of Justin Vernon were recorded at April Base studios in Fall Creek , Wisconsin , and were overdubbed later in the recording process .

## = = Musical content = =

New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light contains eleven tracks with a total running time of fifty @-@ two minutes . Ten tracks were written by Stetson , with three of these featuring additional writing from Justin Vernon . The track " What are They Doing in Heaven Today ? " is a cover version of a gospel song written by Charles Albert Tindley in 1901 and recorded by Washington Phillips in 1928 .

Stetson has stated that the songs are " based in traditional American song , " and the music was described by AllMusic reviewer Fred Thomas as containing " elements of jazz , modern composition , and ... aspects of repetition and textural drone found in certain branches of electronic music and noise . " Fact called the album " a rich , multi @-@ layered sonic world " and noted that the presence of Vernon 's vocals meant that " Stetson ? s approach feels considerably poppier this time around . " Pitchfork Media opined that Stetson has " plowed a unique path through the music

landscape in the last five years , " stating that " his music is heady but always rooted in the body . " Jeremy D. Larson concurred with this idea , claiming that Stetson 's music is " alien but human , technically astounding but filled with passion ? the saxophone acts as a medium of expression tied to his whole body " , but admitted that " to most ears , Stetson ? s music is hard to classify . " Reviewer Daniel Paton also found classification of the music difficult , saying that it " doesn ? t really meet even the most open @-@ minded definitions of jazz , neither is it really an example of free improvised music . "

In his review for *Drowned in Sound* , Alexander Tudor observed the album 's " abrasiveness , brute force , and determination to push the instrument to its limits , " describing a " relentless pummeling of metal in motion ; often aggressive or chaotic , but using scales to evoke a sense of discipline " while noting that Stetson was " equally at home with classical minimalism . " Exclaim ! reviewer Vincent Pollard noted how Vol . 3 " organically and coherently blends Stetson 's avant @-@ garde playing and dark , complex themes with accessible and compelling compositions , " while MusicOMH commented that Stetson was " finding guttural , fuzzy , violent sounds from his saxophone ... but also finding a disarming warmth where necessary . " In his review for *No Ripcord* , Stephen Wragg stated that " there ? s such a polyphonic richness to these recordings that it sounds , at times , like five people are present " and noted that the techniques employed in the recording of the album " creates this heady , vertiginous rush ? adrenaline @-@ inducing in its deftness ; and that ? s an effect that strikes me as incredibly difficult to recreate in music . " Spin 's Richard Gehr suggested that the music was " densely multiphonic , often claustrophobic , and reeks of fear and flight " but that it " offers at least a slight sense of salvation , " and concluded that the final album in the trilogy was " music of the moment , a work of granular epiphanies that accrete , finally , into a magnificent whole . "

= = Release = =

At the announcement of the album in January 2013 , the track " High Above a Grey Green Sea " was made available for streaming on the Constellation Records Soundcloud website . In March , four more tracks from the album ( " And in Truth " , " Hunted " , " Who the Waves Are Roaring For " and " Part of Me Apart From You " ) were able to be streamed following their premiere on the Belgian radio station Radio Scorpio . A short film made to accompany the tracks " In Mirrors " and " And in Truth " was released on 5 April 2013 , directed by Kurtis Hough , Dan Huiting and Tabb Firchau .

New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light was released on 29 April 2013 in Europe and the following day in North America . The album was released on compact disc , 180g vinyl and digital download . Following the release of the album , a promotional video was made for the track " Who the Waves Are Roaring For " , created by videographers Isaac Gale and David Jensen .

In July 2013 , New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light was shortlisted for the Polaris Music Prize , which was Stetson 's second nomination for the award after Vol . 2 : Judges in 2011 .

= = Reception = =

Upon its release , New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light received critical acclaim . At Metacritic , which assigns a weighted average score out of 100 to reviews and ratings from mainstream critics , the album has received a metascore of 81 , based on 18 reviews , indicating " universal acclaim . "

AllMusic rated New History Warfare Vol . 3 : To See More Light four stars out of five with reviewer Fred Thomas commenting that " Stetson explores scorched landscapes and heavenly scenes alike with his stylized playing . " In his review for *Consequence of Sound* , Jeremy D. Larson lauded Stetson 's album as " his strongest and most cohesive collection in his career " and suggested that " you ? ve never heard anything like it " , giving a mark of four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five . Vol . 3 received an eight out of ten review from *Drowned in Sound* , where Alexander Tudor found the album to be " essential listening and another triumph . " Exclaim ! magazine 's Vincent

Pollard awarded the album a perfect ten out of ten score , praising its " accessible and compelling compositions " and dubbing it a " masterpiece . " Angus Finlayson of FACT magazine was more critical , rating the album three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of five and commenting that Vernon 's vocals " run the risk of taming Stetson ? s playing . "

A favorable review from musicOMH 's Daniel Paton described Vol . 3 's " unpredictable and challenging but frequently awe @-@ inspiring terrain " and gave the album four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five . No Ripcord reviewer Stephen Wragg was less impressed , rating it a seven out of ten , but offered that the album was " stacked with jaw @-@ dropping moments , underpinned by seismic emotional shifts . " Mark Richardson , writing for Pitchfork Media , awarded Vol . 3 8 @.@ 1 out of 10 @.@ 0 and noted Stetson ? s " impressive achievement " before concluding that " the result is a sound that could come only from one person on earth . " Spin magazine 's Richard Gehr described the music as " peerless at conveying isolation , loneliness , and alienation " and scored the album eight out of ten . Rob Young of The Wire praised the album 's " extraordinary aural illusionism " , noting that Stetson 's playing technique finds " timbres in the saxophone 's tubing that are rarely brought out . "

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Colin Stetson except where noted .

= = Personnel = =

#### Performers

Colin Stetson ? alto saxophone , tenor saxophone , bass saxophone , vocals , production

Justin Vernon ? vocals

#### Recording personnel

Mell Dettmer ? mastering

Ben Frost ? mixing , production

Jon Ottosen ? mixing

Vid Cousins ? recording

Marcus Paquin ? recording

BJ Burton ? recording

Brian Joseph ? recording

Mark Lawson ? engineering , recording

#### Additional personnel

Tracy Maurice ? artwork , design

Matt Moroz ? artwork , design