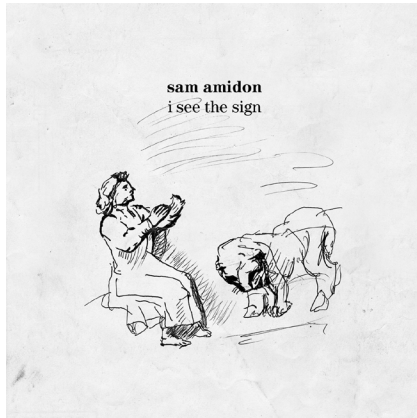


sam amidon

i see the sign


Sam Amidon - I See The Sign
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The needle-drop fuzz that cues Sam Amidon's fourth solo album of songs, *I See The Sign*, raises the curtain on a world of little theatres, foretelling of an aural gut-grip that is fully human and wholly natural. Amidon's intuitive and often radical reworkings of age-old secular ballads, gospel, folk songs, and hymns render familiar characters new through his direction, vision, vocals, banjo, guitar, and stellar contributions from fellow musicians. Stylus Magazine raved that Amidon's sophomore solo album, *But This Chicken Proved Falsehearted*, was "the most interesting folk album of 2007." In 2008, Bedroom Community debuted his third album, *All Is Well*, which garnered media enthusiasm as a "a goose-bump-manufacturing sonic pièce de résistance" (CMJ New Music Monthly).

I See The Sign sets the stage for Amidon's second Bedroom Community release to showcase deft attention to songcraft and collaboration. Where *All Is Well* foregrounded voice and strings to share tales of human endurance, *I See The Sign* is a carefully constructed battle and balance of musical sensibilities surveying the psychological extremes of existence. Contributing to *I See The Sign* is multi-instrumentalist Shahzad Ismaily, a long-time collaborator of Amidon's whose musical past includes New York City's improv scene as well as playing bass for Rage Against the Machine, percussion for Tom Waits, and guitar for Laurie Anderson. Offsetting Ismaily's expansive contributions, Nico Muhly's chamber-orchestral arrangements for string, brass, and woodwinds continue the groundbreaking work he began on *All Is Well*. Renowned singer-songwriter Beth Orton emerges after a music-scene hiatus to lend haunting vocals to four songs. In an environment of struggle, euphony, and polyphony, Valgeir Sigurðsson's expert role as producer grounds this sonic psychogeography.

While atmospheric pressure in "Rain and Snow" builds from the love of trouble and troubled love, "Pretty Fair Damsel" lightens the scene as Amidon's voice and Muhly's keys cast rays of sun through forests of sugar maple to spotlight music for the hopeful and hope-filled. "How Come That Blood" gallops with Ismaily's percussion and Moog bass, accented by string flourishes as pheasants take wing to flee the scene. Through recomposed children's singing game "Way Go Lily" and Georgia Sea Islands song "You Better Mind", Amidon and Orton pair elegant vocals to play out strains of concern and comfort. Title song "I See The Sign" steps boldly centre-stage to depict the dark clouds of Armageddon hovering over wildflowers, myrtle and marsh marigold blooming against a roiling grey sky. By stark contrast, an intimate rendition of R&B musician R. Kelly's "Relief" is the perfect dénouement to draw the album's drama to its finale.

With fearless grace and apocalyptic beauty, *I See The Sign* performs aural vision for vision; sounds enter ears and exit through eyes that shine and widen from listening. *I See The Sign* enacts a technicolour reality, with sound grown in and on the body - a body costumed in blood-red lichen and moon-silver moss, with the crackle of grit audible beneath boots. An album traversing the emotional gamut, Sam Amidon and his collaborators present *I See The Sign* as a gift to the listening, sensate body. In your doomsday attire and with your eyes glowing bright, do you see the sign?

About Sam Amidon



Brief Bio

Acclaimed folk singer and multi-instrumentalist Sam Amidon's solo albums are *Solo Fiddle* (2001), *But This Chicken Proved Falsehearted* (Plug Research, 2007), *All Is Well* (Bedroom Community, 2008), and *I See The Sign* (Bedroom Community, 2010). He frequently collaborates with Thomas Bartlett, Shahzad Ismaily, Nico Muhly, and Valgeir Sigurðsson. Amidon lives in New York City.

Full Bio

Born in 1981 and raised in Vermont by folk-musician parents, Sam Amidon sings and plays fiddle, banjo, and guitar. As a teenager, Amidon rose to acclaim as a fiddler, releasing five albums with his band Popcorn Behavior. A musician who glides through unlikely set of genres from traditional folk to free jazz, Amidon has released four solo albums, and also plays in the New York-based indie-rock bands Doveman and Stars Like Fleas. After a seven-year stint in New York City, Amidon has been fully itinerant since 2008 as he tours and collaborates with a roster of renowned musicians, including Shahzad Ismaily, Nico Muhly, Thomas Bartlett, Ben Frost, and Valgeir Sigurðsson.

His second solo album of songs, *But This Chicken Proved Falsehearted* was a collaboration with Thomas Bartlett (a.k.a. Doveman). Amidon quickly followed this with his second album, *All Is Well*, released by Bedroom Community in 2008. *All Is Well* was produced by Valgeir Sigurðsson, with orchestral arrangements by Nico Muhly and contributions from Stefan Amidon, Ben Frost, Eyvind Kang, and Aaron Siegel. In 2009, Amidon debuted Muhly's reworked folk composition "The Only Tune" at Carnegie Hall, a composition also appearing on Muhly's 2009 Bedroom Community album *Mothertongue*. Amidon also released the 2009 LP *Fiddle and Drum*, featuring free improvisation with Siegel.

On Amidon's new release, *I See The Sign*, he works with old-time melodies and lyrics as a starting point for creating atmosphere. His long-time collaborator, Shahzad Ismaily – a multi-instrumentalist and composer who has worked with a diverse range of musicians including Laurie Anderson, Bonnie "Prince" Billy, Jolie Holland, Rage Against the Machine, Lou Reed, and Tom Waits – proved foundational to the creation of *I See The Sign*. The album features three children's singing games popularized by Georgia Sea Islands songstress Bessie Jones, recomposed by Amidon to expose maturity and unease. Each of Amidon's albums has shone with the care and support offered by his collaborators, and never is this clearer than on the sweeping epic of *I See The Sign*.

Amidon draws comics and makes videos. His work has shown in the galleries Kuhturm in Leipzig, Audio Visual Arts in New York City, and in a multimedia performance at New York's Museum of Art and Design.