

# Man Forever

## *Play What They Want*

Thrill Jockey Records - May 19th 2017

The music of drummer **John Colpitts** as **Man Forever** is explorative, innovative and fearless. A musician and composer equally versed in the disparate musical languages of DIY rock, improvisation, and contemporary classical, Colpitts (aka **Kid Millions**) has made an album that defies genre classification. Propulsive, elaborate drum arrangements (created with **TIGUE Percussion**) remain essential to Man Forever - on the songs of *Play What They Want*, they are augmented by voice and melody with contributions from **Laurie Anderson**, **Yo La Tengo**, and **Mary Lattimore** to name a few. *Play What They Want* represents the culmination of 25 years of musical engagement by one of New York's most acclaimed percussionists.



The collaborative process, essential to Man Forever, requires the relinquishing of one's ego for a greater purpose. In *Play What They Want* Colpitts leverages a vast and talented stable of diverse collaborators to create a work that transcends the sum of its parts.

“You Were Never Here” kicks off the album with a gorgeous vocal performance by all members of **Yo La Tengo** and, like the transition from the black and white to technicolor, the piece becomes a driving, wild marriage of **Max Roach's** “Garvey’s Ghost,” **McCoy Tyner**, **Alice Coltrane** and **Steve Reich**. World-class harpists **Brandee Younger** and **Mary Lattimore** join bassist **Brandon Lopez**, pianist **Sam Yulsman** and the **Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble** to create an experimental jazz and classical “dream team.” “Ten Thousand Things” resonates with TIGUE’s tense, virtuosic compound meters, a Moondog-esque vocal by Colpitts and singer **Nick Hallett**, and another intuitive performance by harpist Mary Lattimore. Finishing the side, “Debt and Greed” is a surprisingly wry pop tune that combines Colpitts’ Jaki Liebezzeit-esque drum groove with CSN-style harmonies, guitar by **Trans Am’s Phil Manley**, and horn playing by **Ben Lanz (Beirut, The National, Sufjan Stevens)**.

The second side leads with the evocative album centerpiece “Twin Torches.” Here Colpitts worked with the legendary multi-media artist and musician **Laurie Anderson**, who provided spoken vocals and violin on the nearly 10-minute tour de force. This composition also features arresting vocal atmospherics by Quince, which precede some of the most complex drumming Colpitts has ever recorded. The album closes with “Catenary Smile,” a prickly ballad featuring Nick Hallett’s cascading background vocals which buoy the lyrics: a contemplation of humanity’s problematic tendency to anthropomorphize inanimate things.

While Colpitts’ previous albums have expanded on the possibilities and limitations of drums and percussion, this new album redefines the project in myriad ways. Building on a complex rhythmic foundation, Man Forever created an album that is innovative, imaginative and joyous. *Play What They Want* is a rare record of untamed ambition that hits all its marks.