

INDIE SCENE

BR'ER

*City of Ice*

fullgrownman.com

By the fourth track of this harrowing collection, it's high time for some sunlight—the tune in question is called “Hope,” but even that title turns out to be misleading. “Now there’s no hope for one,” sings Benjamin Schurr, the Philly auteur behind Br’er. “He lives in songs that are sung of pity and empathy and all in between.” That’s putting it lightly. Schurr funnels heartbreak, resentment, dark fantasies and grotesque fascinations into these 11 industrial-folk screeds, augmenting a traditional singer-songwriter vocabulary—guitar, ukulele, strings—with synth squeaks, ambient drones and fits of electronic percussion. On one song he credits a bandmate with playing a washing machine, but there’s no getting through this stunningly bleak set without feeling a little dirty.

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