

It wasn't planned. The goal was to hibernate.

Justin Vernon moved to a remote cabin in the woods of Northwestern Wisconsin at the onset of winter. Tailing from the swirling breakup of his long time band, he escaped to the property and surrounded himself with simple work, quiet, and space. He lived there alone for three months, filling his days with wood splitting and other chores around the land. This special time slowly began feeding a bold, uninhibited new musical focus.

This slowly evolved into days filled with twelve-hour recording blocks, breaking only for trips on the tractor into the pines to saw and haul firewood, or for frozen sunrises high up a deer stand. All of his personal trouble, lack of perspective, heartache, longing, love, loss and guilt that had been stock piled over the course of the past six years, was suddenly purged into the form of song. The end result is, *For Emma, Forever Ago*, a nine-song album comprised of what's been dubbed a striking debut by critics and fans alike.

Bon Iver (pronounced: bohn eevair; French for "good winter" and spelled wrong on purpose) is a greeting, a celebration and a sentiment. It is a new statement of an artist moving on and establishing the groundwork for a lasting career. *For Emma, Forever Ago* is the debut of this lineage of songs. As a whole, the record is entirely cohesive throughout and remains centered around a particular aesthetic, prompted by the time and place for which it was recorded. Vernon seems to have tested his boundaries to the utmost, and in doing so has managed to break free from any pre-cursing or finished forms.

*For Emma's* tracks consist of thick layers draped in lush choral walls, with rarely more than an ancient acoustic guitar or the occasional bass drum providing structure. Vernon sings the majority of the record in falsetto, which painfully expresses the meanings behind its overt, yet strangely entangled words. This newfound vocal path acts as each song's main character and source of melody.

Despite its complexity, the record was created entirely by Vernon with nothing more than a few microphones and some aged recording equipment. This homemade aspect shows itself in sections as creaks and accidentals are exposed in the folds of the songs, but is hidden well by the highly impressive and almost orchestral sound that Vernon managed to produce by his lonesome, within the creaky skeleton of his father's cabin.