

TERRA COTTA RELEASE DEBUT RECORD *I FOUND* *A LIGHT*

RIYL: Sadurn, Florry, Big Thief



Photo by Michael Lucio Sternbach

On May 17th, Philadelphia based folk quintet **Terra Cotta** self-released their debut record, *I Found A Light*. Despite only being active as a band for just over a year, Terra Cotta have already found themselves as mainstays in Philadelphia's ever-growing folk scene. *I Found a Light* was recorded last September, just after the band's first tour. They spent a week touring the Northeast performing at various farms, botanical

gardens, and miscellaneous venues. Terra Cotta are no strangers to unorthodox gigs, having played alongside puppeteers, mimes, and magicians.

García-Leeds says of the record, “I think spirituality, magic, and a sense of nature’s sacredness are essential to understanding what Terra Cotta revolves around. I grew up immersed in a kind of syncretic mysticism – my father is a kabbalist, and my mother was raised attending Afro-Brazilian Orisha festivals and spiritualist seances. Terra Cotta’s music is often reflecting on and celebrating the invisible currents that underpin our existence.”

After finishing his music composition degree, frontman **Gabriel García-Leeds** accidentally became a Minister of Music at a predominantly Central American diasporic church in northeast Philadelphia after becoming the church’s guitarist through a Craigslist post. “I learned a lot of central and south american sacred folk music during my year as the minister of music, and I feel like this has had a big effect on my work with Terra Cotta,” he says.

Spontaneity and instinctual musicianship lie at the heart of their music. Paco Cathcart (The Cradle) recorded the band in their Queens studio. Everything was recorded in one day, and almost everything was recorded live. García-Leeds mixed the album himself over the winter, and tapped Heather Jones (ther, Sadurn, Florry, MJ Lenderman) for mastering. *I Found A Light* was released independently and in DIY fashion, with a small press of cassettes dubbed by a friend and a modest supply of CDs burned in Japan.

I Found A Light, on the whole, is a celebration of life and the beauty that lies therein. “I don’t ever really write about the object of love, a person of desire or anything - but instead write about the experience of love itself,” García-Leeds explains. “Our songs are full of reflections on the nature of love, its place within life, the trouble it stirs, its rare and magical depth.” This ethos is explored most directly on “Love Is All We Get,” a lively and joyous tune about being thorough mutual understanding. “Spare me the sadness and spare me the mess / I can see the ache in your eyes / I can see the black past sunrise / I can see the days scatter like birds on a line / If love is all we're looking for then love is all we get,” García-Leeds and percussionist Mariel Rice sing in harmony.

More is on the horizon for Terra Cotta this fall, as García-Leeds sets off for an arts residency teaching at a quaker farm in the Green Mountains, where he plans to finish writing the band’s next record. They plan on recording it in the autumn at a cabin in Maine built by Rice’s carpenter father.



I Found a Light album art by Maisie Sibbison-Alves

Terra Cotta is Gabriel García-Leeds (vocals, guitar), Mariel Rice (vocals, percussion), Veda Lakshminarayanan (flute, vocals), Eli Kleinsmith (fiddle, banjo), and John Moran Jr. (upright bass).

Streaming links for *I Found A Light*:

[Spotify](#)

[Apple Music](#)

[Bandcamp](#)

Terra Cotta Upcoming Shows (all in Philadelphia)

8/15 - Bartram's Garden w/ Squirrel Flower, Boo Boo Spoiler

8/31 - Port Richmond Flea

9/13 - Molly's Books

10/17 - Upstairs at Abyssinia w Sarah Morrison

10/18 - Kung Fu Necktie w/ Moon Panda

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