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Maps and Diagrams – The Town Beneath The Sea

So there I am sat at work one day, minding my own business, when I get this email, all humble-like and asking if I would mind checking out not one record, but two. The email was from a certain Tim Martin who just so happens to be a co-worker of mine and a very good friend, but who I was pretty sure didn't play music unless he was drunk and then it was just table banging. Then it slowly dawned on me that it was a totally different Tim Martin - the genius behind the Maps and Diagrams moniker. What Tim (not my co-worker) didn't realise was that I'd been a bit of an obsessive fan since his Antennas and Signals release on the oh-so-jaw-droppingly-awesome Japanese label Moamoo, plus when the lovely Mike at Smallfish gave me a copy of Tim's Lhasa Apso release not long after. So I promptly spilled my coffee over my crotch and let out a howling wild animal sound, not sure if it was the pleasure of the email or the pain of the heat. I digress...every album I have heard by Tim, whether its under his Maps and Diagrams guise or some alternate moniker, has something of the magnificent about it. Not in some over-blown way I should point out, but in a subtle, beautifully evolved and understated style, he creates music which just envelopes and ignites within.

Lights Will Call On You and The Town Beneath The Sea, whilst quite different records, come as a natural pair as one follows the other so perfectly. Whilst Lights Will Call On You introduces to a very distant sound world, with a much more 'dirt under the nails' approach with haunting melodies calling you out to some forgotten memory, The Town Beneath The Sea cradles you with tender, open warmth and full-bodied emotion. It is in this core that I just love Tim's work; his ability to toy the line between the subtle and the direct, playing with a sense of beauty that never gets overly-sweet nor saturated, respecting the listener's sense of what is pure, whole or perhaps wholly real. It is the music of an artist at the height of his powers, and I am so honoured that we get to work with Tim on this.
(Ian Hawgood)