

Zach Zaitlin Announces “Put the Pieces,” First Single from Forthcoming Debut LP *PRIMETIME*

Philadelphia, PA — August 28, 2026 — After more than 15 years away from releasing music, Philadelphia-based musician **Zach Zaitlin** returns with “Put the Pieces,” the first single from his forthcoming debut full-length album, *PRIMETIME*.

A haunting, darkly playful meditation on the impossibility of optimizing a life, “Put the Pieces” grew out of Zaitlin’s obsessive attempts to determine whether moving from Maine to Philadelphia had been the “right” decision. The song examines what happens when the ordinary uncertainties of living become a kind of endless mathematical problem: Which place is more beautiful? Which life is better? Which choice will finally produce happiness?

“I’m searching for the perfect system / for determining with precision / exactly when
and where I should be / to guarantee perfect happiness.”

But the more pieces Zaitlin puts into place, the less certain he becomes that anything adds up.

Musically, “Put the Pieces” inhabits a strange space between symphonic pop and something considerably more unsettling: **The Beach Boys attempting a surf at the beach just outside of Twin Peaks**. A Roland Juno synthesizer, electric guitar, drums, layered violin and cello passages, and Zaitlin’s voice are surrounded by eerily manipulated piano, guitar, and found-sound textures. The result is simultaneously lush, uneasy, soulful, and faintly absurd—an appropriate sonic setting for a song about trying desperately to make sense of everything.

The song began during the COVID era as a bedroom recording. Zaitlin recorded the original synthesizer and vocal parts and asked violin and cello-playing friends to record short snippets from their homes. He then assembled and layered those fragments into the song’s string textures. When recording for *PRIMETIME* began in 2024 with producer/engineer **Mark Watter at Headroom Studios**, the original recording was expanded with guitar from **Alex Lewis** and drums from **Jake Nussbaum of the post-rock duo The Early**, along with further atmospheric experimentation developed collaboratively by Zaitlin and Watter.

“Put the Pieces” is also an unusually revealing introduction to *PRIMETIME*, an album that represents a hard-fought return to music after Zaitlin’s 2009 EP *JOYEUX NOËL*. In the years that followed, a cross-continent journey, building a life in recovery, struggles with perfectionism and self-doubt, and a winding search for meaning brought him close to abandoning his creative work altogether.

The twelve songs on *PRIMETIME* trace a parallel inner voyage through that period—a journey through what might be called a dark night of the soul, even as the first glimmer of daybreak begins to appear.

For Zaitlin, “Put the Pieces” captures something both painful and funny about the mindset that kept him stuck for so long. Its narrator wants to find the perfect system, the perfect place, the perfect set of decisions. Yet beneath all the analysis is the dawning realization that the problem may not be the pieces at all.

“I put the pieces where they should be,” he sings, “but something’s still not right with me.”

In that sense, the song is not simply about choosing between Maine and Philadelphia. It is about the strange human desire to turn an unknowable life into a solvable equation—and the freedom that might come from finally admitting that it can’t be solved.

“Put the Pieces” will be released **August 28, 2026** on all major streaming platforms. A music video is currently in production.

About Zach Zaitlin

Zach Zaitlin is a Maine-bred, Philadelphia-based musician and piano teacher whose music combines unexpected piano textures, synthscapes, layered acoustic instrumentation, and searing, soulful vocals. His work resists easy categorization, drawing on influences ranging from The Beach Boys, Radiohead, and Björk to PJ Harvey and Jeff Buckley. *PRIMETIME*, his forthcoming debut full-length, marks his first major release since 2009 and documents a long, winding return to music after more than a decade spent searching for a way forward.



Photo by Will Stickney