

Caamp

“Nothing stays the same forever,” says Caamp’s Taylor Meier, “and there’s something beautiful about that. Time passes, seasons turn, people grow. Change is what makes life special.”

Copper Changes Color, Caamp’s fifth and most adventurous album to date, is indeed a reflection on growth and evolution, but it’s also a celebration of the dreams and bonds that endure. Recorded in Texas, Oregon, and New York with co-production from Beatriz Artola (Fleet Foxes, Sharon Van Etten) and Tucker Martine (My Morning Jacket, R.E.M.), the collection finds the breakout Midwestern band pushing their sound to new heights, infusing their infectious brand of modern folk music with an electrifying dose of indie rock energy. The songs are raw and vulnerable, alternating between buoyant, breezy anthems and dreamy, pensive meditations, and the performances are honest and intuitive to match, fueled by the undeniable chemistry between Meier and bandmates Evan Westfall, Matt Vinson, Joseph Kavalec, and Nicholas Falk. Put it all together and you’ve got a rich, rousing record built on love and trust in the face of doubt and uncertainty, a joyful, cathartic work about not just accepting change, but learning to embrace it.

“When we were putting the finishing touches on this record, I started noticing copper everywhere I went,” Meier recalls. “The older it was, the more imperfect the finish had become, but that patina was what gave it character. That’s the way I feel about our band ten years in.”

Founded by childhood friends Meier and Westfall in Athens, OH, Caamp rocketed to early acclaim on the strength of their self-titled 2016 debut, which generated hundreds of millions of streams across platforms and garnered the band their first gold single. Three years later, the group topped the Billboard Heatseekers chart with their sophomore effort, *By and By*, which hit #1 at AAA radio, earned the band festival slots everywhere from Outside Lands to Newport Folk, and led to TV performances on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, and *CBS Saturday Morning*. Caamp’s most recent album, 2022’s *Lavender Days*, landed on NPR’s list of the year’s best roots music, topped the Americana Albums chart, earned the band their second and third #1 singles at AAA radio, and saw the five-piece headlining their biggest shows yet, including a triumphant homecoming blowout at Columbus’s Nationwide Arena. This year, Caamp’s single “Let Things Go” earned the band their fourth #1 on AAA radio.

"It's so fun to just strike your guitar and let it echo through a room that size," says Westfall. "There's something primal about it, and while we never really consciously discussed it, I think you can hear our sound growing to match the rooms we're playing."

Though the band's momentum seemed unstoppable in the wake of *Lavender Days* (to date, they've amassed more than 2.5 billion streams worldwide and sold out multiple nights everywhere from Red Rocks to Radio City Music Hall), a series of physical and mental health setbacks forced Caamp off the road more than expected, opening the door for the kind of self-examination that can only happen while sitting still.

"I've experienced so many different versions of myself these past few years," Meier reflects. "I've been focusing on healing and recovery while still processing a lot of grief and loss, and it made me take stock of my head and my heart and my friends and my family and figure out what really matters."

As Meier found himself embarking on new phases during this period—he turned thirty, began splitting his time between central Ohio and the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and fell in love with early 2000s indie bands like The Strokes—he also found himself recommitted and more grateful than ever for the steadfast connection he shared with his bandmates.

"There's just so much trust," says Meier. "We trust each other, we trust the songs, we trust the process. It allows us to work freely and push ourselves to places we haven't been."

When it came time to record, the band headed first to El Paso's famed Sonic Ranch Studio, where they tracked nearly 20 songs in just a week with Artola and drummer/longtime collaborator Josh Block (Leon Bridges, White Denim). After a break, the group headed to Portland's Flora Recording to collaborate with Martine on another batch of tunes before finishing up with a final session at Manhattan's Sear Sound.

"There was no rush," says Vinson. "We knew we could take our time and enjoy just getting together in a room and seeing what happened when we took our sound to some uncharted places. There's a live performance at the core of each these tracks, and I think that's what ties this whole collection together."

That live energy is obvious from the outset on *Copper Changes Color*, which opens with the driving “Millions.” Punchy and magnetic, the track shifts partway through from sunny garage rock to muscular Americana, setting the stage perfectly for a record that boldly walks the line between genres while proudly wearing its heart on its sleeve. The lush “One True Way” (feat. Madi Diaz) questions whether anyone ever truly knows what they’re doing, while the mesmerizing “Fairview Feeling” makes peace with our imperfections, and the effervescent “Mistakes” lays its cards on the table, with Meier singing, “Can I get to know you, honey / And all of your lovely mistakes / I've got more than a few to show you.”

“I remember walking around when I first moved to New York and having all this dialogue in my head,” he explains, “but the streets were even more chaotic, which slowed things down and allowed me to open up to the possibility of writing something really vulnerable. I found that the city scratches a different itch for me, and I spent a lot of time there just walking around, writing and rewriting verses and trying to go deeper than I ever have on this record.”

Deep as Meier takes things, he and the band never lose sight of life’s simple pleasures. The addictive “Porchswing” revels in the joys of a steady, reliable love; the Britpop-tinged “Shade” pledges to always be there to pick up a partner’s slack; the exhilarating “Waiting Up (For You)” basks in the glow of a connection that transcends distance; and the tongue-in-cheek “Ohio’s Ugly” savors the feeling of sharing a place you love with someone you care about.

“It’s a song about falling in love with a girl and wanting to pull her back to Ohio,” Meier explains. “People don’t understand why we’re still here, but anybody from the Midwest will tell you there’s a magic to it. I travel all over the world now, but nothing beats coming home.”

Ultimately, *Copper Changes Color* is all about that push and pull between old and new, between the thrill of the unknown and the comforts of the familiar. “No one knows how long this lasts / Try and make it sweet,” Meier sings on poignant album closer “Drive.” Change isn’t just inevitable, it’s essential. Enjoy the patina.