

CLAIRE

“Tides”

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For millions of years, life on earth has been subject to a constant cycle of tides, the ebb and flow of water triggered by the gravitational force of the moon, hurling itself with full force against the coasts, raging and thundering one minute, and gently and tenderly kissing land the next. This cycle is not only followed by the earth's seas, but also by humans. The new album “Tides” by the Munich electro pop quintet Claire is devoted to this special emotional interaction between two people who are attracted to each other in an almost magical way - and who sometimes are repelled by each other.

Just a year after the band was formed, Claire's 2013 début album “The Great Escape” established them as one of the most exciting newcomer formations on the European music scene. With their chart entry at number 38 on the longplay hit parade, the quintet from the Bavarian capital city had quite an impressive initial success. They delighted their ever-increasing fan base with the “Introducing” tour that followed, the Melt! Festival, the Chiemsee Summer Open Air and the SonneMondSterne Festival, as well as during celebrated support tours for Woodkid and Bastille, a sold-out headliner tour through the German clubs and not least internationally such as at the renowned SXSW arts and music festival in Austin, Texas, or the CMJ Festival in New York. After Claire presented themselves from their mind concept side with their “Raseiniai” EP issued the previous year, on “Tides”, the band led by singer Josie-Claire Bürkle are varied and multi-faceted like never before!

Following the release of their 6-track mini-epic “Raseiniai” in the autumn of 2015, lead singer Josie-Claire Bürkle, keyboardists Matthias Hauck and Nepomuk Heller, guitarist Florian Kiermaier and drummer Fridolin Achten took their time to take a deep breath, reflect on what had happened from a healthy distance and decide what path their musical journey, which Claire began with their début “The Great Escape” four years ago, should take. The quintet now presents the result of its collective time to reflect with its second studio album. “Tides” reflects the natural onward development of a genuinely extraordinary combination of dancefloor and mind concept. The move away from sterile laptops to an organic analogue sound, where club tracks alternate with spherical moments, with the music pulsing dynamically in tune with the flow of the tides. The courage to experiment is the motto that Claire have written large on “Tides”, with their musical curiosity shining through.

“We dared to do so much more than on our first album,” explains keyboardist Matthias Hauck. “Today, everything is much more bold. More extreme. Loud songs are really loud and danceable. Quiet songs are really quiet and atmospheric. There's no more middle road.” Claire are testing the boundaries between pop, electro and soundtrack-style elements. The different influences blend together to create a compact unit, which pulses with the constantly changing field of tension between loud and quiet, harmony and noise, pure energy and ethereal floating. There's another new aspect to “Tides”: for the very first time, Claire have worked with an external producer and placed themselves in the hands of creative genius and mixing panel legend Dave McCracken (Depeche Mode, Florence & The Machine, Scissor Sisters), who acted as advisor to the band, and who is responsible for two songs. “Although he only came on board with the new album once we had already started, Dave made a huge contribution,” guitarist Florian Kiermaier continues. “We travelled to his studio in London and we all got on so well right away that we immediately came up with the two songs ‘Two Steps Back’ and ‘Burn’. He later came to visit us in Munich, watched our show and spent a few weeks with us in our studio. He watched each of us closely and saw what makes us tick

as individuals, and who can do what best. It was a real challenge working with him, but he made an unbelievable contribution to our further development.”

On “Tides”, Claire create their own sound world. After the quintet’s band bus, together with all their equipment, was stolen in London during a tour of the UK in September 2014, they set out on a new path with fresh inspiration, replacing software with hardware and digital computers with analogue synthesisers. The result is an organic, warm, edgier soundscape. “Today, we work in a completely different way than when we started out,” keyboardist Nepomuk Heller explains. “We spent a lot of time fiddling about on these old machines. It all takes a lot longer than when you work digitally. But in this way, you are forced to take a lot of time for a song, and to engage with the pieces far more intensively than when the songs are created on the computer. We took the time to allow the songs to mature and develop; we gave them air to breathe. For us, it was important to leave a song to rest for a while before listening to it again ‘with new ears’. As a result, everything now sounds more vibrant and real. In some places, there’s hissing and buzzing. This time, we simply left a lot of mistakes and ancillary noises in, because they create the special character of the album.”

Whether it’s epic and indulgent, as on the first single “End Up Here”, or driving and danceable as with the club-oriented “Friendly Fire” - with “Tides”, Claire have created a unique, dramatic sound aesthetic between stormy dance tunes and score-like mind concept pop, with occasional unusual noisy shoegaze elements over which Josie-Claire Bürkles vocals float, sometimes soul-like and dreamy, sometimes sexy and demanding. The striking mix is also dotted through with experimental tracks such as the funky “Masquerade” with its catchy tune, the weightless, flowing house tune “Drowning” or the exotic-surreal “The Crash”, in which Claire fulfilled a long-term wish and worked with a small children’s choir. An emotional tide change that can be addictive. When it comes to the song themes, everything turns around the constant return of ebb and flow - even if it’s only in metaphorical terms, as singer Josie-Claire Bürkle explains.

“The album title ‘Tides’ is a good way to sum up what the record is all about. We already talked for a long time about the songs in advance, and laid out what subjects were occupying our minds. The first album was still very open in terms of themes. This one is much more personal all round. The songs are often about relationships between people, such as the different stages of love and the states within a relationship that people pass through. They are about the cycle of growth and decline in love,” as the last song “Come Closer” makes clear - a bittersweet uneasy listening ballad about closeness, familiarity and an apparently insurmountable distance. “The decision to put it at the end was based on what we felt. The song rounds off the record beautifully. It’s an extremely emotional song, which breaks out at the end and which shows a completely different side to us. It’s not a classic happy end, but there is some hope and the desire for harmony in there, too. Until the sea of feelings slowly gathers momentum and leads to a new storm surge...”