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# FENDER ALBUM PICK OF THE MONTH: WARPAINT

Written by [Mike Duffy](#) on January 10, 2014

It's been three years since Warpaint has released new material, but this month's self-titled album is a welcome return for the Los Angeles-based quartet.

Originally formed in 2004, *Warpaint* marks a seminal moment for this band. For their first full-length *The Fool* in 2010, Emily Kokal, Theresa Wayman and Jenny Lee Lindberg largely wrote the tracks before drummer Stella Mozgawa came on board just before recording began. But following a tour that lasted two and a half years, Warpaint – this time all four members – spent time in the legendary Joshua Tree to sketch out early demos of what would become their eponymous statement.





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Eventually, they got into the studio with prolific producer Flood (PJ Harvey, U2, Smashing Pumpkins) to work on the majority of songs, with Radiohead collaborator/Atoms for Peace member Nigel Godrich lending a hand by mixing two tracks.

What came out of that process is a masterpiece of lush landscapes that are equally as dour as they are wistful. With Mozgawa in the fold from the start, Warpaint doesn't necessarily reinvent itself, rather, the album is a smart continuation of the mesmerizing music they embraced so well with their debut. Drum machines, dance beats and keys are found regularly throughout the record, but they still stay true to their roots of dark alternative rock.

The first taste fans got of the album was the ambient single "Love Is To Die," which was born out of jam sessions and featured in a Calvin Klein commercial last October. The song is as atmospheric as ever, with Kokal's haunting vocals adding to the brooding dreamscape.

"Love is to die, love is to not die, love is to live," Kokal sings ominously over a driving bassline from Lindberg.

That is followed by "Hi," which according to Kokal is "a really beautiful and dark twist to a very conventional songwriting structure." The dual voices paint a picture that is both bleak and beautiful, atmospheric even, in a way that recalls classic Portishead. Second part seems a bit awkward...not sure entirely of the way you want this to read. I think it could use either , and atmospheric in a way or , atmospheric even,

A different sort of jam arrives with the appropriate disco vibe of "Disco//Very." The dubstep tempo gives it a dancefloor-ready tone that – who knows? – an enterprising DJ might want to remix into a clubby banger.

Later, keyboards and beats are all layered together with "Biggy." Beginning with a slight chick-chick from a shaker, the groove expands as a spare drumline helps the wave build and guitar plucks are finally heard midway through. By the end of "Biggy," the ethereal forest is almost too thick to navigate out from, and only the song's abrupt ending can rouse the listener from their trance.

Fans will have the opportunity to see exactly what went in to *Warpaint* with the eventual release of a documentary titled *Love Is To Die*. The group allowed visionary director Chris Cunningham an all-access pass to film and photograph the two-year process.

Hopefully, Cunningham includes a fun mishap that takes place during the album's two and a half-minute intro, where Mozgawa comes in a little too quickly with her kit and has to apologize.

The goof is quickly laughed off and everyone easily settles in. But one can't help but wonder why they included it on the final product. Perhaps it is a nod to the comfort level the individual artists had in writing material as a foursome.

Call it maturation, but it's clear that Warpaint's sophomore effort solidifies this band's identity.

*For more information, visit Warpaint's [official Facebook page](#).*

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