



“We’d been touring on our last record (2013’s *Wait To Pleasure*) for a while,” recalls No Joy singer-guitarist Jasmine White-Gluz. Returning to her home of Montreal brought with it the ravages of a long absence: the ending of a long-term relationship, close friends leaving town for good, and the imbalances of comfort. “The only thing I could do was write new songs.”

*More Faithful* is No Joy’s third full-length for Mexican Summer, and bears the fruits of a band that redefined its work ethic in the gulf of time between recording sessions. The outcome – the juxtaposition of unrest and calm, beauty and chaos, truth and fantasy, in the throes of dimed amps and hair-whipping guitar goddess rock music – is as unwavering as ever. But where *Wait To Pleasure* balanced textural differences with the freewheeling novelty of the studio environment, *More Faithful* documents a much more rigorous creative process and performance, one in which the group (White-Gluz along with guitarist Laura Lloyd, drummer Garland Hastings, and bassist Michael Farsky, formerly of Dirty Beaches’ live band) pushed themselves to new peaks of intensity. All of the record’s 11 songs, in whole or in part, jump at the listener with atypical tunings and key changes, tension from odd time signatures and an upfront rhythmic presence, and the force demonstrated in their live show.

Circumstances aren’t the only thing different about how *More Faithful* went down. “This was a fully collaborative effort in songwriting between the four of us,” Jasmine explains. “Michael is the newest member of the band, and his approach to songwriting is different than the rest of ours, so there are definitely new elements that weren’t there before.” On their sound, she says, “we wanted to make a record where the hooks are really hooky, but the music around the hooks is more challenging and difficult to make sense of quickly ... where people could listen and pick out new things that they didn’t notice the first time. We also knew that we had to write songs that we could transpose to play live. We’re kind of a scrappy live band, and thinking about how these songs would sound at shows really influenced how we wrote them.”

As for the lyrics, they reflect both the realities of their experience, as well as a decision to bring the band closer to the public as individuals. “The goal was to finally show No Joy as people instead of a band. To us, that means actually showing our faces in photographs, or in the case of the album, putting vocals up front, and lyrics that are more honest in relation to what we’ve experienced,” states Jasmine. “Part of our approach in this band has always been to juxtapose things that don’t often fit well together, whether that’s really sad lyrics for an upbeat song, or poppy qualities paired with super-heavy music. In the case of this record, creating and recording it was a very personal experience for us, so we wanted to have the album expose us a little bit more as people and reveal some vulnerability.”

To aid in this challenge, No Joy again chose to work with producer Jorge



Elbrecht, a member of Coral Cross and Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti, producer of Au Revoir Simone, Travis Bretzer and many more. Recording was split between tracking at Brooklyn studio Gary's Electric, and mixing in an old farmhouse in Costa Rica. "Jorge decided he wanted to go back to Costa Rica before heading out on a long stretch of touring, so that's where we finished the record together. He built a little makeshift studio environment, a semi-circle of chairs in front of speakers and a computer, where we did the mixing, overdubs, and cut vocals for 12 hours a day." Repairing themselves to a much more isolated environment strengthened No Joy's regimented approach to making a record that satisfied their vision. "We were out in the jungle on the side of a mountain in the middle of rain season, so after noon each day it was nothing but torrential storms outside. And there wasn't really anywhere to go or any means to get there. We had no cell reception, and there were no other people around, so we were very isolated during the process. There was nothing for us to focus on except finishing the record, so we pushed ourselves pretty intensely to get everything we wanted in those two weeks."

On these decisions, Jasmine adds, "Through the entire process, there was a level of discomfort that I think we used to our advantage. We were in an environment that matched the tension of everything that informed writing these songs. It was different with *Wait To Pleasure*, we'd never worked in a real studio before, and had a lot of time to just tinker with things. We threw a party in the middle of recording, and we had fun making it, but we didn't prepare ourselves. This time around, every last detail of the record was endlessly discussed, debated, and labored over. *Wait To Pleasure* was our spring break effort, but *More Faithful* is definitely final exams."

Listen to *More Faithful* then listen to it again. There is no question that it's the most forward, throttling record No Joy has made to date, taking their set of influences to the wall in a brazen display of beauty-laced power. At times it's heavier than anything they've done yet, and also their fastest, riffs shooting upward in discord and drifting down in angelic harmonies. Shoegaze and ethereal and alternative rock revivals be damned; *More Faithful* pushes No Joy to the breaking point. They've leveled up.