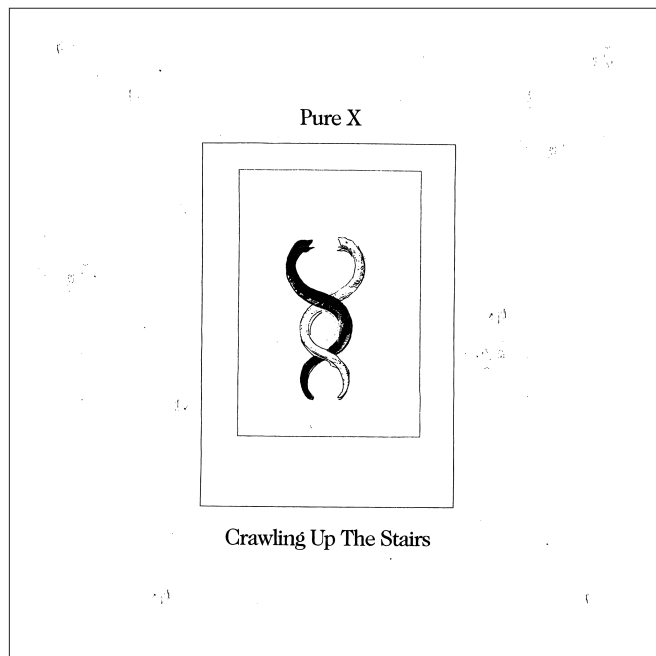


Pure X

Crawling Up The Stairs



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CATALOG: ACE028

ARTIST: Pure X

TITLE: Crawling Up The Stairs

GENRE: Alternative/Rock

STREET DATE: May 14, 2013

FORMAT: CD Digipak & 12" LP

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NON-EXPORTABLE

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Crawling Up The Stairs is the second LP from Austin, Texas' Pure X. Made up of principal members Nate Grace, Jesse Jenkins and Austin Youngblood, they stay true to the dense sound they explored on their last album, *Pleasure*, but add twinkling atmospherics and a new clarity to their carefully cultivated, emotionally heavy songs.

Where *Pleasure* was built on syrup-slow hooks and a weighty, sexy haze, *Crawling Up The Stairs* is the sound of Pure X emerging from that humid cocoon to stare all the screwed up parts of life directly in the face and embrace them. When Grace's voice, cracked and worn, breaks through a fog of downtempo drums and misty guitar on "Someone Else," the pain that used to be visible in his face when he was on stage is pushed to the forefront of their sound, his voice growling and moaning with barely contained anger and apocalyptic worry in anguished falsetto. *Crawling* isn't a record about escape, it's about what you do after you've realized that escaping isn't an option and you just have to face the world you live in head on.

Crawling Up The Stairs is an album born from emotional turmoil. For much of 2012, Grace was laid up with a serious leg injury. During the recording period, he had no insurance, no money, and if he ever was going to walk again, he needed to have surgery. Grace had no idea if he'd get the money together, and was consumed with doubt, unable to sleep. After a cathartic but torturous night of insomnia, heavy with world-worry and intermittent nightmares, Grace emerged feeling exhausted and different. Not better or worse, but *different*. Ready to heal. *Crawling* is the result of that. Track by track, Grace, Youngblood and Jenkins—who shares vocal and songwriting duties—drag themselves through a bad year.

As Grace was wrestling with his own demons, Jenkins' was figuring things out as well. On the gorgeous "Thousand Year Old Child," his falsetto hangs over unusually upbeat drum work from Youngblood and perfectly placed synth wines. It's a tricky song—relaxed and happy on the surface, but lyrically, Jenkins is wrestling with getting older and being uncertain about his future, singing, "there is no reason/ to think about time/ sometimes I feel/ I feel like a thousand year old child." A little later, the kicker comes: "up in the morning/ sleep at night/ there is a question/ what am I doing with my life?" It's a universal feeling rendered personal by Jenkins' heartbreakingly spare lyrics.

But *Crawling* isn't entirely dark. Album closer "All of the Future (All of the Past)" is the record's most optimistic song. As if Grace, Jenkins and Youngblood have finally emerged from an endless parade of bummer moments with newly optimistic perspectives on life. Grace's guitar glistens and glides across Jenkins' thick bass work and Youngblood's expertly controlled drums, but it's Grace's lyrics that end up laying everything out, making clear that there's a redemptive narrative in this record worth coming back to: "I can see the light/just got to stay alive," Grace sings. It might read as desperate, but Grace, for the first time, sounds confident that they'll make it no matter what.



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