

# FRENCH KICKS SWIMMING

After three heralded albums, French Kicks have emerged with *Swimming* - their best album to date and the first French Kicks album to be produced and mixed entirely by the band. The band has always been involved in the production of their albums, but with *Swimming* (Vagrant Records), their fourth full-length, the band felt that they could best capture the raw beauty of the new songs by recording it themselves.

Singer/multi-instrumentalist Nick Stumpf explains, "The result is that it sounds completely like us and automatically unlike any other records you will hear, because the decisions were all made from an artistic standpoint as opposed to a certain idea of how records are supposed to sound," Stumpf says. "We were not so much as asked to compromise on anything we wanted to do, and I think you can hear that in the record. We felt totally free. We were very happy and able to be loose and have fun with it, which is so important to every aspect of the record."

"We were confident that we could capture a consistent feeling and ambiance on this record and we felt sure that the combination of what we knew and what we didn't know would lead us to something that was distinctly our own," adds guitarist/vocalist Josh Wise, who sings lead vocals on "Said So What," "With The Fishes," "Carried Away," and "All Our Weekends." Nick Stumpf sings lead vocals on the remaining eight tracks.

*Swimming* creates a lush environment from the very first notes of its lead track and single, "Abandon." The song is not only one of the band's favorites, but it acts as a declaration for the entire album, establishing a safe house for uninhibited creativity, experimentation and free-flowing spirit. The record's 12 tracks exude a refreshing, unprocessed sound, yet still embody classic French Kicks melody and vigor.

The band's approach of recording all the basic tracks live, (Nick on drums, Lawrence on bass, and Josh on guitar), gives the record its live feeling. "Playing live is the best way to record because you know right away if it's happening," Stumpf says. "You feel it immediately and there is no process of intellectualizing it. Basically, as soon as you become cognitively aware of what you're doing, it starts to suck. It was with that in mind that we made this record. We used first and second takes and generally didn't worry too much about it," Stumpf explains. The mantra was maintained throughout the process, "There are many overdub parts that were completely improvised, where someone would have an idea and go do it once and that's what you hear on the record."

"I think the way we worked allowed us to preserve a lot more spontaneity and casual creativity than we had on previous recordings, and those are kind of intangible elements that really make you feel drawn to a piece of music and into a mood," Wise muses. "Sometimes the trappings of the recording studio and the record-making process tend to erase those nuances that, in the end, are the things you most want to preserve."

The French Kicks have been creating intelligent pop music for close to a decade now, reinventing themselves, refining their craft, and exploring new territory with every new release. "Playing music is something we love to do, says Stumpf. "Even when the things surrounding it can be extremely hard, what keeps us going is perpetually exploring possibilities with music, and the gratification we feel when everything comes out right, as it did on this record."

Song By Song Performance Credits Available Upon Request

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