

Immersion

Sleepless is at once a logical development from Analogue Creatures and a huge leap forwards. Although the influence of German krautrock pioneers like Tangerine Dream and Popal Vuh is still detectable, Immersion have evolved their own far more personal sound. Their amalgam of fascinating textures and limpid melodies gives their compositions an irresistible appeal.

While warmly percolating analogue synths remain at the heart of Immersion's sound, *Sleepless* finds their sonic palette broadened to encompass guitars, drums and bass. There's a guest appearance from Matt Schulz of Holy Fuck, too, and a collaboration with Gil Luz and Asi Weitz of EBM band Hexenschuss. For a duo who once titled an album Low Impact, this is most definitely Immersion in high-impact mode!

Album opener '*Microclimate*' is a bright, optimistic composition with shades of Ulrich Schnauss in its thoughtful, melodic flow. '*Off Grid*' kicks off with the infectious sound of a four-string tenor guitar, but it's soon joined by flickering synth-lines and one of Spigel's characteristically spacious bass-lines. In fact, Spigel's bass work throughout the album may be the finest she's ever committed to tape.

Just as you think you might be getting the measure of the album, the title track opens with a richly melancholic brass arrangement. But this is then eclipsed by an Eastern sounding melody and strangely circling guitar line. Like all Immersion's best work, it's simultaneously mysterious and emotionally engaging.

'*Propulsoid*' has the kind of urgent electro-glide that might suggest Moon Duo or Suicide, but the core melody is unmistakably Immersion. The strict yet fluid drum pattern comes courtesy of Matt Schultz of Holy Fuck, who provides the track with a strong motorik drive.

'*Manic Toys*' is another distinctly up-tempo track, which comes across as a weird deep-space hoe-down, while '*Seeing is Believing*' begins with dark synth tones suggesting we might be listening to the soundtrack to an early 1970s dystopian sci-fi film. But as the piece evolves, there is something of the bucolic splendour of Boards of Canada to be heard in the cycling rhythm and rich drones. Album closer '*Io*' sees several looping celebratory melodies overlaid to create a mesh of sound that is elegiac and uplifting.

Sleepless is widescreen music – lush, detailed and smartly executed. In short, Immersion have produced an album that politely but firmly demands your attention.