

Holler My Dear

Das neue Album: *Steady As She Goes*

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Disco-Folk with groove and spirit

The first song of the new album already makes clear where Holler My Dear's musical journey is heading to this time. *Steady As She Goes* signalizes confidence, courage and movement. The international band from Berlin knows: when the shadows in the world grow longer lamenting doesn't help, but optimistic determination does. Accordingly, the music sounds like a soundtrack for a confident departure, for courageously swimming against the tide. Of course there are also pensive moments and quiet ballads. But overall, the pleasure of cheerfully dancing out of line prevails, inspired by music that sounds uplifting and elevating. Wonderful melodic arcs, catchy hooks, triumphant choirs and infecting grooves are topped off by Laura Winkler's captivating vocals, changing between soul, pop, and jazz. They convey good-humored resistance, dispel sadness with subtle wit and exude a lightness that never turns into carelessness. This is inextricably linked to clever song lyrics, which clothe reflections about the way of the world in direct, cunning or poetic words.

Holler My Dear's second album *Eat, Drink & Be Merry* three years ago was already celebrated for its unusual, largely acoustic sound, in which trumpet, accordion and mandolin step out of their traditions to create something new. Laura Winkler's enormously versatile singing and her optimistically worded thoughtfulness left an even longer lasting impression. "Every piece unstopably heads for a hymnal climax and in its fervent core shines Winkler's masterful vocal art," Rondo wrote. The magazine *Folker* praised that "progressive music can also be made without electronic effects," and Andreas Fellner from *Ö1* diagnosed the "music as an anti-depressant". Others highlight the "artful pop attitude" (*Mica - Music Austria*) or the boundlessness of the music.

The internationality of the sound lies in the genes of the sextet. Laura Winkler, born 1988 in Graz, studied voice and composition in the conservatory there, and moved to Berlin in September 2011. Several years earlier, the drummer Elena Shams and accordionist Valentin Butt came to the German capital from Russia, independently from one another. Lucas Dietrich originally comes from Vorarlberg and lived in Paris for three years, trumpeter Stephen Molchanski previously played in London with a hip-hop band and with the *Alternative Dubstep Orchestra*. Fabian Koppri from Brandenburg had the shortest way to Berlin. The band came together in the winter of 2011/12. Recently they added another Briton, the singer/songwriter Ben Barritt, who joins the band for live shows from time to time and was now also featured in the production of the new album. All personalities bring their own distinct musical backgrounds. Molchanski's trumpet sounds like New Orleans jazz or Vaudeville drunkenness, in addition he raps skillfully ironically. The accordion awakes memories of Balkan or French musette, even though Butt's playing is so well versed and multifaceted, that he has already worked for the Berlin Philharmonics and various theatres. Elena Shams drums disco beats with audible enjoyment and reveals her passion for detailed, playful patterns. As a self-declared *Steely Dan* fan, Barritt is an expert for second voice harmonies and focused entries, such as striking funk or other guitar riffs.

As the center of force and gravity, Laura Winkler's splendid singing floats above everything. As lively as ever and in certain colors even more confident, her spectrum ranges from slightly dreamy, atmospheric moments to gospel-like expressiveness. In between there are rhythmic phrasing, rapidly spoken lines and jubilant boosts. Her irresistible enthusiasm always conjures a smile on the audience's faces.

Laura Winkler is the main composer and songwriter of the band; her subtle humor protects even profound passages from too much melancholy. On *Steady As She Goes* Winkler has become more straightforward than before, also musically, but especially in the lyrics. Nonetheless, the songs are still full of detail. "I love it, when an album works like a movie, novel or journey and you just can't stop and always want to listen on. Therefore I already gave thought to how the individual pieces go together harmonically and in what order they should be on the CD while composing them. It was also my aim to structure the songs airier, because the band will make them more dense later anyway." Some facets, like stylistic elements and metaphors, appear multiple times over the course of the album. "We created certain sounds for terms like 'water' or 'storm'," Winkler explains, "furthermore, there are recurring themes in the lyrics." First and foremost, there is her stated plea for candor, pluralism and humanity, as well as explicit rejection of exclusion, fear mongering and absolute calculation. Laura Winkler also displays diversity in a personal manner in "Little By Little", where she openly sings about queer topics. And Winkler poetically addresses absurdities of today's electronic communication in "Orchid Song". "We want to speak to our audience and tell them how we see things and what really gets to us," Winkler says.

Many international concert tours in the past years have brought the band even closer together. Experiences like in Mexico City, "where several thousand spectators were hopping around at our show," were impressions that influenced the new songs, just like the ones in Iran and Kazakhstan, Japan, Korea, or Estonia. "In Teheran we were always approached; the people absolutely wanted to exchange views." The band is all the more excited about their first Malaysia tour in the beginning of December, where they are also performing at the Penang Island Jazz Festival.

Under the impact of tour experiences, *Holler My Dear* are playing with dynamics even more purposefully and sprinkle some contemporary electronic vignettes in between their distinctive acoustic sounds. When *Holler My Dear* think of disco, they primarily mean those classics like Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" from a time when disco still had a societal relevance aside from glamor and hedonism, and conveyed a solidary attitude towards life. "The idea, to animate people even more strongly to dance, does not mean giving up the filigree aspects of our music," Laura Winkler emphasizes.

There is a clear message inherent in the album's title *Steady As She Goes*: "Keeping the ship on course" does not necessarily mean straight stability, but rather cutting one's way, possibly swaying and shaky, through high waves. "One has to be flexible, because the only thing consistent is change. In doing so, we think of 'Don't Panic' from *The Hitchhikers Guide To The Galaxy*," Laura Winkler grins. "Changes are part of our life and we stay in motion." It is precisely this attitude that makes *Holler My Dear's* *Steady As She Goes* a very special pop record, on which lightness and depth, passion and grandeur are soaring.

Laura Winkler is available for interviews in Berlin.

Tourdaten:

08.02.2018 Berlin / Kantine am Berghain prä.s. v. XJazz	22.03.2018 AT-Wien / Akkordeonfestival Wien
10.02.2018 Dresden / Jazzclub Tonne	23.03.2018 AT-Heidenreichstein / Nordic Grooves
13.02.2018 Bremen / Lagerhaus prä.s. v. Radio Bremen	04.04.2018 AT-Wien / Porgy & Bess Doppelkonzert
14.02.2018 Duisburg / Spelunken Spektakel	05.04.2018 AT-Graz / Orpheum Extra
15.02.2018 Frankfurt / Brotfabrik	06.04.2018 SI-Ljubljana / Jazzclub Prulček
16.02.2018 Hamburg / Birdland	07.04.2018 AT-Salzburg / Jazzit / Doppelkonzert
17.02.2018 Magdeburg / Volksbad Buckau	19.05.2018 Villigst / Studienwerk e.V.
19.02.2018 Leipzig / die naTo	15.06.2018 Weimar / Mon Ami
20.02.2018 München / Jazzclub Unterfahrt	16.06.2018 Klein Trebbow / Hofkonzerte
21.02.2018 Nürnberg / MUZclub	24.06.2018 AT-Feldkirch / Musik in der Pforte
22.02.2018 Karlsruhe / Kulturzentrum Tempel	05.10.2018 AT-Hallein / Kulturforum
23.02.2018 Stuttgart / Kulturzentrum Merlin	06.10.2018 AT-Zwettl / Synchron
24.02.2018 Gilching / Rathauskonzerte	

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