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TINA DICO (DNK/ISL)

Album: FASTLAND

Label: CNTCT Recordings

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Web: [tinadico.com](http://tinadico.com)

EPK: [irascible.ch/releases/tina-dico/fastland](http://irascible.ch/releases/tina-dico/fastland)

More rhythm, more self-reflection, intense as always and on top of her game at the most successful point of her career to date, the Danish singer-songwriter Tina Dico is ready to conquer new frontiers. Her modus operandi: “an adventure rather than a routine”. And her new album captures that brilliantly: it is brave, daring and above all, wonderful.

A few months back, as Tina was getting ready to write a new album, she expected the music to come naturally, as usual. The Reykjavik-based Danish musician’s successful solo career had already spanned 17 years, with ten album releases along the way. Now, it was time for the eleventh, and Tina got to work. She grabbed her guitar and started playing, looking for ideas, melodies, songs. But what came? Nothing. “The guitar didn’t speak all of a sudden. It gave me nothing new”, she says. It came as a shock; Tina and her guitar had always had an insanely close relationship. “Whatever I tried, every idea that I developed, it didn’t feel relevant. I wrote song fragments, and although they sounded good objectively, to me, they didn’t reflect where I was at.”

Tina heard alarm bells ring. If new tracks sound alright, but don’t carry any meaning for the musician who plays them, then that’s routine, that’s business as usual. And for this singer-songwriter, that isn’t an option. Tina’s fans love her for the unique urgency and intimacy of her music. “I needed to get that urgency back, so I changed everything. I sat behind some drums and played some beats. I unpacked some old keyboards and tried out weird sounds. I pulled on my bass guitar and came up with new rhythms.” And suddenly it came, as if the instruments had shattered the writer’s block. “I wrote new songs and re-arranged a few old ideas, and step-by-step, I had a new album.”

FASTLAND is the new album, coming four years after WHISPERS, the album that took her to the top spot in the Danish charts for the fifth time. Shortly before Christmas 2017, Tina played an already legendary concert in Hamburg’s new Elbphilharmonie, performing acoustic versions of

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songs from her breakthrough album *COUNT TO TEN* so intimately that, even in the huge hall, you could almost hear a pin drop. In May she gave Frederik, the Crown Prince of Denmark, a birthday serenade: A performance of 'Adams House', a song written for the occasion, and watched by over 12,500 spectators in Copenhagen's Royal Arena, as well as 1,4 million TV viewers. It's all going well for Tina, but *FASTLAND* still feels like a departure to pastures new.

Just to calm the fans, your favourite singer isn't whacking out drum solos or heavy electro pop. The first song on the album, 'Not Even Close', starts with Tina's dark, tantalising voice and her urgent guitar playing. 45 seconds later, a rhythm starts and takes the song into its very own direction, far into a darker realm, then lightens up with Tina's voice. Folk Noir! The second track, 'Devil's Door', was originally meant to be a guitar ballad about the mistakes we make in life. "I played the first version back and I thought 'Not bad', but does this vibe fit me, does it fit my life?" Tina, who turns 41 in autumn, has three children, a fantastic career, loyal fans, and in Helgi Jónsson not only a husband, but a producer and a creative partner in crime. "We completely re-arranged the track", she says. Now, 'Devil's Door', with its great soul bassline, no longer sounds sad, but defiant. "I've never been so reckless before / I've never been so close to breaking the law / Knock, knock, knocking on the Devil's door." Another song, 'Parked Car', also began life as a guitar piece, but developed into an atmospheric, hymn, once again sung beautifully by Tina Dico and with a fantastic finale. "Helgi is a master at layering voices, and we used his skills at the end of 'Parked Car'". An entire choir of 'Tina Dicos' repeats "For all eternity" and finally disappears into the ether. The protagonist of 'Night Out' is the same as in an older song, 'Friend In A Bar'. "I was intrigued to know how she was feeling after all these years", says Tina. The track is a wake-up call for a woman who's afraid of going out, and as one of the places she could go to would be a disco, it's only fitting that the soul-pop piece 'Night Out' is a track you could dance to.

Tina chose *FASTLAND* as a title for her album - a word that in both Danish and Icelandic (and less known in English) means "mainland". Other artists tend to give their album a name that sounds good, or that fits a marketing strategy. Tina's albums always have a personal ideology behind them. "Music is my *FASTLAND* but the title is also a comment on the modern world, a world where everything is liquid; always in motion, always in development." - "I used to be fastland / Now I'm a movement", sings Tina Dico in 'Not Even Close'. "I'm old enough that I didn't have a mobile phone when I was a teenager. I was un-contactable during the day. Today it's unthinkable. We're always within reach, always in communication with the world around us. We never stop. We never go back to our own "mainland" to be alone with ourselves for a bit. Not that this is all a bad thing - Tina isn't a pessimist about modern culture. She might question today's materialism and consum-

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erism in the soul-pop track ‘Fancy’, but: “I still love this chaotic adventure. However, I’m very aware that in this fluid world I need to take care to keep a solid foothold. A ‘mainland’.”

This mainland is her family. And this mainland is music. “Music has given me a foothold since childhood, for whenever times get tough”, she says. Tina could spend hours telling you about the musicians that inspired her as a young girl in Denmark, the most important being Tracy Chapman – “a woman who, back then, I knew nothing about, but her songs felt intimate to me, as if they were letters from my best friend.” The last track on FASTLAND is therefore ‘Something I Can Keep’, a wonderful ode to music: “There’s a song for every age you’ve been through / It will always be the same, it will always be with you.”

Tina Dico is often reminded that she has written a heap of songs that mean the world to her fans. “It’s a wonderful and incomparable feeling”, is how she describes it. But it’s also a mission: Never fall to routine, never let it become business as usual. FASTLAND impressively proves that Tina Dico takes her mission seriously. The result: this singer-songwriter has never sounded so self-assured or emphatic. FASTLAND is an adventure with a happy ending.

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