



# The Progressive Aspect



CD Reviews

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## Janet Feder – THISCLOSE

Article by: [Jez Rowden](#)

From Denver, Colorado, this is different.

Janet Feder plays guitar and sings. Nothing unusual there perhaps but she does it in a particularly unusual way. *THISCLOSE* is Janet's fifth album having started out with folk and rock before finding her own unique voice. More intimate than any of her previous releases, the sensitive nature of the recording sessions attempts to allow the listener into Janet's three dimensional space of guitar and found sounds to give a particularly emotional experience. And it does sound good, the sparsity of the notes shimmering amid the well placed augmentations.

For the bulk of the album the voice takes a sidestep to allow other sonic discoveries to come to the fore as Janet often "manipulates" the instruments rather than simply playing them. She doesn't use pedals but changes the colour of her sound via the strings and by placing a range of small objects onto them to alter the textures, opening up the sonic palette, as discussed in the video below. Working closely with her production team of Joe Shepard and Mike Yach, Janet has invented a sound world where her songs can live and breath, where anything is possible within an environment of enthused experimentation.

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# Janet Feder: THISCLOSE (EPK)



## Dworniak Bone Lapsa – Home

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Of the nine tracks, three have vocals, Janet's voice being very pleasant and particularly suited to the sparseness of the songs, as on *Crows* where it has an "underwater" quality within a backdrop of echoed sounds that often verge on howling. It's a great opener, the listener immediately drawn in by the depth of the production. *Ticking Time Bomb* changes tack by adding banjo, the beautifully clear vocal supported by clarinet and accordion in an almost hollow sound that allows the air to get in. Towards the end the mood changes as the tranquillity is shattered, the space filled with dissonant smashing. *Angles & Exits* is beautifully melancholic with Janet's fragile voice the focal point. Just gorgeous and one of my favourite tracks on a spellbinding album.

This individually feminine approach to the guitar is both fascinating and refreshing in a world of powerhouse playing and otherworldly dexterity. The sounds produced are there to be listened to, not to form a backdrop to other activities, and this is what Janet is seeking; like-minded souls who enjoy both the making of sounds and listening to the results. Janet says of *THISCLOSE*:-

*"Even though it sounds like me, it's something beyond...and it also feels like an arrival at the culmination of, well, everything that got me here. Previous albums felt like they happened in my head; THISCLOSE feels like it emerged from somewhere between my head and my heart. I've never made more intimate music. It's OK by me however it lands for my listeners. I played what I wanted to hear, because I could hear myself more clearly than I was ever able to in the past. And I played what I wanted to play because....I could."*

The central part of the album acts as a loose suite of seemingly connected pieces, snatches of melody appearing within a swirl of disjointed sounds, some minute, some more forthright, the whole thing is a fascinating listen. *Happy Everyday, Me* has more of a folk feel, a strident guitar melody supported by piano with small extraneous sounds filling the gaps. Sustained and textured electric guitar, percussion and sporadic acoustic guitar colour *No Apology*, think Ry Cooder's *Paris, Texas* and wide open spaces under a burning sun. Chords are left to evaporate in *Happy Everyday, You* suggesting the vast sweep of a seemingly endless plain, before a picked melody line takes its place. Lifting guitar manifests *You As Part Of A Whole*, percussion giving the sensation of a light breeze through a tree decorated with small metallic objects.

The last two tracks are by far the longest here; a symphony of disembodied sounds and filigree melodies to relax the listener. *She Sleeps With The Sky* moves through movements in a quiet landscape with only the weather for company, a breathy wind distorting the stillness before an unexpected and urgent guitar part changes the direction. A pause and then the 10-minute title track, unsettling percussive sounds gradually emerging with sporadic guitar chords surfing over them. It gets angrier and more aggressive but eases into a hypnotic state with the perpetual rhythmic rattle that inhabits the piece. And then it stops. Distant echoes, distorted piano rumbles, a sound collage. The most disturbing piece on the album, not much happens – but it happens in a majestic way. A brave way to finish.

The attention to detail within this album is extraordinary, all credit to Joe Shepard and Mike Yach, and of course to Janet Feder who is another artist of rare individual talent that I am glad to have had the opportunity to hear.

Well worth investigating for quiet and intimate listening during those relaxed moments. It isn't exciting and singalong but it is most certainly enthralling and completely absorbing.

### TRACK LISTING

01. Crows (4:55)
02. Ticking Time Bomb (4:07)
03. Happy Everyday, Me (2:56)
04. No Apology (3:31)
05. Happy Everyday, You (2:50)
06. You As Part Of A Whole (4:59)
07. Angles & Exits (5:41)
08. She Sleeps With The Sky (7:02)
09. THISCLOSE (10:33)

Total time - 47:34

### MUSICIANS

Janet Feder - Baritone Guitars, Electric Guitar, Banjo, Voice, Plucked Piano, Prepared Hammer Dulcimer, Sounds

~ with:

Todd Bilsborough - Percussion (tracks 4 & 6)

Kal Cahoon - Backing Vocal, Accordion (tracks 1 & 2)

Marc Dalio - Percussion (track 1)

Elaine DiFalco - Accordion (track 7)

Mike Fitzmaurice - Double Bass, Bass Harmonica (track 2)

Paul Fowler - Piano (inside & out), Voice (tracks 3, 6 & 8)

Mark Harris - Bass Clarinet (track 2)

Amy Shelley - Percussion (track 9)

Joe Shepard - Studio Door (tracks 1 & 8)

Mike Yach - Electric Guitar, Bass, Cymbaled Spring (tracks 1, 4 & 9)



## THISCLOSE

Janet Feder



1. Crows

00:00  04:55

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1. [Crows](#) 04:55
2. [Ticking Time Bomb](#) 04:07
3. [Happy Everyday, Me](#) 02:56
4. [No Apology](#) 03:31
5. [Happy Everyday, You](#) 02:50
6. [You As Part Of A Whole](#) 04:59
7. [Angles & Exits](#) 05:41
8. [She Sleeps With The Sky](#) 07:02
9. [THISCLOSE](#) 10:33

### ADDITIONAL INFO

Record Label: Independent

Catalogue#: n/a

Year Of Release: 2015

Produced by: Joe Shepard with Mike Yach and Janet Feder

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