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Empathy for the Apathy: Plike's film-noir EP

 [August 15, 2015](#)  [Valerie Polichar](#)

A tinkle of music-box bells and an eerie sample: “Strange, children... they never forget.” Thus begins **Plike**’s EP *Empathetic Apathy* – its first track, “Attachment Theory,” an intoxicating brew of vocal samples, arcing string sounds and delicate electronica: a horror movie encapsulated in a song.

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That ability to blend the delicate with the

disturbing is a hallmark of *Empathetic Apathy*. **Plike** members Em and ASH select vocals with care to create their desired effects; vocalists sampled on the EP include Veela, Cory Friesenhan, Lokka and Maryam. Em produces, plays keyboards, and mixes; ASH crafts the audio engineering and mastering; the two work together to compose, arrange and sequence these articulate, engrossing pieces.

Despite the brevity of the album, **Plike** manages a coherent sound yet doesn't get lost in stylistic ruts. Where "Diffidence" evokes classic '90s electronica and shimmering shoegaze, "Tripped Script" powerfully crosses a throbbing dubstep bassline with a Middle Eastern vocal sound. "The Clockwork Girl" has a science-fiction undertone ("conditioned via machines... imitations," a low whisper warns), ghostly echoes and a shaken-sheet-metal bass, inducing a hollow, falling-through-space sensation in the listener. "Lessons in Futility" weaves characteristic sounds from the preceding tracks — gauzy vocals, dubstep rhythms, cold-war-style samples ("The bomb might explode without any warning. Duck!") — with distressing back-alley screams, culminating in an explosion and the sinister conclusion: "You're on your own."



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There's
a lot of



excellent indie electronica available these days, making it harder for a band to elevate their sound above the pack or distinguish their message. On this haunting EP, **Plike** (the name is a contraction of Em and her sister's childhood game of "pretend like," appropriate to *Empathetic Apathy's* film-noir cinematic narrative) seems to have found the recipe. We'll be listening for more from this Austin, Texas duo.

Unappreciated Scholars Review Grade: A

Empathetic Apathy is available on [iTunes](#) and [Bandcamp](#); tracks can also be streamed on [Soundcloud](#). Follow Plike on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/plikeproject>. Visit the official website at <http://www.plikemusic.com/>

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