

ATWOOD MAGAZINE

THIS JUST IN: JOYWAVE'S "CONTENT" IS A CREEPY, DOUBLE- EDGED SWORD



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Rochester, New York-based band Joywave love questions.

In 2014, the indie rockers released their sophomore EP titled *How Do You Feel?*, and one year later, they inquired once again, this time in the form of their first full-length *How Do You Feel Now?* ([Cultco Music/Hollywood Records](#)). Asking twice was necessary for Joywave, and reasonably so - the relationship between the older, four-track *HDYF?* and its lengthier, younger partner resemble that of two close-knit siblings who are similar, yet at odds with each other. In this weirdly fitting example of personified records, the debut LP is the bratty, polished little kid who shares similar aspirations with his big brother, but is capable of doing, and excelling at, more. With the addition of six all-new tracks, a lush revamp of 2011's single "[Traveling at the Speed of Light](#)," and a beckoning three-letter word, Joywave - a quintet of ingenious parents - turned their modest indie pop project into *How Do You Feel Now?*, an indietronica triumph hosting a tracklist of balance and sonic diversity, along with inventive production from Daniel Armbruster (vocals) and Sean Donnelly (bass).

Listen & Watch: "Content" - Joywave



An outsider could easily believe that Joywave's debut album was a satisfying product for not only its audience, but also its architects. So as the question, "How do you feel now?" continues to linger until the name of a sophomore effort is revealed, then the band's latest single "Content" seems to provide a temporary answer for an enduring query - at least, it would if Joywave weren't as playfully deceiving as they've made themselves to be (last year they marketed and released an entire fake album with a tracklist that read "Why be credible when you can be incredible?").

*I'm searching for the difference between
What content and content could bring
Maybe they're no different 'cause they look the same
Maybe I'm just an algorithm with a given name
Trying to find the difference*

If connected to the group's previous work, the title of this new single defines an emotion, but content is one of the English lexicon's double-edged swords that Armbruster deliberates (*I'm searching for the difference between what content and content could bring / Maybe they're no different 'cause they look the same*) and through the perspective of a meditative narrator, it's calculatedly difficult to pinpoint the exact meaning of "Content."



Content - Joywave

Unable to categorize Armbruster's lyrics or resolve his personal pursuit of differentiation, listeners are susceptible to a similar curiosity: How often does content collide with content, material with satisfaction? Words on this track may be far apart and few, but their chilling repetition is a drill to the brain, even as Armbruster's singing is sterilized with the kind of polished vocal effects that frequent Joywave tracks, from 2012's "Anemone" to "Life in a Bubble I Blew" in 2016. Donnelley and Armbruster have mastered the art of producing in moderation - in this post-77777 (the band's 2011 mixtape) era, each second of each cut seems purposeful, whether saturated or silent.



In a comparable sense, vocal modulations always define Joywave's soundscape, and the group continually succeeds at establishing contrasting tones with the same handful of well-executed signature moves. "Content" exemplifies this success, even with its lyrics creeping between the heavy distortion of drums and haunting keyboards - a recipe that elicits a feeling of possible crisis, especially as Armbruster's final "trying to find the difference" becomes a warped cry, tunneling into an alternative universe of silence where the split between *content* and *content* may not even exist.

:: [Listen to Joywave's "Content" here](#) ::