

Jobi Riccio knows that while a quiet heart-to-heart can solve many problems, sometimes the heart needs a giant, all-caps billboard, especially when the world around that massive sign gets louder by the day. As each new track on her new album *Face the Feeling* (due May 15th via Yep Roc Records) unveils, Riccio faces another inescapable emotion as if it were a billboard screaming into view as she hurtles down the highway. And rather than turn away from their challenge, Riccio faces those uncomfortable moments with the thrill of self-discovery, reveling in growth and change as facts of life.

Throughout *Face the Feeling*, Riccio finds masterful balance between extremes, indulging in the light and the dark, the subtle and the direct, the ecstatic highs and the mournful lows. “You have to chase what moves you, what’s exciting you,” the Nashville-via-Colorado musician says. For Riccio’s sublime debut album, *Whiplash*, that meant exploring growing up and coming of age, hoping to find a route away from chaos and pain. On the follow-up, she courageously wades into the uncomfortability and luxuriates in the catharsis—finding a remarkable strength in leaning into the power of change rather than resisting it.

In addition to the shifting inspiration, Riccio reaches beyond folk and country to find a new, more electric path through emotionally unguarded terrain. By merging the introspective storytelling of Americana with the restless pulse of indie rock, she reaches a deeper strength than those filling her already impressive résumé. Those heights include Riccio having received the John Prine Songwriters Fellowship Award at the Newport Folk Festival, earned an Americana Honors & Awards Nomination for Emerging Artist of the Year, dazzled at the legendary Grand Ole Opry, and having made her national TV debut on *CBS Saturday*. She’s toured with legends and icons including Lucius, Jason Isbell, and Iron & Wine. And yet despite those accolades and achievements, *Face the Feeling* pushes out to even more adventurous boundaries.

The journey of self-discovery is exemplified in lead single “The Ridge.” “When I play the song, I picture a very specific ridge I used to go walking on in fall growing up,” she explains. “The crows and magpies, scrub oak and deer, communing with them always helped me figure out how I was feeling.” Buoyed by Dom Billet’s snappy drums and Paul Defilglia’s limber bass, Riccio’s lyrics test the line between loneliness and self-reliance as sweetly as her Telecaster tones.

When she wasn’t out hiking through the scenic wilderness of her native Colorado, Riccio’s life was powered by music. Country, bluegrass, and folk songwriters like John Prine and Joni Mitchell held particular sway, bolstered by the likes of The Chicks and Nickel Creek on local radio—not to mention her sister’s CD collection and hours spent on the family computer poring over music blogs featuring the likes of The Killers and The Strokes. “I didn’t know how to express it in my music quite yet, but I’ve

always had a massive breadth of interests and inspirations,” Riccio says. “Country and folk were big influences but I always loved indie rock too.”

And where “The Ridge” finds solace in reflection, “Buzzkill” utilizes some of that depth to kick open the door to self-acceptance. A cathartic jolt of distortion, the track features a gruffer delivery somewhere between Courtney Barnett’s deadpan and Waxahatchee’s full-throated twang for a musical quarter-life reckoning and a defiant reclamation of agency. “I don’t want to be the guy at the party/ Who makes you sorry/ You decided to go,” she sings, fighting against the all-too-prevalent instinct to wallow in struggle.

*Face the Feeling* builds from the collaborative blueprint of *Whiplash*, Riccio teamed again with co-producers Jesse Timm and Isaiah Beard. “I feel so lucky to have found Jesse and Isaiah, two of my closest friends who know me very well and share my excitement,” she says. And while those relationships remained constants, Riccio credits the album’s newfound strength to the interpersonal change that occurred since *Whiplash*. “I did a lot of growing,” she says. “It was an excavation of self and undoing of a lot of people-pleasing. Especially as a femme person, that is baked into my socialization from the day I was born, and this album represents remembering the core of who I am.”

The silvery “Love of the Song” works as a particularly powerful memento on that journey. Written as she relocated to Nashville, the track stares down the fear of fitting into a “cool kid crowd” and finding her own place. The moonlit twang of “Pilar, NM” gives Riccio space to explore extreme honesty and finding strength to do the things you love even when they’re difficult. “I’ve always been a pretty open book,” she explains. “But allowing myself to be challenged and learning the power of letting go was a big part of developing this album.”

The slow-burning “Doesn’t Matter” closes *Face the Feeling* with a blissful confidence and clarity. “Go give ‘em hell/ Go make ‘em mad/ Go give it everything that you have/ And don’t look back,” she avows, thunderous drums pounding each empowering word into place. The track originated from a songwriting lesson Riccio took with Margaret Glaspy, an experience which helped Riccio face her own imposter syndrome. “The song is a reminder that life doesn’t just happen in our heads and there’s room for all of us,” she says.

Album opener “A Little at a Time” feels like embracing the listener as they enter Riccio’s trademark blend of vulnerability and strength. The pain of distance rings out on the track over swaying guitar lines and a rich tapestry of harmonies, strings, and splashing cymbals. On the exquisite “Wildfire Season,” tracked the day after the second Trump election, Riccio’s rugged growl bounds against concussive snare and

distorted guitar for a track fueled by rage and grief at the still-worsening climate crisis. “Leaders of our country and the ruling class are actively working to cover up the fact that a crisis is happening at all, despite the lived reality of haze-choked skies we have begun to experience nationally as records break and waters rise,” Riccio explains. The song proved a perfect call to action when Riccio performed at the Rally for Public Lands at the Colorado State Capitol, empowering attendees and those around the world to fight for environmental justice.

Through it all, the release at the end of *Face the Feeling* represents Riccio’s personal journey of growth—but also very clearly invites listeners along for the quest. “I wanted to task myself with facing the good, bad, and ugly feelings - and to create a place for others to do the same,” she explains. The resulting record acts as a call to arms, a celebration of self, even when the noise of the world threatens to drown you out.