

# DARKUS

2020 Showcase Series



saint clair

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## 2020 Showcase Series *saint clair*

### *Editors Message*

It always feels like a breath of fresh air when you come across an artist who takes their passion of music and uses it as a foundation to build something intimate, powerful and special unlike anything you have heard or seen before. So when our friends over at Halestorm PR dropped me a message to tell me about the multi-talented musician Saint Clair, to say that I was excited would be an understatement.

Known also as Emma Toploski, which will no doubt ring a bell to many, especially if you are Bombay Bicycle Club or CHILDCARE fan, 2020 marks a very important year for Saint Clair which does not only include her next EP, in the violet hour, but also sees her showing us all what she has to offer as a singer-songwriter.

It is with great pleasure therefore we use this showcase edition to celebrate the evolution and continued growth of one of the UK music scenes extraordinary female artists – the one and only Saint Clair.

*Thushara X x X*



**Editor in Chief:** Thushara S. Chandrasiri

**Thank You To** Saint Clair

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Front Cover Photography By: Sorrel Higgins





Photo By Sorrel Higgins



# In Conversation With saint clair

**Over the past number of month's singer song writer, Emma Toploski better known as Saint Clair has been embracing all levels of creativity, in the lead up to the release of her 3rd EP, in the violet hour, which is due for release later this year. Having already launched the first part of her campaign in the form of her latest single, goddess, there are already clear signs of her incredible potential to make 2020 a strong year and leaving music fans excited for more.**

**Having previously released D1 and D2, this new chapter in her journey sees her evolution as an artist take on heights. Therefore with so much to discuss we were honoured to have the opportunity to speak to the lady herself to find out more about the steps ahead.**



Photo By Tam Topolski





**A huge welcome to you, what has been keeping you smiling these past few weeks?**

Thanks for having me! Releasing goddess, chapter 01 of my new 4-part visual EP in the violet hour was an amazingly liberating experience. We shot 4 music videos in as many days and poured so much love and time into them that it felt great to finally share what we've made with the world.

**Later this year you will be releasing your EP 'in the violet hour' – how do you feel it has pushed you as a musician both sonically and lyrically too?**

Having a long-form project with a narrative arc really helped consolidate my vision for this EP and pushed for a coherence you seldom get with singles. Telling such a painful and personal story about grief and loss was the most challenging thing about this project.

**The first taste people will get from the EP will be goddess, which also has a powerful video to accompany it. When people first hear and watch it, what is the best way to embrace it?**

Our intention with the EP is for it to be an immersive, visual experience so I would always recommend watching the video first. However, people take so many different things from music depending on their mood or environment so any interpretation or connection is as valid as the next.

**When you are addressing such important issues such as the various stages of grief how have you found it being able to navigate through those raw emotions we sometimes associate with the feeling and balancing it by coming in the opposite spirit with hope and strength?**

Grief is a very turbulent and discombobulating experience. In my experience, you never recover from your loss and although the pain always persists in various guises, there comes a time when you accept a new reality and move away from actively grieving. Each chapter of the visual EP, which is directed by my sister following the loss of our dad, explores many of these feelings; acceptance and hope for the future emerges slowly in chapter 04.

**What was quite fascinating to hear was that the EP will be broken down into 4 chapters, all different in their own way, but also intertwined into the overall story. What were some of the elements of life and influence that helped you to visualise how you would shape the EP in that style?**

Once I put the collection of songs together, I knew I wanted to create independent stand-alone videos that told their own story but that could also be woven into the fabric of a wider narrative arc. The idea was to transport people on a journey through grief and loss following the loss of my dad, but it wasn't until my sister came on board to direct, that we developed a proper through-line for our protagonist. The videos will be released online in chapters, but we will be screening the full film alongside the release of the EP in November.

*"I think creating a long-form concept that takes people on an ongoing, intricate journey rather than releasing individual singles has helped sharpen my creative ideas and how I communicate them"*

**EP aside you also have a very rich history in music from being a singer in Bombay Bicycle Club and bassist for CHILDCARE. What has that transition been like going from being part of a band to celebrating your own identity as Saint Clair and vice versa?**

I joined Bombay Bicycle Club at the beginning of this year and used to play for Laura Marling and Ghostpoet amongst others. Although I find juggling multiple projects inspiring and challenging and I love playing other people's music, I've always wanted to release my own stuff too. Saint Clair is a way for me to have a musical and visual identity and provides a vehicle for me to channel my ideas. Unlike with CHILDCARE where I have 3 other people to bounce off and validate what we're doing, being a solo artist (especially an independent one) can be lonely and riddled with self-doubt. On the plus side, I have total creative freedom and control!

**Tell us a little bit about your personal relationship with music, has it always been that constant friend who knows your heart but is also not afraid to keep you on your toes?**

I've always been very drawn to both playing and listening to music but it's quite a strange existence to be at once innately passionate about something and also reliant on it for work and financial security - it can take some of the magic out of it! My relationship with music changes frequently and I guess it's important to try and capture that romantic, almost childlike passion and reckless abandon I had when I first started discovering sounds and scenes. If ever I'm feeling jaded, I usually just step away and find inspiration elsewhere in podcasts, books or films...

**It should be noted that in the violet hour is much more than an EP and music – there are other exciting elements to it such as art, film and photography. From your experience have there been any eye-opening moments which have left you pleasantly surprised about your own levels of creativity?**

We wanted to make the EP as immersive as possible and create an inextricable link between the visuals and the music. We were working entirely independently, and I co-produced the whole project so learned a huge amount about putting together the right team from finding the perfect DOP and gaffer to the costume designer and art director, editors and graders etc.

We shot 4 videos in as many days which is a very ambitious task and yet every single creative involved in this shoot believed passionately in what we were trying to achieve and brought their wealth of skills and talent to the table to make it happen. I also had a unique opportunity to delve into new disciplines like dance and acting thanks to incredible choreographer Jos Baker who directed all my movement and my actor/director sister Tam Topolski, both of whom helped me deliver what I hope is an authentic performance.

**If we fast-forward to where we are in 2020 and where you see yourself currently in your personal journey how do you feel you have grown in confidence compared to say when you released the previous EP's D1 and D2?**

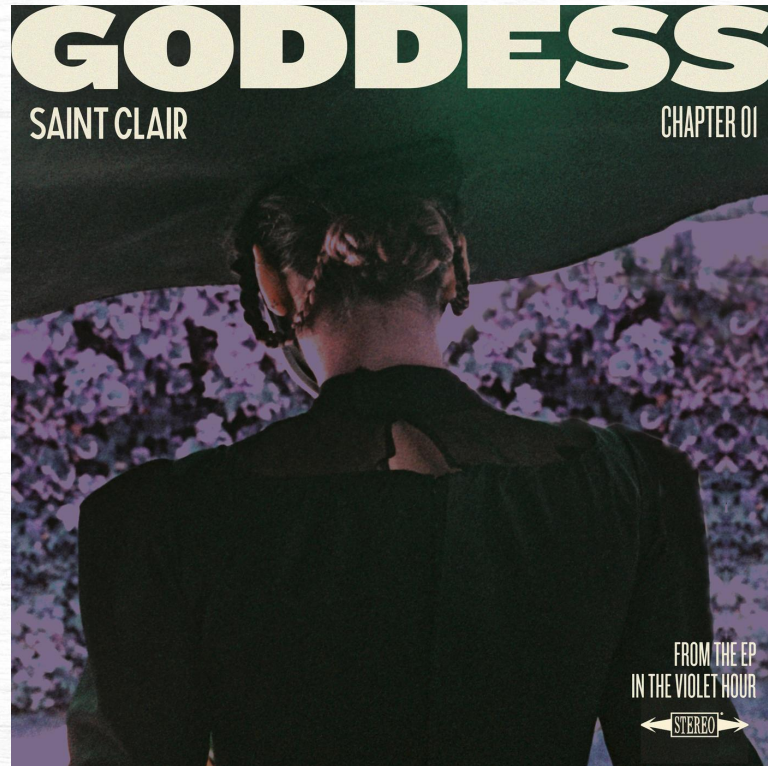
I think creating a long-form concept that takes people on an ongoing, intricate journey rather than releasing individual singles has helped sharpen my creative ideas and how I communicate them. I've also found working closely with family and friends and people I really trust has given me the confidence to retreat into the creative process and explore more ambitious ideas, especially such a deeply personal and painful subject-matter like grief.

**As it gets closer and closer to the release of 'in the violet hour' in November what is that one thing that you are most grateful and excited for that is leaving you with that feeling of constant butterflies in your stomach?**

I'm just excited to reveal the next 3 chapters and continue sharing the journey. Chapter 02, violet hour, will be out on Thursday 13th August.



# saint clair



## 'goddess' Music Video & Single Released 9th July 2020

Having been working on her EP, *in the violet hour*, which is due for release this November, Saint Clair gave us a slice of just some of the remarkable vibes we can expect with the introduction of her latest single and music video *goddess*. Known for her connections with Bombay Bicycle Club and also CHILDCARE, this latest track sees her step out in the light embracing her own vision as a singer-songwriter.

If you have watched the music video yourself, you will probably agree me when I say how breath taking and captivating it was to watch. Taking on the theme of heart break and the type of grief we can often feel, Saint Clair tackles the powerful emotion and transforms into something quite delicate and special.

Like me if you are the type of music fans that looks for connection and depth, then *goddess* ticks all the boxes because you will feel that not only are you experiencing a stunning piece of music but it is as though Saint Clair is speaking to your mind bringing a refreshing edge of gentleness and calm.

What makes this song even more special is that the beauty is enhanced even more by the music video itself, which also gives us all a flavour of Saint Clair's vision, to not just make this a song, but a piece of creative art, thus making *goddess* radiate textures and layers of a sonic masterpiece.

Although this may be only the first instalment from *in the violet hour*, having the opportunity to experience it myself, has made me all the more intrigued to hear what the rest of the EP sounds like when it is released in a few months' time. If *goddess* has left me mesmerised, then I have a feeling that the rest of the EP will be just as powerful and mind blowing.

In the meantime however if you want to see what it means to take a passion and relationship for music to a whole new level, then check out the track right now because it serves as a testimony how Saint Clair will be one of those artists you definitely need to keep your eye on in months to come.

Article By Thushara





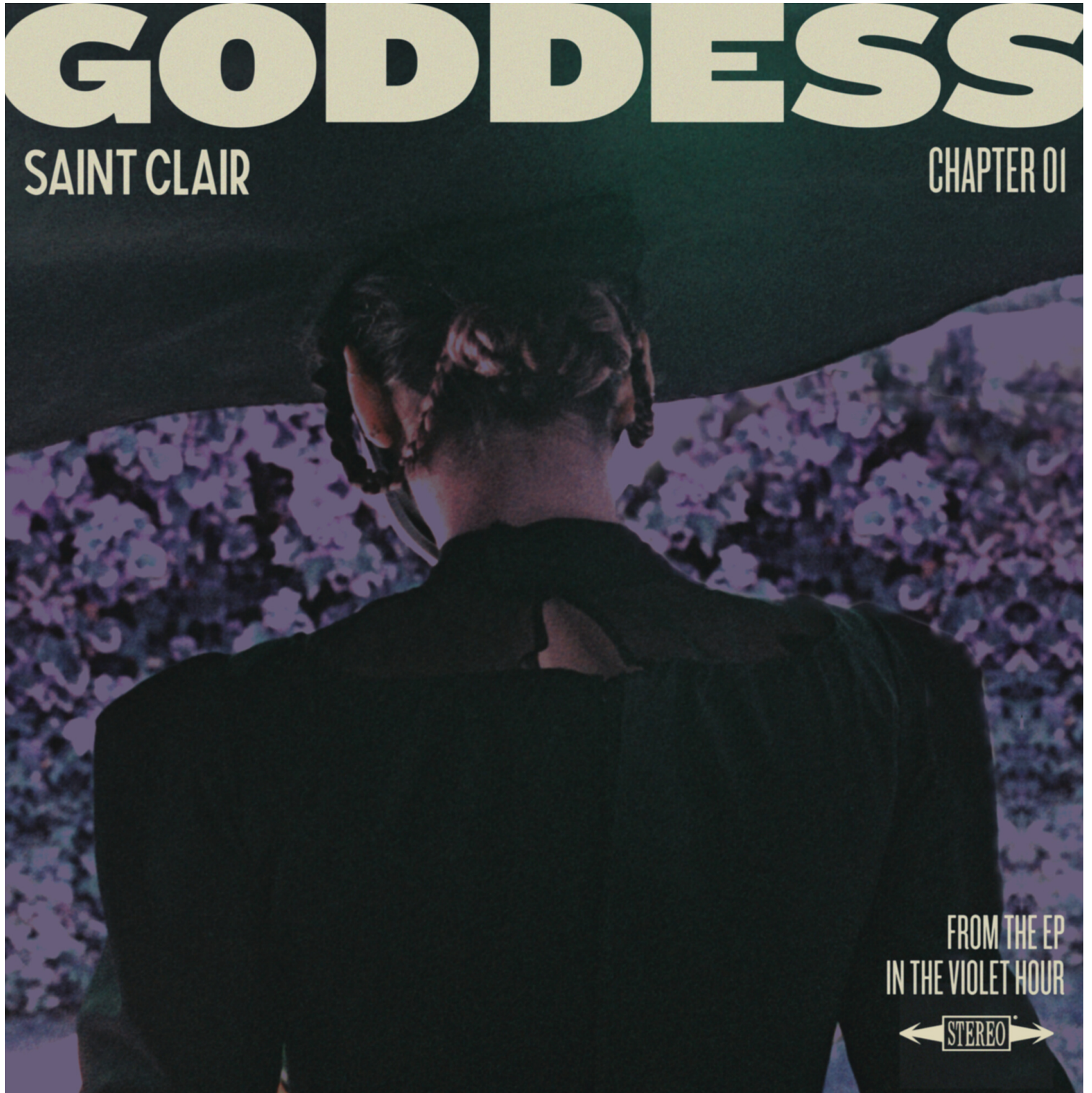


Photo By Flore Diamant



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Artwork by Ross Stirling, photo by Flore Diamant