



PHEW, ERIKA KOBAYASHI, DIETER MOEBIUS RADIUM GIRLS

8. AUGUST 2025
CD / LP / DIGITAL



Im Schatten der nuklearen Katastrophe von Fukushima im Jahr 2011 fanden sich die japanische Musikerin Phew, die Künstlerin Erika Kobayashi und der deutsche Elektronik-Pionier Dieter Moebius (Cluster, Harmonia) zu einem außergewöhnlichen Projekt zusammen. Gemeinsam entwickelten sie das Konzeptalbum „Radium Girls 2011“, das sie 2012 unter dem Projektnamen Project UNDARK veröffentlichten – 114 Jahre nach der Entdeckung des Radiums durch Marie und Pierre Curie. Das Album ist den sogenannten Radium Girls gewidmet, Fabrikarbeiterinnen in den USA der 1920er Jahre, die Ziffernblätter mit radioaktiver Leuchtfarbe bemalten und schwere gesundheitliche Schäden durch Radiumvergiftungen erlitten. Anlässlich des 80. Jahrestags der Atombombenabwürfe auf Hiroshima und Nagasaki macht das Label Bureau B „Radium Girls“ wieder zugänglich – erstmals auch auf Vinyl.

The work is dedicated to the Radium Girls.

The album was originally released under the title „Radium Girls 2011“ by Project UNDARK.

Project UNDARK is:

The radium, glowing in the dark, also called „fairy’s light“ by Marie Curie.

114 years after Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium in Paris, France, we are now here in Tokyo, Japan, in 2012. Phew and Erika Kobayashi dedicate this project to the Radium Girls and everyone who has been affected by this „light.“

—Phew & Erika Kobayashi, 2012

"First, there was music.

Moebius suggested making an album together and sent me a CD-R. Initially, it was supposed to be a Moebius & Phew production. I think this was in late 2010, but I'm not sure.

Then, in 2011, the earthquake and nuclear accident in Japan happened.

When I had tea with Erika Kobayashi, she told me about the Radium Girls, and that's when I came up with the idea of making a concept album. Erika and I then wrote the lyrics for Moebius' tracks.

The song order is the same as on the first CD-R he sent me.

The music tracks were recorded at Moebius Studios, while the vocals were recorded and mixed in Japan.“

—Phew, 2025

The Radium Girls were female factory workers who unknowingly suffered radiation poisoning while painting watch dials with glow-in-the-dark paint at the United States Radium Factory in Orange, New Jersey, around 1917. A group of five affected women later took their employer to court, setting a legal precedent that granted workers the right to sue companies for illnesses caused by hazardous working conditions. Between 1917 and 1926, the U.S. Radium Corporation—previously named the Radium Luminous Material Corporation—specialized in extracting and refining radium from carnotite ore to manufacture glow-in-the-dark paint, marketed as „Undark.“ As a supplier for the military, the company produced radioluminescent watches and other instruments. The New Jersey factory employed over a hundred workers, primarily women, to apply the radium-based paint, unaware of the serious health dangers associated with it. In total, around 4,000 workers across the United States and Canada were hired to paint watch dials with radium. Many later suffered from severe health problems due to radiation exposure, though the exact number of fatalities remains uncertain.

TRACKLIST

- A1 Radium Girls
- A2 Evelyn
- A3 Tracy
- A4 Marie
- A5 Helena
- A6 Anna
- B1 Manhattan Project
- B2 Little Boy and Fat Man
- B3 Katherine
- B4 Argonne National Laboratory
- B5 EBR-1
- B6 Radium226

BB485

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