

# CHLOE LILAC

When she was 13-years-old, Brooklyn native **Chloe Lilac** started sneaking out of her apartment late at night, grabbing her mom's vintage guitar and hopping on the subway to busk on the streets of Manhattan. Now 17, the singer/songwriter has spent the past few years writing and self-producing songs that capture all the weirdness and wonder of growing up in New York City, embedding each track with her lavishly detailed storytelling. On her debut EP ***Manic Pixie Dream (RCA)***, Chloe sets her reflective lyrics to an idiosyncratic breed of bedroom-pop, channeling both raw vulnerability and a quietly powerful presence.

Along with embodying her sweetly hazy yet hook-heavy sound, the title track to *Manic Pixie Dream* shows the soft defiance at the heart of Chloe's songwriting. "When I was younger I felt like the Manic Pixie Dream Girl trope was so prominent," she says. "I was getting really frustrated with people wanting me to be that way instead of a real, multi-dimensional person, so I decided to write a song about it."

Throughout *Manic Pixie Dream*, Chloe transforms the most precise and private of emotions into songs nearly cinematic in scope. On the EP-opening "Summer"—a track that's now amassed over 3 million streams on Spotify—she threads her epic summertime-in-New York fable with flashes of brilliantly off-kilter poetry (e.g., "James Dean on a fucking Citi Bike"). A #1 hit on Hype Machine's Popular chart, "Stolen Liquor" brings sleepy beats and dreamy slide-guitar tones to her story of sneaking out to Prospect Park Lake with a boy and a bottle of wine. The sparse and soulful piano ballad "Jesus" examines her past experience with getting lost in drugs ("Jesus couldn't love me even if he tried"), while "Again" merges its jagged textures with lyrics telegraphing the raw intensity of a toxic friendship ("You make me wanna die/But I still love you, darling"). One of the most cutting tracks on *Manic Pixie Dream*, the gorgeously stark "Heartbreak City" confronts the destructiveness of hookup culture. And on "Sneakers," with its tender country lilt and aching vocal delivery, Chloe recounts the very specific heartbreak of buying Nike Air Force 1s to impress your crush, then still having to wear the shoes once he's passed you over.

Growing up in Wyckoff Heights, Chloe first developed her distinct songwriting voice as a little kid, partly influenced by her parents' musical tastes. "My dad's a really big rock guy, so he only let me listen to, like, Talking Heads and Frank Zappa when I was younger—mainstream pop wasn't allowed," she says. By age seven Chloe had taken up piano and guitar, and at age 10 started stealing her parents' laptop and teaching herself music production. Naming Childish Gambino among her main inspirations ("I love how he's so self-made and kind of an outcast, and very hands-on with his production"), she

soon began writing three songs a day and later moved on to her middle-of-the-night busking routine. “I’d been putting stuff out on SoundCloud since I was 12 but no one was listening to it, so I started sneaking out and playing on the street every night,” she says. “Then in school I’d be so sleep-deprived, and I’d put my earbuds in and produce songs in the middle of class. I did that for about six months, and finally the school caught on and kicked me out.”

Arriving in March 2017, Chloe’s woozy and hypnotic single “Reckless” broke the Top 5 on the U.S. Viral 50 on Spotify, and also charted globally. As she continued turning out new material, she steadily gained acclaim from outlets like Earmilk, who praised her “smooth vocals that evoke shades of a young Fiona Apple.” By the end of 2018, Chloe had landed a deal with RCA Records, as well as toured with such artists as Charlotte Lawrence. “It was kind of punk rock—people would come to see these big musicians and then this little-ass kid would just walk out onstage with her iPad,” she recalls. “Now I’ve got a band with me for the live show, so it feels a lot more official.”

As she looks back on the making of *Manic Pixie Dream*, Chloe points out that she’s found a certain power in creating such confessional music. “Everything I write is like my diary,” she says. “When I first started sharing my more personal songs it was really scary; I think I had a panic attack when I put out ‘Stolen Liquor.’ But then I learned that people are going to interpret your music however they want, and that’s the beautiful thing about it. You’re never going to get anywhere or have anything good happen if you don’t just put your heart out there like that.”