

CHLOE LILAC

Back when Brooklyn-born **Chloe Lilac** was still interested in being a normal teenager, she would roll into first period straight from a night out on the Manhattan busking circuit. “I’d be in class with my Bluetooth headphones and my computer, doing production on Garageband” she recalls. Her mind would be elsewhere, replaying a slideshow of scenes from the night before standing at sunrise with her guitar in Union Square, or playing in front of Soho House at 2 a.m. because “I heard Drake hung out there.”

Chloe has packed a lot of disaffected rebellion and subsequent creative redemption into her 18 years. She comes by her punk rock spirit honestly. “I was raised on Frank Zappa, the Talking Heads and Bowie,” the singer says. She describes her childhood home, with her architect father and journalist mother, as a kind of urban bohemia. “My dad was always in bands and he was a rock snob” she remembers. So, it’s only recently that Chloe Lilac has seen herself as part of New York rock’s never ending story. Growing up she was a huge fan of pop music, a style that was “forbidden” in her home. “The first pop song I ever heard was ‘Ain’t No Other Man’ by Christina Aguilera when I was 6 and that changed my life,” she says. “I heard the like ‘heeeeyyyy’ and I was like that’s what I want to do. That’s fucking *it*.”

Chloe Lilac was born and initially raised in Brooklyn Heights, but she and her family didn’t stick around. In middle school they moved to Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn, where she felt a more artistic/creative vibe in the neighborhood. By seven Chloe had started playing piano and guitar and in third grade was in a Joan Jett cover band with her friend. “I became a ho for pop” she recalls, laughing. “Everything on the radio sounded amazing because it was totally new to me.”

Trying to sort out where her art fit between Marina and the Diamonds that she loved and David Bowie that ran through her blood, led the singer to radio-ready but off-beat artists like Lily Allen and Lorde as well as, of course, Childish Gambino, who remains her gold standard influence. “*Because the Internet* is literally my favorite album of all time,” she says. “I love how he’s so self-made and kind of an outcast, and very hands-on with his production.”

Making music was organic for her. In her mid teens, she was writing a song a day and releasing a new song each week on Soundcloud. Her woozy, lusty anthem “Summer,” racked up more than 10 million streams on Spotify, and her previous self-released single “Stolen Liquor,” a haunted ode to earnest bad decision hit #1 on Hype Machine.

Chloe then signed with RCA Records last year and released her debut EP *Manic Pixie Dream*, receiving comparisons to Fiona Apple and Lorde. She started to develop a following from her touring and SXSW performances. *PAPER* praised her for “shattering perceptions of damsels in distress,” and *Refinery 29* said she was so talented they “could barely stand it.”

As Chloe Lilac prepares to release her sophomore EP entitled *DOUCHEBAG*, it’s that tension between the sleek, willful sincerity of pop music and the disaffected anger at the heart of punk that has become her signature. She is sending out diffusely enraged pop dispatches, sonic

messages in a bottle from a member of a generation coming of age during unprecedented uncertainty, polarization, and pain. “I want people to feel less alone,” Chloe Lilac says. “But really I just want them to have fun. We are in such a dark time right now and everyone wants to be so serious, but there’s something to be said about having a good fucking time, man.”

With *DOUCHEBAG*, she finally feels what’s coming out of her creatively expresses anything like the full range of who Chloe Lilac is. “When I made *Manic Pixie Dream*, I felt a bit unsure of who I was as a person,” says Chloe. “That was probably the hardest time for me. I had gone through all this shit in high school where I was an addict and then I was sober and I had my first real physical relationship and it was pretty bad. I wasn’t in school so I felt kind of stupid. Then, I signed to a major label and I had all this pressure from all these adults. I was like, I didn’t know who I was as a person and now I need to figure out who I am as an artist.”

When Chloe sat down to start writing music for her new EP, the experience was centering and she felt her growth as a young woman and artist. “Performing the new songs on tour gave me a sense of newfound confidence and connection with my audience and fans which was so empowering.”

After wrapping her tour with Tessa Violet, Chloe wrote “Moderation,” a wry banger about the anguished joy of self-anesthetization (“all this time I’ve been telling everyone I’m fine somewhere in between ecstasy and suicide”). “Obvious” also featured on the EP is a wrenching slow-burn piano near-ballad about wanting so badly to be wanted. And the brutal “Here’s Your Song” is a charred, rocked-up take on Carly Simon’s eternal “You’re So Vain” theme. The kiss-off pop-punk ode to a worthless ex, “Douchebag,” presents as one of the most playful songs on this collection of sad anthems. “It’s really about me just sticking it to that motherfucker,” the singer says, laughing. But it also serves as a gateway to the EP’s larger theme. “As a young woman I’m so conditioned to just take what men give me and thank them for it,” Chloe Lilac says. “These songs are about empowering myself and my listeners to give them strength to manifest confidence. It’s for myself and for them. It’s both.”

As Chloe looks ahead to putting these tracks out into the world, watching them make their way into others’ lives, she’s feeling a new and somewhat unfamiliar series of emotions: peace and ... excitement about the future. “I think this EP is about me really – I know this is cliché – but about me discovering myself as a young woman and coming into who I really am,” she says, smiling. “Like, at this point I’m the most myself I’ve ever been, and that is such a huge accomplishment.”