**Chloe Moriondo**

***oyster***

When Chloe Moriondo began work on her new album, she was thinking about open water. Time off from writing and touring after some challenging personal circumstances had given the singer-songwriter space to “think about what I wanted to make,” she says. Immediately, she realized: “It was time for me to go to the ocean.”

She meant that metaphorically, of course, and poured all her oceanic energy into *oyster*, a dynamic and heartfelt exploration of lost love, self-knowledge, and the journey towards adulthood—on her own terms. On her previous albums, Moriondo employed a range of styles, from understated ukulele tunes (*Rabbit Hearted.*) to mischievous pop-punk (*Blood Bunny*), leveling up from a YouTube darling to a critically-acclaimed indie-pop singer beloved for her raw honesty and eclectic approach. On 2022’s *SUCKERPUNCH*, Moriondo pursued a bold new direction: an audacious, glossy pop sound that was both uninhibited and thoughtfully crafted*. oyster*—written in the aftermath of turbulent life changes and assembled with a close-knit team of cowriters and producers including Jonah Summerfield (Holly Humberstone, Tommy Lefroy), Chloe Kraemer (The Japanese House), AfterHrs, and more—finds Moriondo pulling from all her musical palettes, from earnest balladry to explosive hyperpop, from cathartic pop-punk to sparkling indie-pop, to craft a sound all her own. On *oyster*, she delves into the depths of heartbreak and catalogs the process of surfacing braver, wiser, and ready to dive back in.

Following the success of *SUCKERPUNCH*, Moriondo “went through a pretty intense breakup—the biggest one I've ever gone through,” she says. “I really never thought that my heart could hurt that bad for that long.” The relationship was a creative partnership as well as a romantic one, and the separation left Moriondo’s head spinning. She had just moved out of her parents’ home and was now alone, living by herself for the first time—“sitting with some awful feelings,” she concedes. “I felt so lost and alone and almost didn't feel like I knew myself,” she says. “It was like I had to figure out who I was again.”

Over and over in *oyster*’s lyrics, Moriondo processes this grief: “*I thought my heart belonged to you, and only you/And now I’m not sure what to do with it,*” she confesses on “Pond.” On “Shoreline,” she sings, “*It was so hard to know where to go without you/And it shows how I grow/There’s a space at the root*,” her voice sweet and forlorn over gently pulsing synths. Like many of the songs on *oyster*, its production is meant to evoke the album’s aquatic theme. “The little drones in the chorus remind me of sitting by a lighthouse,” she explains, “hearing ships pass by, but just waiting.”

But true to Moriondo’s spirit, the record isn’t entirely bleak; threaded throughout are flashes of light and the idiosyncratic, offbeat impulses that Moriondo has long used to balance out life’s darkness. “Hate It” is a delightfully creepy track, where Moriondo muses about what it’d be like to wear a stranger’s face to bed, or to “*slip it over my head and rob a bank*.” As it sways and seethes with an envious swagger, the song “encapsulates all the feelings of jealousy, hatred, and obsession that can come with a crush on someone unattainable,” Moriondo explains, “or yearning for a life that feels unattainable.” On “7 Seas,” she sings about infatuation over bubbly production that melts like cotton candy on your crush’s tongue. And “Sinking,” a contemplative track about the long road to healing, finds Moriondo admitting, “*I feel more free now that I’m without you*,” as producer tomcbumpz’s skittering beats and whirring synths seem to echo out from beneath the waves.

Moriondo knew she wanted to name her album “oyster” before she even began working on it. “I felt really reflective—like I was in my own little bubble at the bottom of the sea when I started this album,” she explains. “So it felt natural to make it sound like it’s underwater.” Moriondo is the youngest of three siblings, and she says her mother sought out raw oysters—a food that’s usually considered off-limits during pregnancy—immediately after each of her children was born. “So I always think of myself as a little oyster baby,” Moriondo jokes.

As the album progresses, its propulsive percussion and heartbreak anthems give way to shimmering synths and moments of introspection, landing on the spare and moving closer “Siren Calling.” “We go through all these journeys, all these big waves—some emotional ones, some exciting ones,” Moriondo explains of the album’s arc, “and then slowly you settle down there, where it is a little sad, but it's reflective and beautiful at the same time.”

Like a tide coming in and slowly receding, the album ends on a peaceful note—if not totally healed from heartbreak, at least aware of the path forward. Despite its dark themes, Moriondo considers it a hopeful record, because it gave her time to focus on herself and to write through the pain. “I love being able to make music, and that's the core of me,” she says. “It felt really good to connect with that again and remember that I'm doing this for me and not for a relationship.” *oyster* is proof that Moriondo’s musical core is unshakeable—like a lighthouse’s beam shining into the night, guiding her back to herself.