

BLOOM

Bloom - *The Light We Chase* (2025)

Pure Noise Records

Album Biography - Long

By Tiana Speter

Steeped in emotion, nostalgia and experimentation, album #2 for Sydney melodic hardcore collective **Bloom** vigorously cleaves together the group's past, present and future, relishing in self-reflection and searing musicianship and ultimately facing the darkness with open arms. A significantly personal and musically diverse collection of songs, it's fitting that this brand new chapter for **Bloom** captures them in an entirely new light. Enter: ***The Light We Chase***.

Following the release of their debut full length album, the conceptual 2024 masterpiece *Maybe In Another Life*, the journey to crafting **Bloom**'s sophomore full-length, ***The Light We Chase*** (due out in 2025 via **Pure Noise Records**), found vocalist **Jono Hawkey**, guitarists **Jarod McLaren** and **Oliver Butler**, bassist **Andrew Martin**, and drummer **Jack Van Vliet** adopting multi-faceted change, including starting and finishing the entire album in the space of a few short weeks.

"All of the work for *The Light We Chase* started in January this year," shares vocalist **Jono Hawkey**, "and it was definitely a significantly shorter process than our previous album which took a year and a half from start to finish."

"The concept for *The Light We Chase* actually came to us as a collective while we were on tour and talking about where we grew up," **Hawkey** continues. "A lot of the album is referencing Belrose, we all went to school together there and have a lot of similar memories about that time. We knew that we wanted to write an album that was almost an ode to that sort of nostalgia from that specific conversation we had. And we then made the songs work around that concept."

It's these fundamental themes of nostalgia, longing and the disappointment often associated with expectations that vigorously beat at the core of ***The Light We Chase***, with a thematic and stylistic sentimentality amplified throughout the album's 11 tracks. And while art very much imitated life for **Bloom**'s sophomore outing, drawing on real-world relationship breakdowns, struggles with trust, and wrestling with hopelessness, the group also boldly embraced uncharted sonic terrain alongside producer **Sam Bassal** (Ocean Grove, Void Of Vision, Thornhill).

"We were more confident this time around," says **Hawkey**, "and it was the first time we'd worked with another producer. We'd previously done the same process with the same person ever since we did *Cold* in 2019. We just wanted to try something different this time, and we knew that we'd still get a product that we love."

"There was no structure with the recording process with Sam the first time we did it," adds drummer **Jack Van Vliet**, "so we had a lot more time playing around with other sounds. And because Sam in Ocean Grove is a real nu metal guy with a 90s kind of aesthetic, there were different ideas that none of us had really done before that all came in pretty naturally."

"Sammy's catchphrase became: put some swag on it," **Hawkey** continues, "which is a great summation of his style of music. That's definitely stuck around, and even when I listen back to the album now I'm like: oh yeah, this has got that Sammy nu metal, Fred Durst, snapback feeling to it!"

"It's not a Limp Bizkit record or anything like that," **Van Vliet** laughs. "But there are little bits that kind of made their way in there."

Marking **Bloom**'s first full-length release with **Pure Noise Records** after inking a deal with the label in 2024, work for ***The Light We Chase*** spanned 24 recording days in total, including 14 days recording in



January, touring Australia with Newcastle punks Trophy Eyes, touring with Silverstein in Europe, followed by their first ever headline performances in Japan, and a final 10 days in the studio returning down under; a workload that, as both **Hawkey** and **Van Vliet** agree, lent a level of unexpected and organic authenticity.

“This was the most emotionally heightened recording we’ve ever done,” **Hawkey** reveals, “and there was a level of exhaustion because we were putting so much out there, recording and touring internationally all at the same time. I think you can hear that in a couple of songs on the album, especially lyrically. You can really feel this sensation of pushing and chasing after this dream, and that voice of self doubt seeping in. Looking back on it now that it’s been a few months since that whole process, it’s cool to see the time capsule of a frantic four to five months.”

“Diamonds are made under pressure,” adds **Van Vliet**, “and there was so much pressure surrounding even just the timeline for this album. But there was also so much fluidity at the same time. Everything felt like it came logically and naturally after the next thing, even though we had a short timeline. I don’t know if one informed the other, but I think it made a lot of the songs more interesting in a way that there was that exhaustion while we were making it. All of your guards are down when you’re so tired, and you’re like: “I don’t need to put up a front here, I can just say what I mean”. And maybe that wouldn’t have happened if it was more of a drawn-out process.”

With a solidified concept tethered alongside a deviation into more autumnal colour palettes and aesthetics beyond traditional metalcore tropes, **The Light We Chase** also unlocked yet another path not previously travelled by **Bloom** in the form of credited guest vocals, bringing together a stalwart lineup of features from homegrown heroes (**Void Of Vision’s Jack Bergin** and **Yours Truly’s Mikaila Delgado**) through to international icons (**Movements’ Patrick Miranda**). But despite the many changes made along the way, one key process in **Bloom’s** creative arsenal remained during the album’s early days, with the group once again penning lyrics simultaneously as the actual songs were being written. “*We’ve done it for pretty much every Bloom release,*” explains **Hawkey**, “*and whatever is present at the time channels into it.*”

The Light We Chase sets its tone instantly with a reverb-soaked soundscape awash with yearning, dramatic crescendos, and powerful instrumental progressions on opening track **Belrose**, also named for the group’s shared childhood stomping ground. From here, the record weaves between thunderous ruminations on fear and the present day (**Forget Me Not**), ferocious stadium-ready anthems (**Out Of Reach**), and a hazy dreamscape coated with shoegaze, grunge and dreampop via **Keep You**, also featuring the raw and engaging stylings of **Movements’** frontman **Patrick Miranda**.

“**Keep You** is our radio banger,” laughs **Van Vliet**. “I think it’s one of the catchiest songs we’ve ever made. It’s awesome, and it’s really nice to listen to. And I don’t know if it’s also because the lyrics relate to the area that we grew up in but it also feels like the most “Australian” song we’ve ever made. It kind of feels like a Silverchair song or something like that, it’s got that grunge, garage rock undertone and it’s really nostalgic. That’s something we haven’t really done before.”

“It ties in really well to the concept of the album being based on childhood and growing up,” **Hawkey** adds. “There’s a lot of name drops of streets and places and ex’s cars parked out the front. There’s a nostalgic sweetness to it.”

Further into **The Light We Chase**, **Bloom** snapshots romanticising the past and the reality of loss (**Glen Street**), before the album’s dazzling epicentre appears in the agile, turbulent and thematically surging track **Life Moves On Without Us** (“*a title track in every way but the title itself, outlining the main struggle of the album,*” shares **Van Vliet** of the latter). And from here, the album’s second half commences with the aptly titled **Act II**, balancing themes of envy, raw delivery and a lightning bolt climax, joined by **Void Of Vision’s Jack Bergin** to bring the track to a guttural close. And from here, we welcome one of the most soul-wrenching moments on the album – and also the heaviest **Bloom** song to date – with **Withered**.

“Lyrically, **Withered** is quite vulnerable,” **Van Vliet** shares, “so it’s nice to have that with the heaviest song we’ve ever done.”

“There’s a couple of songs that peel back the curtain about the band,” adds **Hawkey**, “and **Withered** is quite literally about being in a band and the sacrifices you make. We’ve made it for someone who may



be a fan of the band but doesn't know a lot about it all. It may be a bit jarring because we're essentially saying: was my dream worthless? Have I put all of my time and energy into something that is just going to fizzle out and die? We've written a lot of emotional songs in the past, but I don't think we've ever written them about the band itself. It's kind of meta in a way, and a bit of a peek behind the scenes."

"We're an emotional metalcore band, a melodic hardcore band," **Van Vliet** continues, "so it felt natural to be like: this is the thing that's important to me right now. Everything that *Withered* is about is so relevant to us as a band, so we decided that we should have a song about it."

Nodding to earlier **Bloom** works on *Only Sky*, reminiscent of *Carve Yourself Into My Lungs* and *Past Tense*, the album's penultimate track *Tongue Tied* carries **Bloom** into elegant sonic terrain, with acoustic tenderness and a transcendent duet between **Jarod McLaren** and **Yours Truly** vocalist **Mikaila Delgado**. And last but certainly not least, *The Light We Chase* closes on *Show Me Who I Am*, featuring **Bloom** shapeshifting between alt-rock riffs, mesmerising harmonies, grunge elements and an outro that burrows into your soul.

Renowned for their open-veined take on the melodic hardcore realms since forming back in 2017, **Bloom**'s ability to balance catharsis with rage, despair and full-blown bangers has seen them recently tick off performances alongside Silverstein in Europe earlier this year, Chelsea Grin and Currents down under, their debut Japanese headline shows (with Tokyo entirely sold out), Miss May I, Polaris, Make Them Suffer in 2024, and a completely sold out headline tour for earlier single *The Works Of You*. In 2023, **Bloom** ticked off an appearance at Good Things Festival, supporting Bad Omens and Thornhill with Holding Absence, with their live performance equally renowned to be as potent as their commanding releases. And with their status as bona fide headliners and international drawcards undoubtedly set to ricochet to even greater heights alongside the release of *The Light We Chase*, **Bloom**'s trajectory in the past 18 months alone has seen them eclipse the lofty career goals way back at the beginning.

"When we were practicing for the first time eight years ago at JMC, we had a whiteboard and we put all of our goals up on it of what we wanted to achieve," shares **Van Vliet**. "At the very top was: tour overseas, play UNIFY festival, and be signed to Pure Noise. Those were our biggest, most far-reaching goals that we could have had - and in the last year or so we did all of them. And interestingly, that all also kind of ties into the themes of the album as well, having the goals and achieving them and being like: what now?"

"All of that did bleed into the record in a way too because that inner child, that band just starting out eight years ago - we've kind of done what we initially wanted to do," **Hawkey** adds. "We're definitely not satisfied or ready to hang it up or phone it in. Now, there's almost a feeling of: we did the thing, what's next?"

"I feel like we learned a lot from releasing album one, as well as the music that's come before that," **Hawkey** continues. "We're now at a point where we're very confident in our sound, and we're willing to take more risks."

"In many ways, the album is an oxymoron," **Van Vliet** concludes. "You can't catch light in your hands, and you can't have darkness without the light casting its shadow. We all have an idea of something perfect. A memory, a vision of the future, a light at the end of the tunnel. *The Light We Chase* is that perfection. The sublime. The taste of something good. Our widest exploration of how far metalcore can be pushed and shaped, this album is lyrically diverse as it is instrumentally."

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