

Mother Mother

GRIEF CHAPTER

Their ninth body of work. A new chapter in their constantly evolving story. An organic groundswell of young, passionate fans who have all found community in their songs – old and new alike. The gradual curvature from playing concert halls to headlining arenas and opening a stadium tour. All this plus the inevitable passage of time and weight of life and all that comes with it, contributed to the pounding, profound new **Mother Mother** album, **Grief Chapter**. Within its walls contains a dialed-up collection of songs that takes chances, swings big, goes as grandiose with the songwriting as it does granular, and manages to dive deep on Big Picture concepts like life, death, mourning, and the freedom that comes with accepting the inevitable – seemingly heavy themes that, magically, are buoyed by lyrical moments of complexity and lightness throughout **Grief Chapter's** 12 tracks.

Lead singer and **Mother Mother** lyricist **Ryan Guldemond** describes the process of crafting **Grief Chapter** as pushing things further than he'd ever done before. "On past records, we'd aim to trim the fat," he says. "We'd tighten our songs up, to make them succinct, effective, and compact. But with **Grief Chapter**, we'd get to that point and then ask ourselves, 'how can we push things further? Where can we add length, and inject some unconventionality into these tight structures?' We wanted to take compositional chances."

Ryan says he and the other members of **Mother Mother** – **Molly Guldemond** (vocals, keys), **Jasmin Parkin** (vocals, keys), **Ali Siadat** (drums), and **Mike Young** (bass) – felt empowered to push the page on **Grief Chapter** in heavy part due to a new generation's discovery and embrace of the band in the past few years, primarily through avenues like TikTok. "Our big break came in the form of our weirder songs being embraced and celebrated, which felt like permission to push the limits. It was an invitation back to a truer self-identity for the band, which was very exciting, and also relieving, and something we see as a rare gift. The message in the industry is often to truncate things and homogenize the sound. But the message we've been receiving by the people who actually enjoy the music recreationally is to bend it, twist it, break it, push it further, and then push it farther still, which are all tactics we gleefully applied to **Grief Chapter**."

That freedom yielded some of the band's most impactful songs to date, including the already released singles "**To My Heart**" and "**Normalize**." Album opener "**Nobody Escapes**," **Ryan** says, helped birth the record's overarching theme: "The weighty idea of death is loud in that song but in a very playful and cheeky way, which is how we wanted any matter of seriousness to present itself on the album; with a sense of humour. It also scratched the right itch musically, veering all over the place with big dynamic shifts, so it was a good song to use as a barometer for staying on track with the rest of the material."

Thematically, "death and grief rooted themselves in these songs, but not morosely," **Ryan** says of the current that textures all of the album's songs. "It's used more as a reference point for how to live more fully and presently. I find the best way to see the day for the true blessing it is, is to remember that once it's over we don't get it back. Life is fleeting, therefore it's precious, and death is the most effective way I know to frame this miracle of living."

As a title, **Grief Chapter** came from a text exchange with an older friend of the band, a songwriter in his seventies who noticed that many of his friends and family were dying around him. "We were texting and I told him, 'It sounds like you're in a real grief chapter,' and right away both our ears perked up. It felt like a

title for a song, so we began writing it, using exact words and descriptions from our text thread. To me that's when songwriting feels the most magical, when it happens accidentally, birthed from the pain and beauty of living life."

Sonically, **Grief Chapter's** twelve songs are some of **Mother Mother's** most muscular offerings they've ever made as a band. "We've been playing the biggest stages of our career over the last few years, feeling more like a high energy rock band than we've ever felt. It's natural, I think, that this charged frequency found its way into the record. In the studio, our instinct was to make things hit hard and feel powerful, and the band as a whole felt very honed to execute in this way."

As a band, **Mother Mother** has been making music for many years now, but **Grief Chapter** marks a new artistic peak for the group, something **Ryan** credits to each member's active decision to show up as their best selves in the creative and recording process. "I just think we all brought a spirit of *great isn't good enough*," he says. "We all feel a lot of deep gratitude for our recent good fortune, and to be making another record, and really wanted to honor that by being our best and truest selves throughout the process. We don't take this moment granted — or this life. A life in music, doing what we love with whom we love."

"And we owe it to our audience," he adds, "who teach us daily what it means to be authentic. They've taught us that being yourself is the most viable path forward, which is such an amazing message for a band to receive. We try and echo that same sentiment back to them through our lyrics and how we interact online and at shows. The world likes to tell people from an early age that they should change who they are and be something different, something better, and that leaves people feeling broken and estranged from themselves. We like to use our voice to encourage people to be who they are, which actually ties into **Grief Chapter's** whole death theme - it's about honouring one's life, and it seems the best way to do that is being true to yourself along the way."

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