



Earrings ANNIE COSTELLO BROWN
Dress + Shoes VERSACE

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Goyce Wrice

“I listen to some of these demos and I’m like, ‘Woo, I can hear the pain in my voice.’”

“Lines getting blurry now/Got my mind in a hurry now/In a lane we ain’t used to/I don’t wanna slow it down/I’m in it if you with it,” Joyce Wrice sings on the contemplative yet confronting “Blurred Lines,” a solo track that dropped last year. It’s a sensual exploration of the fruitful highs and stomach-churning lows of a relationship. The San Diego-born, LA-based R&B singer has gotten very good at prising open both the fullest and most broken, beaten hearts, gleaning vulnerability, joy, lust, and loss from the hidden corners of the upper ventricles to craft a sound that’s intimate, personable.

Joyce’s music is rooted in an alchemical code that feels unique to ‘Joyce the Voice’, as she’s playfully known – her debut EP STAY AROUND from 2016 is a masterclass in artful, expansive lyrics and sonics that are sad and soul-tugging, yet uplifting and piped with optimism. It is effervescent, nostalgia-tinged R&B that sounds like the soundtrack to a sun-dappled party going on in your very own backyard right now.

It’s early in LA when we get talking over the phone, a conversation that’s pre-empting a forthcoming album. Joyce’s mornings begin at home with chanting – she was brought up in the Buddhist faith, and has found her own, very personal practice – something that grounds everything from her self-worth to her support network, the empathic music she makes and her ambitions.

It’s over half a decade since her early YouTube covers – Missy, Brandy, Mariah tributes – that first caught the eyes of the industry and her adoring fandom, and a year on from a celebrated COLORS debut. This upcoming release, Joyce says, feels like a distinctly new era – though still a fiercely independent artist and faithful to the hallmarks of breezy, beautiful R&B, she’s excavating new life experiences and testing the genre’s limits.

BRICK: I’d love to start by hearing

about what you’re working on right now, what’s going on with you?

Joyce Wrice: I’ve just been making songs and developing my writing, and just having life experiences, really getting out of my comfort zone finally. I’ve really been able to create music that is pages from my diary. I’ve been able to put songs together that I think would really make a great album. So, that’s what I’ve been working on right now, my album. I recently collaborated with Devin Morrison on a song called “With You,” for his album. So, through working with him, and also having a great connection with [longterm collaborator and Stones Throw producer] Mndsgn, us three have decided that we want to put a project together. So, I’m working on two projects, one is my album, and then the other is a project with them.

BRICK: What is the album looking like, and how does it continue on with your sound from before? How do you see yourself evolving and progressing?

JW: I feel like it’s modern R&B. Some of it might be a little bit more catchy, because I think in the past I never really knew structure for my songs, so this time it has a little more. A lot of it is just about my love life experiences, which in the past, I didn’t really indulge much, but last year was a year where I was in a relationship, kind of my first time being in a relationship, and then ending that and then just dating and being involved with people, and just being more open because I’ve always been very guarded.

BRICK: Does that feel like a cathartic process then, getting to work through those really lofty emotions and very complex things for maybe the first time?

It does feel very cathartic. It’s very therapeutic for me actually, now that I think about it, because I’m really a private person. I journal every

morning, and sometimes I’m like, “This sucks,” but at the same time, it’s been such a beautiful experience for me to evolve and grow, and I guess really just become a woman and allow myself to be vulnerable. I listen to some of these demos and I’m like, “Woo, I can hear the pain in my voice.” And sometimes, it makes me feel a little sad, and the other times, I’m just, I’m glad I can create from it. I always want to create value from whatever it is, rather than just sitting in this dark cloud. So, I think of it that way, transforming it to some kind of good, I guess.

BRICK: And is that reflected in the tone of new album, in terms of production?

JW: It’s always difficult for me to describe it. I guess I would just say it sounds more modern. I think before, my stuff sounded like we were in the ‘80s or the ‘90s. I have a lot of ballads, but we’re really wanting to do a lot of up tempo stuff, because I really love dancing, and I love backyard parties, so I want to be able to showcase that in my music too.

BRICK: Where do you think your music is best enjoyed? Is it at a party? Is it in your car? Is it with your friends?

JW: A lot of people say it’s very vibey, so I don’t know if people are just at the house smoking or just trying to relax. I’ve seen a lot of DJs playing my records, whether it’s a day party, or a low-key night-time thing. I always love seeing that, and a lot of choreographers have made dance routines to my records too, that makes me really happy.

BRICK: How has your upbringing and your family life influenced the art and the music that you make? Do you come from a musical family?

JW: Yeah, I guess. My mother is from Japan and my dad is black, and he was born in Louisiana, raised in Flint Michigan. He joined the military and met my mom while he was stationed in Japan. I feel like most military

families move around, but I didn't do that growing up. My dad, whenever he was stationed somewhere, he ended up just traveling and my mom and I stayed in San Diego. I didn't grow up with siblings, and my parents are a bit older. My mom had me when she was 40, and I was the first child that she ever raised, both my parents, first child that they ever raised. So, my parents were kind of overprotective, and I didn't really go out much. But, because of that, I stayed home a lot and I don't know what happened, I think my dad played R&B music, and he played a lot of hip-hop. I definitely gravitated towards music because of that. I don't know, the melody and emotions just really pierced my soul and just made me want to learn more about music. I spent a lot of time at home by myself, watching music television and singing along. Growing up, that was what I did in my spare time, and I was really shy, so that was my best friend, music.

BRICK: You come from a Buddhist background. Do you still consider yourself spiritual?

JW: I grew up Buddhist and my mom is Buddhist. She was very involved in her Buddhist activities, so I would just go with her to these meetings and they chant. Basically, it's a community. It's an organization that really helped people become happy and have a support system that allows them to overcome their obstacles and tap into their fullest potential through chanting. I really loved the environment and I've seen my mom change for the better. As I got older, I started to really learn and practice for myself, and I've stuck to it ever since.

BRICK: Do those values then play in your musical career? The way of feeling like you've got that support system to be positive and to focus on what you want to do.

JW: Yeah. I would definitely say that





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“The melody and emotions just really pierced my soul and just made me want to learn more.”

doing what I'm doing right now, really going after what I love and making a career out of it. I don't think I would be able to do it if it wasn't for my Buddhist practice. Everyone's different. I feel my natural tendency is to be hard on myself. I feel like sometimes I self-sabotage, as extreme as that sounds. So, naturally, it could be very difficult for me to believe in myself, to have confidence in myself, but thankfully I find that with my Buddhist organization and

and what was that like for you to find your start in that space?

JW: I feel so fortunate to have grown up during the time where I didn't have the Internet and didn't have social media, and then when I was at the end of my high school years, I think, that's when YouTube started to develop. I wouldn't be where I'm at if it wasn't for that, for sure. Doing the YouTube covers was a great opportunity for me to come to the realization that I really love singing

someone that Cosmopolitan did this with, and they picked this cover that I did of Mariah Carey's "Heartbreaker (Remix)". It was great because Mariah Carey's one of the artists that I really loved growing up, because she mixed hip-hop and R&B together. And so, there's a YouTube cover of me doing one of her songs, and that cover, I really love. It's really cute to look back at myself, in my parents' living room, my dog is sitting next to me wanting to go play



Necklace: STYLIST'S OWN
Dress: JOHN ELLIOTT

my chanting. I chant every morning and night, and I'm constantly reminding myself of the beauty of life and how every day is an opportunity for me to polish myself and become a better version of myself and go after what I love. I think it's definitely helped me as an artist, for sure, and as a person in general.

BRICK: You started with your career doing YouTube covers. How does it feel looking back at those old videos,

and that I want to sing and I want to share my story and my voice with people.

BRICK: Are there any of those early videos that you look back on and smile?

JW: Well, it's so funny. Cosmopolitan Magazine hit up my manager, and they do this thing on YouTube where they have artists watch people sing covers of their songs. And so, actually Mariah Carey was

outside, and I'm just having the time of my life singing that song. And to see Mariah Carey give commentary on it - and thankfully she was nice about it. That was very special to me. When I look back on... it makes me cringe a little bit, because I'm so self-critical, but I feel like for anyone doing whatever they love, it takes a lot of courage to do that. So now, I feel like, "Yeah, go out and do it. Have fun."



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