

a review of the album:

DIVE DELUXE



Created by

**ALMOST
MONDAY**

Reviewed by

A.J. FOSTER

ABOUT THE BAND



Cole Clisby

almost monday (stylized in all lowercase) are an indie rock/alt-pop trio based in San Diego, California, made up of childhood friends and a close surfing buddy who now tour the world together. Vocalist Dawson Daugherty and bassist Luke Fabry grew up playing music side by side, later meeting guitarist Cole Clisby while surfing in high school. The trio formally came together in 2015 while attending college in North County, San Diego, initially performing under the name The Mondays. They were soon forced to rebrand as almost monday after discovering the original name was already taken.



Dawson Daugherty

In their earliest official lineup, Daugherty handled vocals and bass, Fabry split duties between lead guitar and bass, and Clisby played rhythm guitar, with drummers rotating in and out as the band experimented with its sound and even swapped instruments from time to time. That early period culminated in the release of their debut single, "Take Me Higher," in 2017, which earned moderate local radio attention. Momentum continued to build, and on April 22, 2019, the band broke through on a larger scale with "Broken People," their first mainstream success, which peaked at number 27 on the Billboard Alternative Airplay chart.



Luke Fabry

Over the following years, almost monday steadily released new singles and EPs while expanding their live presence, touring with acts like Joywave and The Driver Era in 2021 and appearing at major festivals such as Lollapalooza the same year. By 2024, they were opening for major touring artists like AJR, performing a mix of fan favorites, standout singles, and highlights from their growing catalog. Drawing influence from artists ranging from David Bowie and Tame Impala to Justice and Gorillaz, almost monday have carved out a bright, infectious sound that appeals broadly across the alternative, surf, and pop-rock scene.

WHAT IS DIVE DELUXE



Producer Simon Oscroft helped refine the sound of the album into a polished mix of nostalgic surf vibes and modern indie pop. The main themes of the album center on youth, nostalgia, and coming of age, capturing fleeting moments of growing up and looking back on them with warmth. The album reflects both the excitement and slight melancholy of getting older, pairing self-reflection with an awareness that time keeps moving. At the same time, its upbeat, feel-good sound emphasizes living in the moment, celebrating friendship, connection, and shared experiences through energetic, danceable indie-pop/rock songs. Some tracks were tested live while touring to shape them based on audience response, and the album's bright, energetic identity was completed with colorful artwork by visual artist Dave Bowers.

On September 25, 2024, almost monday released their first full-length studio album, DIVE. Just three months later, on January 21, 2025, the band expanded the project with a deluxe edition featuring three additional tracks. The songs on DIVE were written collaboratively, without a single designated songwriter; instead, ideas often began with one member bringing in a melody, chord progression, or lyrical fragment, which the group then developed together. Rather than following a strict concept, the album emerged naturally from their personal experiences and changing sound.



drive

opening track
/melodic (1:10)

A dreamy, short opener that sets the tone for the album's beachy, introspective nostalgia. It's a slow and melodic introduction to the album with a really cool almost liminal sound the way they harmonise and sound far off in the distance

7 / 10

never enough

pop/rock #3 (2:41)

The opposite of complex lyrics on your first listen but when paying closer attention the singer is expressing to a loved one that he knows he doesn't make her feel appreciated enough or doesn't express his inner feelings for her as often as she deserves. has a really really interesting sound with its mix of instruments and guitar instrumentation.

7 / 10

she likes sports

modern garage rock #5 (2:22)

Sounds like a song from a dude perfect video, lyrics are clearly on theme with underlying messages about how the singer is kind of love-sick for her. Describes her as beautiful as "my fantasy" and "she'll love you then leave you with a kiss on the face" but it's honestly one of my least favourite songs from the album. Cool story and I see the appeal but its not for me

5 / 10

TRACK LIST

is it too late

surf rock #2 (2:39)

A quick and drastic change from the previous song. Opens with a really awesome riff that reminds me of a modern version of the Dick Dale guitar strumming, the lyrics are about the end of someone's relationship (is it too late? - baby baby I just want you back. - it was the best that I ever had) with a uniquely happy/exciting tempo. Its energy captures the theme of time passing and urgency that runs through the album. It's one of my favourites from the set.

8 / 10

you look so good

modern garage rock #4 (2:42)

This song has a lot more of that classic rock sound and feel with relatively simple lyrics. I would rank it higher because there are parts of this song I love, but it gets ruined by the chorus!

5 / 10

can't slow down

bedroom pop rock #6 (2:55)

I really like this song, it opens with a really interesting whiny guitar riff that repeats at a few other points in the song. The main instrumentation of the song focuses on Luke Fabry's bass and drums to highlight the impressive range of Dawson Daugherty's singing. It's an excellent driving song with its super up-tempo.

9 / 10

jupiter

psychedelic/pop
rock #7 (2:02)

This song's sound is heavily influenced by Tame Impala, from the instrumentation to themes, I think most people would believe you if you told them this song was written by Tame Impala. The song itself is about big, expansive feelings, love or connection that feels larger than life, like a planet in orbit.

7 / 10

tidal wave

surf rock pop
#8 (2:28)

This is my favourite song from the whole album; it has not left my on repeat playlist since starting this project. The song is reflective and evocative, it uses the metaphor of a tidal wave to express how life and relationships can appear and rush forward unexpectedly. There's a wistful sense of time moving on and wanting to capture the moment using similar mixing to the opening song with an echoey reverb.

10 / 10

seaside market

modern garage
rock #10 (2:22)

Another song I can't seem to be able to stop listening to. It's a charming, upbeat track that feels like a snapshot of carefree days, exploring small moments by the beach, letting life's lighter pleasures shine and sharing them with someone you love. It includes a really nice (I think) keyboard or really high guitar & some brass instrumentation that adds to the light relaxed sound.

10 / 10

life goes by

surf rock/pop
#11 (2:33)

The final song of the original release and basically screams in your face the themes of the whole album. Leads every guitar and drum forward with a super upbeat and nostalgic sound that I absolutely love. One of the band's favourite tracks, this song reflects on how life passes quickly and it's important to cherish it and have fun! It's wistful yet uplifting, like remembering good times while acknowledging time keeps on moving.

10 / 10

sunburn

sad indie pop
#9 (2:52)

Another one of my absolute favourites. It's one of those songs that sounds super cheerful but is thematically much deeper, the song likens the sting of a breakup or fleeting connection to a sunburn. something temporary yet it hurts a ton in the moment and can ache for a long time,

10 / 10

The original release of the first

eleven tracks marked a clear evolution from what almost *monday* had been putting out prior to the album. It is complex emotional music camouflaged as easy listening rock/pop singles. The songs of the album have enough variety that even if you just kinda like rock music, pop music, psychedelia, surf, garage rock, whatever there's probably a song in this album that you'll like. I concede that some of the early songs of the album are much weaker in my opinion than the songs in the last half. But overall i would give the original release

7.5 / 10

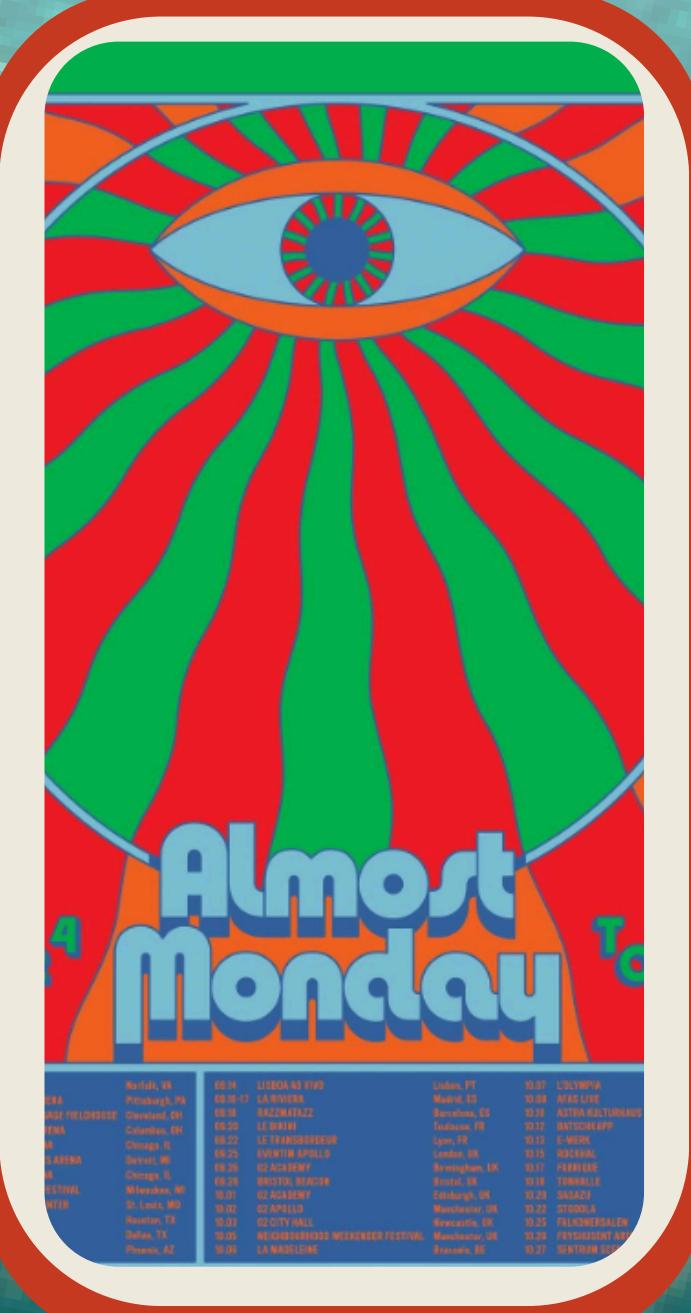
DELUXE
SONGS

sequoia

surf
rock/pop
#12 (2:14)

Opening the deluxe portion, “sequoia” evokes a carefree love story and adventurous spirit, symbolizing reliability and relationships or experiences that feel vast and timeless, like the towering trees it’s named after.

10 / 10



jupiter reprise

psychedelic/rock #13 (3:02)

It's a reprise of the original song featuring artist Jordana as backup vocals and leading a few verses in the middle. This makes it the longest song on the album but Jordana's vocals enhance the dreamy, summery quality and mesh perfectly with the Tame Impala like sound.

8 / 10

holiday

dance/disco/rock
#13 (2:55)

A celebration of freedom and leisure, this track captures the joy of stepping away from routine to enjoy time with someone you care about. It's bright, breezy, and built for sunny memories. It sounds like the type of song they would play during the end credits of a family vacation movie.

8 / 10

These three songs are a welcome addition to the album, fitting seamlessly with its established themes and helping to further flesh out the project as a whole. Even though they arrive after a strong run of tracks in the latter half of the original release, they never feel like afterthoughts or letdowns. Instead, they stand confidently on their own, showcasing tight songwriting and polished performances that subtly elevate the album and make the overall listening experience even stronger.

POST-RELEASE

After its release, DIVE was met with a largely positive public response, with fans and critics praising its sun-soaked sound, infectious hooks, and youthful sense of nostalgia. Reviews often highlighted the band's ability to balance carefree, feel-good energy with subtle reflection, noting that the album felt like an authentic snapshot of their Southern California roots and coming-of-age experiences. In support of the album, the band embarked on The Dive Tour, beginning in Seoul, South Korea, on November 14, 2024, before travelling across Asia and continuing through the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe in 2025, helping expand their international audience and solidify their reputation as a strong live act. Commercially, the album era was boosted by the success of its second single, “Can’t Slow Down,” which reached number #1 on the Rock & Alternative Airplay chart and number 32 on the Adult Pop Airplay chart, marking a significant milestone and reinforcing DIVE as a breakout release for the band.

MY REVIEW

I really love DIVE, an album I discovered by accident in the summer before Grade 12, timing that couldn't have been more perfect. At that point in my life, I was experiencing many of the same emotions the album captures so well: a longing for nostalgia, the thrill of newfound freedom, the comfort of close friendships, and an underlying anxiety about what the next year might bring. For almost monday, the album is just as meaningful, representing an important milestone in their careers and a defining snapshot of who they were as a band at that moment. DIVE marked a clear evolution in their sound, moving beyond their earlier releases and solidifying their identity as a fully realized indie-pop group. Its upbeat, energetic atmosphere captures vivid memories of summers spent with friends and family, while its polished songwriting and production helped elevate the band to a wider audience. The music works on multiple levels—easy to enjoy for its bright melodies and infectious rhythms, yet rewarding for listeners who dive deeper into its thoughtful lyrics. Beneath the sun-soaked surface lies a layer of introspection, with songs reflecting on time, growth, and memory, mirroring the band's own personal and professional growth. Ultimately, DIVE not only resonated deeply with me at a pivotal moment in my life, but also stands as a crucial turning point for almost monday, helping define their sound, expand their reach, and set the foundation for their future, this is why I rate the album:



Thank you
almost monday