**Moaning**

**S/T**

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Moaning is a band defined by its duality. The abrasive, post punk trio comprised of Sean Solomon, Pascal Stevenson, and Andrew MacKelvie, began nearly a decade after the three met in L.A.’s DIY music scene. Their impassioned debut album comes born out of the member’s experiences with love and distress, creating a sound uniquely dark and sincere. Although the band is just breaking out of their infancy, Moaning’s sleek and cavernous tone emphasizes the turmoil of the era they were born into. One where the endless possibility for art and creation is met with the fear and doubt of an uncertain future.

Solomon, Stevenson, and MacKelvie initially met as teenagers while growing up in the San Fernando Valley, and immediately developed a kinship through Los Angeles’s local music scene. The three began regularly frequenting DIY institutions like The Smell and Pehrspace, eventually selling out dozens of their own shows at both venues with their first few bands. Solomon recalls, after a brief hiatus from playing together, Moaning’s conception came when he sent Stevenson and MacKelvie the first demo for “Don’t Go,” setting the tone for the impulsive songwriting that would follow. The three fleshed out Solomon’s primitive recordings, adding in MacKelvie’s heavy syncopated drumming, and Stevenson’s melodic driving bass and synth parts, capturing each member’s personality in their sparse and fuzzed out tracks. Like many of their previous collaborative projects, Moaning forces pain up against pleasure, using the complexity of personal heart break to inform the band’s conflicted sound. The band eventually landed on the apt moniker Moaning, admiring the ambiguity the name held, and hoping to reference both an intimate wail and an anguished scream.

After laying the groundwork for the new project, Moaning quickly began showing off their first songs to audiences around their local scene, and eventually booked their first few tours on their own. Months after the band’s running start, the three went into their home studio to record an early version of “The Same” and decided to shoot a music video for the track. The band was tipped off about a house that was being demolished nearby, so they assembled a group of friends and filmed them taking turns destroying the estate while Solomon, Stevenson, and MacKelvie tried their best to perform the song amongst the chaos. The video’s budget was limited to the sledgehammers, spray paint, and case of beer they provided for the friends who were invited to cause havoc, emphasizing Moaning’s desire to make as much impact with as few resources as possible. The track’s skidding percussion and toned back vocals gave merely a glimmer of the target Moaning aimed to hit with their sound, and would be revisited with further experimentation on a later recording.

Upon its release, the homemade video for “The Same” caught the attention of Alex Newport, a seasoned engineer and producer who had previously worked with At The Drive-In, Bloc Party, and the Melvins. Newport was first to approach the band, eagerly extending the offer to help record whatever they planned to work on next. The young band was flattered by the gesture and were won over by Newport’s sincere enthusiasm during their first visit to his home studio. The three began working on the tracks that would make up their self titled release, employing a lush, open ended production quality that had never been at the band’s disposal. Tracks like “Artificial” stand out among the recordings, where Moaning used the studio’s recourses to take their frantic live arrangement and give it the intensity merited by Solomon’s lyrics. Once recording concluded Moaning started shopping around the album, and eventually it made its way to the Sub Pop office, where buzz began amongst the label’s staff. Sub Pop's representatives and Moaning finally crossed paths at SXSW, and one month after the band’s explosive set, the three were hastily offered a record deal.

As a whole, Moaning drifts from sentimental to catastrophic, hiding meek and introspective lyrics within powerful droning dance songs, giving sonic nods to some of the band’s musical heroes like New Order, Broadcast, and Slowdive. The band’s youthful attitude is met with the weight of topics like loss, routine, and mental health, reflecting the anxiety towards the status quo that much of their generation faces today. Where many young bands take years to find their footing as writers and performers, Moaning has built up a confidence in sound and vision from the ten years of playing basements, bars, and ballrooms together in their previous projects. Yet, even with their polished exterior, Moaning continues to make the sacrifice of deeply personal anecdotes and emotions to their audience for the benefit of their craft.