The sophomore album from I DONT KNOW HOW BUT THEY FOUND ME, *GLOOM DIVISION* is a glimpse into the gloriously strange wonderland of Dallon Weekes’ mind. Over the course of 12 shapeshifting songs, the Salt Lake City-based singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist follows his wildest impulses toward a combustible sound encompassing everything from R&B to post-punk to art-pop, approaching each with equal parts unfettered imagination and exquisite attention to detail. As he shed all creative inhibitions, Weekes widened the scope of his songwriting and expounded on such matters as love and sex, satanic panic, and his lived experience with neurodivergence (to name just a few). The most autobiographical work to date from Weekes, a former member of Panic! at the Disco, *GLOOM DIVISION* ultimately leaves listeners with the very same sense of euphoric fascination that sparked the album’s creation.

Produced by Dave Fridmann (Tame Impala, MGMT, The Flaming Lips), *GLOOM DIVISION*marks the follow-up to iDKHOW’s critically lauded full-length debut *Razzmatazz*—a 2020 release featuring “Leave Me Alone,” a #1 hit on Alternative radio. In bringing the new album to life, Weekes embraced a highly collaborative and free-flowing process that involved joining forces with the likes of Joywave’s Daniel Armbruster, Louis XIV’s Jason Hill, Miniature Tigers’ Charlie Brand and Rick Alvin, and British singer/songwriter Will Joseph Cook. “We worked in a way where nothing ever felt forced—I’d send an idea to someone whose work I admire, and if they felt inspired they’d add to it,” says Weekes, who co-produced *GLOOM DIVISION*and plays guitar, bass, piano, and more on the album. “Sometimes the songs took a complete left turn, which made me want to go even further into a direction I never would’ve pursued on my own. It reminded me how exciting collaboration can be when you’re working with likeminded people who treat their art with care.”

Recorded at Fridmann’s own Tarbox Road Studios (and in Weekes’ basement studio), *GLOOM DIVISION*opens on the song that set the tone for the album’s unbridled originality, an elegantly frenetic and exhilarating track called “DOWNSIDE.” **“**Sometimes we become so enamored with a romantic partner that, for better or for worse, it can be difficult to see the negative aspects of the relationship. Even if you’re looking for them,**”** says Weekes, who names avant-garde artist/composer Laurie Anderson as an inspiration for the track’s kinetic vocal percussion. “It turned into a song about trying to find the downside in a relationship, but you’re so enamored that you’re unable or unwilling to.”

Another song capturing the all-consuming thrill of obsession, “INFATUATION” examines what Weekes refers to as “indulging in your own sexual fixations and fantasies and the shadow of religious guilt that can come with it,” setting that exploration against a gorgeously airy and groove-heavy backdrop. (“It’s meant to sound like Hall & Oates joined a cult , with Michael McDonald, and the cult was held on a yacht,” he notes.) And on “WHAT LOVE?,” Charlie Brand joins iDKHOW for a sensually charged and spellbinding portrait of a darkly twisted romance, intensifying the track’s sultry mood with slinky guitar riffs, potent basslines, and lyrics channeling an aching desperation (e.g., “You only sacrifice the things I never ask you to”). “When we were working on the verses for that song, I hit record and started messing around and came up with this melody that sounded like ’90s R&B,” Weekes recalls. “At first I was laughing at the ridiculousness of it, but after sitting with it, I realized it was exactly what the song needed.”

Elsewhere on *GLOOM DIVISION*, iDKHOW’s forward-thinking musicality manifests in songs like the irresistibly sardonic “GLOOMTOWN BRATS”—a dance-ready diatribe against a social phenomenon Weekes describes as “an apocalypse of vanities.” “It’s a song about different kind of privileges—rich privilege, white privilege, pretty privilege—and the people who occupy those spaces with very little **or no** self-awareness,” he says. Meanwhile, on “SATANIC PANIC,” he reflects on his childhood and the baseless moral hysteria that infiltrated the American consciousness in the 1980s. “My parents weren’t as **up in arms** as a lot of religious families across the country at the time, but there were definitely things I wasn’t allowed to have as a kid because they were considered evil in some way: Garbage Pail Kids **trading cards**, Big League Chew bubblegum, those candy cigarettes that blow out fake smoke,” says Weekes. “That song came from thinking about that now as an adult and realizing that anything can be labeled as evil if your goal is to frame it that way.” One of the most galvanizing moments on *GLOOM DIVISION*, “Satanic Panic” unfolds with such unexpected flourishes as the fantastically warped saxophone work of Brooklyn-based jazz duo Moon Hooch, then bursts into raw catharsis at its fuzzed-out and explosive bridge.

On “iDIOTS OF Oz,” *GLOOM DIVISION*closes out with an anthemic manifesto against those who wield their negativity as a weapon (from the shout-along-ready chorus: “It doesn’t matter what you think of us/We aren’t beholden to the idiots of Oz”). As Weekes reveals, the title to the lush and futuristic track acts as a play on the derogatory but once-commonplace term “idiot savant.” “Years ago I wrote a song that had the words ‘idiot savant’ in the lyrics, and later on I had fans point out to mehow that can be offensive,’ he says. “The song ‘iDIOTS OF Oz’ is a way of changing that phrase, and hopefully communicating that I want to do better and make everyone feel welcome.”“iDIOTS OF Oz” also draws from Weekes’ own journey as a neurodivergent person. “My whole life I’d been wearing a mask that I didn’t even know I was wearing, and in the past few years I found out that I’m on the autism spectrum and have ADHD,” he says. “I’m still learning about myself in that **regard**, but it’s been pretty revelatory to finally start understanding that part of myself at 40-years-old.”

Looking back on the making of *GLOOM DIVISION*, Weekes notes that the album restored a profound sense of playfulness to his process. “It reminded me of playing music with my friends when I was a teenager, when it was all just about having fun and being creative for its own sake,” he says. Growing up in the Northern Utah town of Clearfield, he first started writing songs on a pawn-shop acoustic guitar at the age of 15, fulfilling a then-lifelong aspiration. “One of my earliest memories is being about five years old and seeing a guitar hanging in a pawn-shop window—I didn’t really even know what it was, but I knew I wanted it,” he says. Naming ecstatically mind-bending albums like Beck’s *Midnite Vultures* and Weezer’s *Pinkerton* among his early influences, Weekes played in bands throughout high school and co-founded an indie-rock outfit called The Brobecks in the early 2000s, soon opening for acts like Phantom Planet and Ben Kweller. Weekes launched iDKHOW in 2016 and introduced the band with their debut project *1981 Extended Play EP* (a 2018 release featuring the gold-certified single “Choke”). With the arrival of *Razzmatazz*, iDKHOW earned praise from the likes of *The Line of Best Fit*, who hailed the album as a “fun, bizarre, and thoughtful listening experience.”

For Weekes, the writing of *GLOOM DIVISION*served as a major breakthrough on multiple levels. “Writing has always been an outlet to exorcize demons and difficult emotions, but with Gloom Division I made a conscious effort to stop censoring myself when it comes to subject material, or what I wanted to say,” he says. When matched *GLOOM DIVISION*’s pure sonic abandon, the result is a body of work primed to leave a sublimely mystifying impact on its audience. “When I think about all my favorite records, like *The Soft Bulletin* by Flaming Lips and *This Year’s Model* by Elvis Costello, the thing they all have in common is that the first time I heard them I thought, *What is this?*” says Weekes. “On the second listen it was more like, *This is weird, but I like it*, and then by the third time I heard it I was absolutely obsessed. That’s my favorite reaction to experience when I’m discovering something new, and I’d love for this album to create that same feeling for everyone.”