

**FEATURE:**

Shinedown: **Hear The Madness**

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Scarlet Carson, Blind Guardian, **And More!**

by John Fortunato

Sometimes the door closes on one career choice when another one opens up for a completely different vocation.

Such is the case for Joplin, Missouri native, Christofer Drew Ingle, a shaggy-haired, multi-tattooed, bracelet-wearing teen idol who adolescent girls can't seem to get enough of. Groomed to be a professional tennis athlete, an arm injury forced the talented youngster to rethink his occupational opportunities. A freethinking artist whose autonomous musical ascension conjures comparisons to fellow do-it-yourself indie rock mastermind, Beck, he self-released several EP's before recently getting signed by Warner Brothers, who'll allow the Dylan-derived 19-year-old prodigy to control his new boutique label, Loveway Records.

Under the guise of Never Shout Never, Chris received a big promotional lift when MTV's popular show, *TRL*, featured his sweet-voiced breakup requiem, "Big City Dreams," a heartfelt bummer-in-the-summer, piano dirge cooed to the max. But no one could rightfully accuse the goodhearted, lovesick rambler of stealing thunder from emblematic emo-bearers Dashboard Confessional or Bright Eyes. Firstly, the independently spirited Midwesterner performs live with a ukulele and banjo as well as customary acoustic guitar. Secondly, his dippy lyrical satirizing and brokenhearted melancholia personalize his guileless, love-stricken messages in a way no mere copycat could muster.

For the first few years, Never Shout Never's unpretentious front man found his muse via a cheating girlfriend who stole his virginity, causing him to experiment with hallucinogenic psychedelics. But he's put that behind him, summing up the severed relationship on "Lousy Truth," a homesick Simon and Garfunkle-like paean that saddles 2010's likable long-play breakout, *Harmony*.

An efficiently detailed singer-songwriter showcase, *Harmony* relies on past endeavors to achieve its goal as an elementary salvo meant to appease Never Shout Never's increasingly obsessed female-dominant admirers without delving into uncharted waters. Apparently, Chris and his tight band, led by guitarist Caleb Denison, and anchored by keyboardist-violinist Dustin Dobernig, bassist Taylor MacFee, drummer Nathan Ellison, and percussionist Hayden Kaiser, want to move beyond the teenage pandemonium that helped propel aboveground stardom.

But, before navigating richer musical styles à la ex-pop idols Hanson, *Harmony* delivers the adolescent goodies in spades, even if Chris shiftily gripes, "This Shit Getz Old." Nervy schoolyard blame game, "Cheater Cheater Best Friend Eater," places ukulele in a light syncopated, clap-tracked setting that's all the rage with his pubescent minions. Wishful crooned meditation, "I Love You More Than You'll

# nevershoutnever's chris drew

## achieves 'harmony'

(three million screaming girls can't be wrong)



I just wanted to write for the kids who've been with us from the underground for the last three and a half years. I wanna give 'em youthful happy songs.

Ever Know," retains an earnest sensitivity meant for his family but embraced by loyal fillies as their own. Tenderly wept orchestral lament, "Sell Out," struggles with the corporate control he tried to fight off, but fairly succumbed to anyway (at least on his own terms). So get on the "Trampoline" and have your "First Dance" with our latest "Lovesick" martyr.

**Your whimsical tunes move from humorous to serious to sarcastic with equal aplomb.**

I try to be me. I don't put up any walls.

I'm pretty sarcastic. But when it comes to family and love, I take that seriously. **Some people have lumped you in with the emo crowd. But the banjo, ukulele, giddy impulses and humorous asides add a unique dimension.**

I just try to learn everything I can. I never limit myself. Next record, I'm moving on to an acoustic feel. I don't wanna be known as the ukulele kid forever; I wanna branch out. Everyone in my band is so good at their instrument and I'm not. I just practice a few things

to be quirky.

**You utilized a string quartet at Highline Ballroom a year back. Plus, *Harmony* offers a few new musical elements.**

It's the last Never Shout Never record. I just wanted to write for the kids who've been with us from the underground for the last three and a half years. I wanna give 'em youthful happy songs. It's a summer journey. And I'm in harmony with the situation I'm in. It was an easier record to make. I was completely sober the whole time. It only took two and

a half weeks. My buddy, Caleb, the guitarist, came with me and added keyboards and drums. I did auxiliary percussion.

**The title cut juxtaposes hippie-like anti-violence sentiments with bright-eyed, bushy-tailed emotions. It's got some Lennon-esque peace talk.**

I don't wanna get involved with politics, though. To me, it's a waste of time. My grandparents were so into politics, brainwashing me, so I just go on the road. People talk politics that never makes sense. I'm into common sense. Violence isn't key, but I like shooting guns for fun. I've gone target shooting.

**Were Dylan and the Beatles early influences? You've covered "It Ain't Me Babe" in the past.**

It's very cliché. I'm a big Dylan fan. First, I got into his earliest stuff. That live-in-the-studio feel is so noble. Lately, I'm into *Blonde On Blonde* and the late '60s works where he stopped giving a fuck and doing whatever he wanted to. He never got involved with the popular scene. My father taught tennis for a profession. I played nationals but got injured, watched TV and cartoons, and sat on the couch. Then, my dad showed me Dylan's stuff. I didn't get it initially, but learned "Blowin' In The Wind" and "Knockin' On Heaven's Door." My dad also loved the Beatles. He's a really heavy Christian. He'd take Dylan-Beatles songs and turn them into worship songs. I'd play guitar at church for him.

**Your best vocal performance may be on "Lovesick." It's reminiscent of Harry Nilsson's melodramatic side.**

I got that song from Elvis' "Love Me Tender... kind of the same chord and I sing at a higher octave. I wanted to make a classic li'l love song with super-easy strumming.

**Are the deeply felt sentiments of "I Love You More Than You Will Ever Know" non-fictional?**

Definitely. I was actually experimenting with DMT (dimethyltryptamine, a hallucinogenic) and had an awesome desert journey. I thought I'd never see my family again. I wrote it as a love song but it's more than that. It's for everyone I love even if I don't see them often. Since I'm 16, I'm gone 90% of the time. It meant something serious instead of being goofy.

**"Lousy Truth" also has that lonesome homesick feel.**

I dated a girl for two years and eight months, I realized she lost her mind and I'd already lost mine. So it wasn't a great relationship. I wrote my earlier songs about her, but it didn't make sense to continue that, so I summed up the relationship on that.

**As per an acoustic outtake on Youtube, "This Shit Getz Old" began as a lo-fi bedroom trinket reminiscent of Conor Oberst's downcast tunes. Do most songs originate that way?**

Most songs come from acoustic. I've grown out of the ukulele. It's a little cheesy and I don't want it to become a gimmick. I'll start with a few chords or fingerpicking, do a simple band jam and figure out what to do with the song. I like more instruments so I can bob my

Nevershoutnever plays Manhattan's Best Buy Theater at Time Square Nov. 18 and Asbury Park's Paramount Theatre Nov. 19.

I like Ryan Adams and the Wallflowers. I'm trying to get that folk-rock feel in my head because that's where I'm at now.

head to the music. I used to be strictly acoustic. Now, I like a lot of 12-bar blues.

**That'd be a changeup from *Harmony*.**

I probably have twenty songs ready for this blues-driven, drum-beaten album. It'll freak out all the little girls. But my voice is changing so I can't sing high tenor forever. I'm nervous. My fans are young and fickle.

**Will you feel like a sellout if *Harmony* blows you out of the water and you achieve even greater fame?**

I can't stand pretentious people. You were either from the hardcore or indie scene where I grew up in Missouri. The indie scene's so pretentious. I'd play acoustic live and they'd all get up and leave. I wanna make music for fun. I had the opportunity to go radio with the last two albums but declined it. I'm not ready and didn't want to get big doing something that isn't quite me. I don't need radio to blow it up. It's gotta be weird as fuck just to prove you don't have to sing with AutoTune with a hip-hop beat to be radio.

**I hate AutoTune shit. Who are some current bands you enjoy?**

I grew up on Jimmy Eat World. They're a solid

band. It's cool seeing them develop since the *Clarity* album my brother bought. *Clarity* was a hit with every song. As a kid, I was into it and still am with the same excitement. That's a good sign. I like Ryan Adams and the Wallflowers. I'm trying to get that folk-rock feel in my head because that's where I'm at now.

**Your sparer satirical tunes would fit in with the freak folk crowd that followed Beck.**

Beck's cool. My older brother was way into Beck. I don't think freak folk is fun, free and respectful, though.

**Will you be debuting any new unrecorded blues songs on the current tour?**

No. We'll stay with the two albums and EP's kids wanna hear. I always want artists to play songs I know when they play live. We're gonna do some international dates afterwards, and that might be the end of Never Shout Never. We'll be Christopher Drew and the Shout because that's what everyone calls my kick-ass backing band. I'd be nothing but a weird kid with an acoustic without them. I don't care if we get bigger. I'm getting to the point I don't want as much attention. But we'll be playing the music I love. We're doing confetti blasts and unveiling an American flag with peace sign backdrop.