

Can't Swim, 'When The Dust Settles,' and Adding New Life In Older Songs

By **Murjani Rawls** - May 6, 2020



Photo Credit: Nick Karp

Listening to your previously recorded songs can be a trip through a melody-like time machine. Maybe you had a fit of inspiration and wrote lyrics in a journal or the first piece of paper you could find. In some cases, there could be a life-defining moment, good or bad, that can spur our creativity into action. Bands throughout time have gone to make acoustic versions of their music and some even apply updates to them. While you can't change the particular moment or event that birthed that particular piece of art, you can alter the musical lens in which some view it. Just call it a firmware update.

Can't Swim and their surprise EP, *When The Dust Settles*. This offering sees the band go back and revisit songs like 2016's *'Death Deserves A Name'* and 2017's *'Fail You Again'* and dress them with a more relaxed aesthetic. Fans will get to approach them from a calmer aspect and perhaps take away a feeling that they didn't know previously.

I talked to lead singer/guitarist Chris LoPorto about how the surprise EP came about, why particular songs were chosen, and the future of music given the status of the current pandemic.

Coming off *Foreign Language*, which is a very abrupt and aggressive record. The *When The Dust Settles* EP more geared towards the acoustic side of things. There is one new song and the rearranging of older ones. What made the band want to go in that direction?

I think the concept or at least the goal of the band since the very beginning was to constantly be doing that. I think we always wanted to switch it up and write different kinds of songs within the same album, you know? Just have a lot of different colors and vibes. I just thought it was kind of fitting for what was going on in the world. It seems like everyone is just chilling and relaxing in their home trying to figure out all this craziness. It was something that I always wanted to do. Strip down some of the songs that kids were already familiar with. I thought this was like the proper time to do it. Then, we went for it.

With rock music, you seldom see the 'surprise and unannounced' releases. It's something that I kind of wish that would happen a little bit more within the genre. What made the band want to go that route and release it with no promotion behind it?

Yeah, I don't think anyone was expecting us to put out more music because like you said, *Foreign Language* didn't come out too long ago. I just kind of put myself in the shoes of somebody who's into my band if somebody that I liked, you know, get a surprise kind of release in a time like this where everybody's kind of just hanging out at home. I thought it'd be pretty exciting. That's why we decided to go for it.

The lone original song on the EP is 'sometimes you meet the right people the wrong time.' I was wondering when I was listening if was that the song that sparked the idea for this project.

So actually, 'Stranger' was the one that I reimagined first. I always wanted to have a different version of that song. A more chilled out version. So, I did that one, sent it to the label and management and they really seem to like it. Then the world got canceled. So I was like, "why don't we do a couple of these and kind of make it a release?" 'Stranger' was the one that inspired the whole thing.

In the updated version of 'Death Deserves A Name,' Danny [Rico] does the lead vocals. Who came up with the idea to go in that direction?

I thought that one was the one that was the most similar to the original. I'm not saying that it's putting out the same song again. I think the other versions are drastically different. So, I was trying to figure out a way to have 'Death Deserves A Name' stand out more than the original one. So, other than Danny having an incredible voice, we're trying to get him more involved with singing some of the top lines. We just think it's a cool flavor for the band. Yeah, it was just an idea. Danny sang it to me in Los Angeles and sent it over. Everything was kind of recorded remotely.

'My Queen' has an orchestral part to it. There are different keys and tempos you play around with. Where the original songs are more energetic and anxious, the changes give them a relative calm. They almost give the songs a new coat of paint. Have the meanings of these reimagined songs changed for you now that you can go back and listen to both versions?

Yeah, for sure! The writing process of it was pretty interesting and funny because you say, "geez, I've probably been singing 'Stranger' now for three years. It's been in every single show we've ever played. Then to record it in a low key, relaxed range took a bit of getting used to for me. I tried to make them stand alone and be good on their own. It's cool. It's like covering your own music.

My last question for you is about this ongoing pandemic. I've spoken to some artists and some of them it said like they can't wait to go back to playing shows right away. Then some are worried that everything is not going to go back to where it was. I think that both musicians and music fans share that worry. What are some of your thoughts on what's going on right now and how it will affect music in the future?

I definitely think it will be changed. Just because I think a lot of bands won't be able to sustain going this long without a paycheck. Also, vice versa. I think a lot of bands will come out of the

woodwork because of this. I think due to streaming and some viral video that a guitar player does on YouTube – we'll see people gain popularity from it. Unfortunately, I think a lot of bands will get hit pretty hard. I don't know how easy it will be for them to just jump back into touring.

Other than that, I sadly think that it won't be until 2021 until you start seeing some of those bigger shows. That's 3,000 people with no windows and they're just kind of bumping into each other. It's all the worst ingredients for a pandemic like this. So, I do think it's going to be a lot longer before it goes back to normal. Then again, I do think that in enough time, it will be like the way it was.

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