

Interview: Jared Monaco of The Maine

BY CLARE FITZGERALD | February 18, 2015

It looks like 2015 is shaping up to be a big year for Tempe, Arizona rock band, The Maine. The five-piece are set to release their fifth album, *American Candy*, this coming March and have already premiered the record's lead single, the catchy "English Girls". The band have a busy year ahead of them and I was recently able to discuss all the upcoming excitement with guitarist Jared Monaco.

CultNoise: How have you guys been? The last time we spoke, you were finishing up the *Forever Halloween* touring cycle and entering the studio to record a new album.

Jared Monaco: We have been wonderful, thank you for asking. Of course, I'm assuming that we're *all* wonderful, but one can only assume, considering I'm sitting here answering these questions by myself. [We're] very excited for the year we have ahead of us.

CN: It appears you've been non-stop since the announcement of *American Candy* and the release of the album's lead single, "English Girls". Has the response been what you expected?

Monaco: I was blown away by the response to "English Girls". I always get really anxious/excited prior to releasing the first material from any given project, but this time I had such a good feeling about the record and the song. I'm glad it went over as well as it did.

CN: *American Candy* is the first time you've returned to work with a producer. Is there a specific reason why you opted to work with Colby Wedgeworth again?

Monaco: We actually did *Forever Halloween* with Brendan Benson, so we've technically been working with producers still. That was an entirely different experience from Colby. The way I see it, Brendan took what we know as a band and threw it out the window. It was awesome. I had never approached recording the way we did on *Forever Halloween* and Brendan was really great at allowing us to be creative in real time. Everything was done on the fly. It was more like, "Oh, that's a good idea. I'm going to press record - Go!" [He] made me think on my toes. I loved that about *Forever Halloween*. I carry those things with me now, and my bag of tricks has grown because of that process.

With Colby, things are much more dialed in and calculated, which I am also a big fan of. It allows me to be creative and precise, and Colby's pop background adds important structure to our songs. Colby was there to wrangle our crazy, and sometimes ambitious, ideas into something that works for the greater good of the song itself. That's where he really shines - that, and knowing a good melody or adjusting a good one to be great.

CN: How was it renting out a house to record, instead of booking a studio?

Monaco: At first, it was a lot of work. Over the past few years, we've been building our own studio in Arizona and we had to pack the entire thing into a box truck and then drive five hours to Joshua Tree. Our control room was up a flight of stairs, so it was pretty labor intensive to get everything up there and set up (our mixing console weighs like 500 pounds). Once we got situated, and I got a chance to sit back and admire where we were, I couldn't believe how free I felt. It's all about the vibe. We were on the side of a fucking mountain. At any moment, I could just step outside and see for miles and miles. We were so isolated, the only thing we could do was work day and night on this record. You can't pay for that in a studio, it's just not possible.

CN: Do you have any funny stories from the recording process you care to share?

Monaco: Not really a funny story, but we became obsessed with shooting beer bottles with BB guns, and one night Kennedy [Brock, guitar] was like, "Hey, I'm doing it one-handed. Watch this." He totally nailed it. "Okay," I thought, "that was a fluke. Do it again." He did it again. Don't mess with Ken.

CN: You've described this album as more upbeat than *Forever Halloween*. What was the reason behind this decision?

Monaco: I remember sitting in our rehearsal room for day one of official writing and we all decided we wanted this record to have a groove. We wanted to focus on giving it a lively tempo and intricate bass lines, and swing the beat on this song or that song. I don't think we got together and said, "Hey, let's make this record fun and happy and full of rainbows and unicorns." It was more like, "Hey, let's see what our band sounds like if we throw some energy in these songs from a place we haven't really been to before."

CN: What tracks are you most excited for fans to hear?

Monaco: I really like the title track, "American Candy". [I'm] also a big fan of "My Hair", "Same Suit, Different Tie", "Diet Soda Society" and "Am I Pretty?".

CN: I'm going to put it out there and say that "English Girls" has been on repeat since its release. What made you guys choose it as the album's lead single?

Monaco: It just felt right. I showed the record to some close friends and family and that song seemed to go over really well. I also think it hints at what else is on the album.

CN: You've announced the *American Candy* tour with Real Friends, Knuckle Puck and label mates The Technicolors. What are you most excited about, in regards to it?

Monaco: I think we put together a bill that our fans are really going to love. I also think these guys are going to be really fun to have around, so it's a win/win [situation]. I know we're all really excited to get it going.

CN: You toured a lot in support of *Forever Halloween*. Can we expect the same rigorous touring schedule for *American Candy*?

Monaco: Yeah, I mean, that's one of the things that will probably never change.

Write. Record. Release. Tour until dead.

CN: I have to ask: does the band have any plans to tour the UK this year?

Monaco: Of course we do. More on that later...

CN: Are there any albums or EPs you're looking forward to this year?

Monaco: I'm already really jazzed on that new Father John Misty album. New Modest Mouse looks promising, and the new Deafheaven record also, just off the top of my brain.

CN: Any last words?

Monaco: Thank you so much! If you haven't already, you can preorder *American Candy*. It comes out March 31st!

American Candy is currently available for pre-order [digitally](#) on iTunes or [physically](#) via The Maine's website. Be sure to stay up-to-date with the band by following them on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

You can check out "English Girls" below.