

THE MORNING DOVES

Interviewed by *The Silver Age*, September 4th, 2024

The Morning Doves is an indie-folk duo comprised of Chris Bunn and Jean Rivera, musicians based in Philadelphia, PA. Their first single, “Art of Impermanence,” was released in July of 2024, and they plan to release a second single in October of 2024. Follow @themorningdoves on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, and listen to The Morning Doves on all streaming platforms.

COLE GABORIAULT: First, basic information: names, ages, where you’re based out of, and what instruments you play.

CHRIS BUNN: My name’s Chris Bunn. Where I’m based out of is Philadelphia, obviously. And instruments I play would be mostly acoustic guitar and vocals. I don’t know if vocals is an instrument, but –

JEAN RIVERA: Vocals is an instrument. Don’t disrespect her.

CHRIS: Yeah, okay. Vocals is an instrument. And age, 26 years old.

JEAN: And then my name is Jean, Jean Rivera. I’m 21 and also based in West. And mainly I sing, play guitar, I do egg shaker, I do harmonica, I rock with the hand – hand percussion is probably a good summarization. Yeah, hand percussion. That’s everything.

CHRIS: You play keyboard, but not really for our songs.

JEAN: Stop telling people that.

CHRIS: Yeah, he plays keyboard though, so... anyways.

C.G.: So then as a group, what type or genre of music would you say you play?

JEAN: Like, indie folk, singer-songwriter...

CHRIS: Oh, I don’t want to be singer-songwriter.

JEAN: No, you don’t want to be singer-songwriter?

CHRIS: I feel like every time I listen to someone who's singer-songwriter, I just don't like it.

JEAN: Okay. Thumbs down to singer, songwriter. Indie folk, definitely.

CHRIS: Definitely indie folk.

C.G.: And how'd you come up with your name, The Morning Doves?

CHRIS: We cycled through many different names, and, well, Morning Doves just stuck for both of us. I had recently come back from a trip in Europe and had become acquainted with the goddess Aphrodite/Venus, whose symbol is a dove. So I felt like she was kind of a guiding force for the band, but also in my personal life. So that's my personal connection to the dove.

JEAN: And then for me, part of it was also, at the time that we met, I was doing opening barista shifts, and Chris was working on a farm, like, five to – like a thousand hours a week. And most of our band discussion conversation was happening before 6am. Cause it was, like, the time that we were awake and able to talk. So that's where the “morning” like “good morning” versus “mourning” like the actual dove came to be. And also I just think it sounds nice. And I've always had a bit of a spiritual connection to birds. I'm from – we're both from South Jersey. I'm from the Pine Barrens.

CHRIS: And I guess the last thing to say about that would be just that Morning Doves, I guess – it's, like, “morning,” changing the word to “morning,” as in the beginning of the day, as opposed to “mourning” as in grieving – I guess for me, it's like – I don't know, it's almost like moving past grieving. And the dove, I feel like, is a symbol of healing as well.

C.G.: Yeah. A new dawn.

CHRIS: Yeah, exactly.

C.G.: So how long have you guys been playing music, both separately and together as a band?

JEAN: I have been performing for 10 years. I started – I've always sung. I've always, always sung, and my parents put me in vocal lessons. I didn't ask. Because they were like, “if you're going to sing all the time, you might as well sing in key,” which is fair. That's pretty fair. So I started off pretty young with that. My dad is a musician, and my mom is, like, the number one music enthusiast ever. So my exposure to music and performance happened super early on. And I picked up tenor sax in sixth grade, so however old you are then – like 11 or something. Loved it and really turned my focus towards music after that. And collectively, it's been two years that Chris and I have played together.

CHRIS: In terms of me, when I was younger, I had several attempts of learning an instrument, most of which were unsuccessful. Like, I played percussion in the fourth grade band. That was pretty good.

JEAN: I also did percussion in the fourth grade band unsuccessfully.

CHRIS: Yeah, so that was not – actually, mine was successful. I just kind of was too bored to continue with it.

JEAN: I was just bad at it.

CHRIS: And so percussion was good. But I also tried the guitar lessons, but it didn't work out for me at that age. It wasn't until I was 16, and my dad's guitar was just kind of sitting in the garage unused, and so I was like, "well, you know, there it is, I should just learn how to play finally. Cause I really want to. I should just learn the guitar." So I was listening a lot to this band called Grouplove at the time. And so I just – their songs are really simple, so I would just, like, bang out four chords on the guitar and sing really loud. And that was how I kind of got my introduction to guitar. So I've been playing for about 10 years now. And, like I said, we've been playing for two years together. But yeah, I think that's the gist of it.

C.G.: So it sounds like there is at least some musical training in your background, although maybe not a huge amount for when you actually started to learn music? That was mostly self-taught?

CHRIS: Yeah, mostly self-taught. I've taken classes here and there, but not really just, like, a ton of lessons from other guitar players or anything.

C.G.: So for other education, did you guys go to college? If so, what for?

CHRIS: I did go to college, and it was for environmental studies. Jean did not go to college.

JEAN: Yeah, let me tell my college failure story. So, since I'm younger, COVID happened like halfway through my junior year, which is right around the time you really start buckling down for college. So I didn't end up going to college officially, but my high school in South Jersey was a tech high school, and I went there for music, and that's where I got a lot of my formal music education. I don't have, like, formal training on guitar – that was just learned from my dad – but everything else I know was learned through that type of education. I technically went to college my senior year of high school, but it was all online, it was community college, and COVID times. So, like, to me it doesn't really count.

C.G.: Yeah. That's, I would say, a good call.

JEAN: Yeah. I don't know if you've ever tried to, like, go to music school in the middle of a worldwide global pandemic, but it kind of blows.

C.G.: That sounds terrible, yeah.

JEAN: I was like, "I could just not spend \$40,000 to take Zoom classes."

CHRIS: No, thank you. I agree.

C.G.: Do you guys have any pets?

JEAN: Yes. Oh my gosh, there are so many pets in this house. We have a calico cat named Molly. She's really mostly my girl. And then, you [Chris] can talk about Lucy, cause she's mostly your girl.

CHRIS: Yes. We have a tabby cat. Tabby, right? Yeah, tabby. I'm new to cats, so... tabby cat named Lucy. She's very reclusive, but she has warmed up to us and now loves us and loves to have her food in the morning.

JEAN: It's very, very sweet because I kind of adopted Lucy and Chris around the same time. I kept them in the same room around the same time. Lucy was a feral. We found her litter of kittens back at my mom's place. And we did, like, a T and R – trap and release – for Lucy. And we released her into what then became the practice room. So she started off semi-feral. And maybe like a month after we found her, I found Chris.

CHRIS: Hi.

JEAN: And they, like, really super-ultra-mega-bonded. And I was like, "whatever, I picked you guys both up off the street, but that's okay." They super-ultra-mega-bonded. And now, we moved out of South Jersey into here, and she still lives in the practice room and hangs out there and is really nice.

CHRIS: She's our band kitty.

JEAN: She is our band cat.

CHRIS: And we also have a bulldog named Violet, who is both our love and the bane of our existence (off the record). But yeah, she's great.

C.G.: What are your comforts in life?

JEAN: Most recently, my comforts in life have been My Chemical Romance's first two albums. Those have been my, like, hardcore repeats recently. I rediscovered reading. That's been my big comfort in life. But you know how sometimes you just, like, spend time dicking around on your phone, and you're like, "oh, I wish I was doing something that stimulated the mind and told me a story." Read a fucking book.

CHRIS: Yeah. I agree.

JEAN: My comfort has been reading, and I've been getting back into drawing lately. And also the lounge chair in the front of our house that sits under our front window gets great sun, and a lovely view when the construction's not happening. And those are – and this cup of coffee, these are my comforts.

CHRIS: Alright, let's see. My comforts... I would say that food is always a comfort for me. I enjoy cooking, and just, like, having a really good meal is probably the most comforting thing for me. Other than that, I've been swimming in lots of rivers and streams recently, which is, like, very comforting.

JEAN: Jealous.

CHRIS: Because it just – I don't know – just, like, cleans off everything that my spirit is holding on to. And, let's see... what else? Comforts would be... I love tea. I'm a big tea drinker. I grow lots of herbs as well. And... comfort, comfort... I would say – oh, in terms of musical comfort, the band Iron & Wine is definitely a big comfort band for me. They're just, like, something I can nestle into. But that's my comforts at the moment.

C.G.: How about discomforts? Do you have any big pet peeves or discomforts in life?

JEAN: It's hard being a starvin' artist these days. It's hard. No college education. And I – and, like, we just kind of moved to the city for the shits and gigs of it all. I don't know if you know this, but there's not really much of a music scene in South Jersey. It's a little sparse down there. So – and we're both, like, woodland people. So adjusting to the city, just in general, and getting into the pulse of that has been a bit of a discomfort. Slowly but surely getting more comfortable, but a discomfort nonetheless. I'm on that five-day workweek grind. That's pretty discomfort. Although, my job – I work at a Trader Joe's, so it's not that serious. It's a bunch of, like, gay musicians. So it's not that bad. Discomforts – I don't know. I feel like that's all my discomforts. I feel like everything's pretty alright these days.

CHRIS: Nice. Discomforts. I would say my job at the moment is definitely a discomfort. I'm not really a fan of what I'm doing. I work mostly from my computer, and that's just so discomforting. It really makes me feel bad inside. So that's a discomfort. What else? I would say, yeah, physical tension in my body has definitely not been very comfortable. Been feeling that recently. Also living in the city. I'm definitely more of, like, a kind of woodland creature, kind of like Jean was saying. So that's been a discomfort to adjust to. And... what else? I guess, like, the emotional discomfort of feeling like everything is okay in life and not wanting to – you know, not always having to change something in order for things to be alright. Yeah, that's a new idea for me. So that's a little discomfort, but that's probably what those are at the moment.

JEAN: A lot of healing and growth. That's all the discomfort.

CHRIS: Ugh, I know. Oh yeah, and therapy. Therapy is discomfort.

JEAN: Therapy is so discomfoting.

CHRIS: Yeah, so boo, but yay.

C.G.: What would you say your main musical influences are, both individually and as a band? I know you mentioned a couple, but any others that you would say are big ones?

JEAN: Okay, I'm gonna start talking, feel free to interject at any time. For me personally – and I have to say, even though we're an indie folk situation, My Chemical Romance is, like, the band ever. Love to see a New Jersey girl win, you know? My Chemical Romance is, like, a really strong influence on my writing and music in general. Also, there's this artist, Rodriguez, who just goes by Rodriguez. There was this documentary – I don't know if it's still out – called *Searching for Sugar Man*. He was, like, unknown as an artist for most of his life until – in America and everywhere except for South Africa during apartheid, where he, like, really flourished there. And then, so later in his life, he kind of got discovered and, you know, whatever. His writing is some of the most prolific – I'd say on par with Bob Dylan levels of just, like, crazy storytelling, super prolific. And I encountered him in, like, middle school times, and it revolutionized my writing. I'm also pretty influenced by Fiona Apple. Susan Werner is another artist who's really influenced me musically. She's a queer artist from Iowa that I actually saw in Philly for the first time at the Philly Folk Fest when I came across her music. Other big musical influences... in general, like, the classic rock scene pretty heavily influenced me, as well as early jazz and, like, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, that kind of stuff. Like I said, like, my mom is, like, the music fan to ever exist, and she listens to just about everything. So I was really raised on a super wide range of music from that end. I think those are my personal influences for me. Your turn.

CHRIS: I learned something new. Did not know some of those. Rodriguez – I'll have to check him out. Anyways, so I would say my influences are mixed. That band Iron & Wine that I mentioned, sonically, very much an influence for me, and lyrically, dagger to the heart every time. So good. So good, that band. Other than that, Sufjan Stevens is a big influence for me. I don't know if you guys know him, but very, very good artist. Anyways, Sufjan Stevens. I would say the Beatles are big for me. My dad is a huge Beatles fan, and I was listening to the Beatles as a very small child. So the Beatles are big. My mom played a lot of Motown when I was a kid. So Motown.

JEAN: I love your mom. Love your mom.

CHRIS: Yeah, a lot of Motown. Other than that, I would say Fleet Foxes, a band I really like. Fleet Foxes is a big influence.

JEAN: That's a good one.

CHRIS: And is it – is it weird to say Tame Impala, since they're kind of a meme?

JEAN: Is it weird to say? It's just honest.

CHRIS: Tame Impala's definitely an influence for me as well. And... at the moment, Charley Crockett.

JEAN: Charley Crockett's been a big influence for me recently as well.

CHRIS: Yeah, country artists.

JEAN: And Johnny Cash.

CHRIS: Oh yeah. Well, I wouldn't say Johnny Cash is my influence, but...

JEAN: Johnny Cash for me. Collectively as a band, do we, like, really...? I feel like collectively as a band, we just – the melting pot of musical influences that we've come across just all simmers down into one little soup. And then we just kind of regurgitate. I don't think we ever sit down with the intention of being like, "I would like to write a song that sounds like this," or "I would like to write a song that feels this way." I think we just – I think the muses just possess us and go, "you're gonna write this, whether or not you like it." And we go, "okay, I promise, I will." And that's how it all comes about.

CHRIS: Yes, I second that.

C.G.: Do you want to talk any more about your specifics of your writing process, or of how you approach maybe even lyrics specifically in your writing?

CHRIS: I'd say there are probably three parts to that. It's, like, Jean's process, my personal process, and then our collective process together.

JEAN: My portion of this process – before anything else, before a musician or anything else I'm a poet. It's, like, the one thing that, even when things have gotten a little dicey, I've never turned my back on it. It's always been there. I've always done it. So before anything else, I'm a poet. So I really churn out lyrics at, like, a pretty – pretty high of a volume. Some of them stick, some of them don't. I'm a big believer in, like, you have to write stuff that's bad in order to write something that's good. And you have to give that bad – like, that thing that's bad some space. In terms of the – in the music part of it, I kind of have a very freeform style of writing. I've been playing guitar on and off for the last 10 years. I'm very strictly and staunchly a rhythm guitar player. Like, I don't care to do solos. I don't want to be fancy about it. That's not my personal forte, and I don't have a desire to.

Before any – musically, before anything else, I’m a vocalist. I’m a singer. And so a lot of the time I’ll come to Chris and, like – to bring it together as the band. So of course I write things for myself and on my own. But when I bring stuff to the band, I’m usually like, “alright, Chris, hear me out. Pretend like there’s more chords, and pretend like there’s a better structure. But here’s all the words, and here’s the melody.” And that’s where I think I excel. Like, I can really write the melodies and the words and stuff like that. The rest of it, I need a lot of help building. And I think Chris is kind of a musical genius in terms of, like, piecing together –

CHRIS: Oh my god.

JEAN: the musical instrumental aspect and translating – I’m, like – I would say that I’m kind of difficult to work with, because I don’t have the language to explain, like, musically what I’m feeling or hearing, but mostly because I’m not even thinking about it some of the time. And also, Chris has been super patient and will, like, pull out of thin air – like, sometimes I’ll give him a song with one single chord. And I’ll be like, “can you imagine the rest of this?” And he does a really awesome job at pulling the rest of it together. But my writing process has always been, like, I want to get the words correct, and I want to get them right, and I want to get the melody correct and right. And then the instrumentation for me has always come kind of secondary, which is not always – which is less the case now, as I’ve worked with Chris, and we’ve put in a lot of hours practicing – he’s made me a better guitar player. And so, my guitar writing and my value on that has increased over time, but first and foremost, I think I really chisel out the lyrics and the words first and build around them on my end. Your turn.

CHRIS: Whew.

JEAN: I really think about this.

CHRIS: Too generous, man. But anyways, I would say that my writing process – yeah, I’ve been a songwriter for probably about as long as I was playing guitar. So it’s always been – most of the time it’s been, I’m just like messing around on the guitar, and then – or a lot of the time it’s like I’m playing like covers, and then I’ll just be kind of riffing off a cover, and then I’ll just encounter something new. Or like, you know, sometimes I’ve had songs I’ve heard in dreams that kind of turn into actual songs, which is not as rare as you would think [unintelligible] right before I wake up. But yeah, usually it’s just like I encounter something that sounds interesting on the guitar or melodically, and then I’ll usually add the words. Usually I’ll start singing in gibberish, and then kind of form what the words are out of the gibberish, and then add what I think kind of fits that’s the theme that’s coming out. Or, just kind of out of desperation, you know, things that are going on in my life, kind of getting it out, and it comes out in an interesting way.

Recently I’ve started being more deliberate about my songwriting, like, kind of trying to write more. And kind of – I don’t always have to have that, you know, inspirational piece in the same way as I used to. It’s like, I’m just gonna follow what I’m interested in, and I’ll probably find something pretty interesting. But yeah, together, I

would say we – you know, I'll bring Jean a song, or Jean will bring me a song. And I think it's probably most interesting when we have something that's kind of unfinished, and then we build it together.

JEAN: I was just gonna say, I think you and I do a particularly good job – like, for you, you kind of almost – you almost always bring a completed guitar piece to the table, but not always a completed lyrical piece. And I think we do a pretty decent job at, like, you bring the guitar piece and you sing your gibberish, and I'll extrapolate what you're trying to say.

CHRIS: Yeah, that's true.

JEAN: And then vice versa. Like, I'll be like, "here's a completely finished melody, bridge, chorus, all of that stuff. And no guitar chords." And then you do a really good job at chiseling out with the music – what music I'm trying to convey, and do that kind of thing. So I think that's really conducive to our writing style. I think the story of how we met is pretty important to our writing style. Back in South Jersey, I was working at – it was, like, a whole bunch of circumstances all coming together. I was working at this coffee shop – there's only one coffee shop in my hometown – so I was working at the coffee shop, and the town does this thing called Third Thursdays, where the third Thursday of every month, everywhere stays open late, and there's live music and local vendors and discounts and whatever. It's just, like, a community building night every month.

And so I'm working it, and I hear this guy playing in the back parking lot, and as I'm taking the trash out – because I'm working – I hear – I, like, get a vision in my head of the two of us playing together in the future. And this was just – I had been in a classic rock cover band in my teenage years, which was pretty lucrative, to be honest, because that's really the South Jersey scene. And you know, we did that for a while, and then COVID happened, whatever. And so I was looking to get back into playing, and I heard Chris playing, and I had this vision of us playing together. And I just – I didn't know in what capacity, I didn't know where, but I was like, "I need this guy to – like, I need this guy. I need to get him somehow." And so I had wrapped up, and he was wrapping up, and in the least graceful social interaction possible, I walked up to Chris, and I was like, "do you live here?" And Chris was like, "yeah." And I was like, "do you have social media?" And Chris said, "I have a business card," and I said, "okay." And then I walked away, and I was like, "well, I just blew it. Real hard." But fortunately I didn't. And then we got together and started playing, and I – you know, I don't think I'm being too generous, I think – Chris's guitar pieces alone move me to tears. So I was like, "I need this guy. I need this guy in my repertoire."

And, you know, I basically picked him up off the street, and I was like, "no, you don't understand. We will be playing together. It will be successful. I've seen the vision." And I think I – actually, I'm not going to speak for you, but I hold that vision pretty strongly and clearly in mind as we're going about things. And I kind of assess if I think the writing or music feels right based on that, like, pull that I had initially.

CHRIS: I would say that sums it up right there. I don't think I have anything else to add.

C.G.: Do you have particular themes that you tend to come back to in your songwriting?

JEAN: Oh my gosh, so many. I like to think – and you can completely disagree with me actually, I don't think we've ever talked about this – but I think that Chris and I write, like, the same song inverted. So I personally am really interested in interpersonal relationships and the human mind and motivation and all of that kind of stuff. And so I'll write often about those things. And sometimes I'll go to Chris, and I'm like, "I have a song." And Chris is like, "that's so funny. I have a song just like that, but in the opposite direction." So that just – I don't know if that's, like, intentional or coincidence or what. But I feel like a lot of our songs really come back to that interpersonal relationship, and bridging the gap between the self and others, and, like, how can – or, like, what can we do, or why is there so much distance, and why is there so much space between the self and others? And, you know, where are we missing this connection? And how do we get it? How do we get the connection that we want?

CHRIS: I would say our songs, like Jean was saying, kind of tend to be about relationships a lot of the time. I think we both really – I wouldn't – I guess I wouldn't say enjoy, but we both find ourselves writing about relationships a lot of the time, whether it be past relationships or current relationships.

JEAN: And relationships – just, like, relationships of people. Not necessarily romantic.

CHRIS: Yeah, but not, you know – they are sometimes romantic as well.

JEAN: Yeah, just not exclusively.

CHRIS: Yeah, and I don't know. I guess a lot of it has to do with, like, letting go of things that have happened or things that have been, you know, hard for us to deal with. I feel like we both probably approach songwriting with a certain kind of desperation of, like – you know, we have this thing that's really bothering us, and we have to process it or kind of get it out somehow, and that's – I think that's where a lot of our songs probably come from.

JEAN: Life is hard, and how do you cope?

ALICIA LOPEZ: So "Art of Impermanence" came out in July, and I know you guys recorded it, it's mixed, it's mastered, so I want to hear all about that process. And then also, I know that you guys did a pretty involved photoshoot for the cover, and I'd love to hear about the decisions you made setting that up.

CHRIS: So I can talk a little bit about the recording process. So I have a friend who I have known since I was – I don't know – probably like 13 or so? 14? His name is Austin Vogel. And they went to Berkeley School of Music to study, like, basically audio engineering and stuff like that. So we got reconnected recently by – there was this

music festival in South Jersey called Beard Fest, and we both got reconnected there. And we had recorded the song in the past, but it hadn't really worked out. So I kind of approached them and was like, "hey, you record stuff, right?" And they were like, "yep, I do." And so we kind of set it up. They work at this recording studio in Mount Holly, New Jersey, called Blue Light Studios¹ or something like that. So we basically recorded the song over two different sessions. It was really fun because they have, like, a big brick-walled room with really high ceilings, which they're moving out of, so it's, like, we got this special opportunity to record in this place. But the room itself has really good reverb, and they chose that room specifically because they have this other studio that's more, like, tight and kind of no echo or anything, but they chose that space for us because they thought it would complement our songs. So yeah, we got up early, and we went recorded for like a half a day or maybe three quarters of a day. It was not that easy. It was actually pretty hard because we're both kind of perfectionists, and I'm definitely a perfectionist in recovery. So I gotta step back because I want it to be absolutely perfect, but that's not good for the song.

JEAN: And I'm kind of a recording hater. Like, I'm a live music till I die kind of person. And I just – the whole process to me feels so... I, like, really thrive on live performance. That's where I excel, I think. Other people in a room, and feeding off that energy. And recording, to me, I'm like, "oh my God, it's so dead in here." And it's way harder for me to get into the zone.

CHRIS: Yeah, yeah. I like the recording process, but it's definitely tedious. And then, I guess... oh, the photoshoot. You want to talk more about that?

JEAN: Yeah. So for the photoshoot... in retrospect, these are things that, like, obviously were happening at the time. Know that at the actual time that we were doing it, off the record, we were just, like, vibing it out. We were just putting stuff together. But we had made a video for the NPR Tiny Desk situation. And so we had this room completely clear. We took the bed out and everything like that so that we could record in there and set up a desk. And on the desk, we had a bunch of our personal objects that had, like, really deep personal stories connected to our lives or major influences or the band. And we had this really beautiful display, and we were like, "well, we put all this fucking effort in to make this really beautiful setup. Let's do something with that."

So I am trans, and it's not new news to me, but I have been – it was newer at the time of the photoshoot, and, like, less – a less developed thought, not as much action taken in that direction of my life. And Chris has been on his own kind of queer journey and, you know, we've – I feel as though we've kind of used each other to sort of think about gender and explore it, almost, in a way. And so the photoshoot that we did – I don't know if you looked at our social media or anything like that, but it's, like, a whole shebang. The thought was, is that we had a bunch of these candles, and we would film and take pictures until the candles ran out. And what ended up happening over the course of that night was we sort of accidentally created this almost death-rebirth narrative. Where, like, the pictures told us that we had both died and then came into our own thing. If you notice in the

¹ Blue Light Digital Sound – <https://bluelightdigitalsound.com/studios>

photos, like, it's very serious and intense and almost macabre in the beginning of them. Where this, like – where we sort of get, like – we're adjacent to each other when we get laid to rest, but then when we come back, it's so lively, there's so much life, we get our instruments. Like, we sort of pull back into a more true, real self. And we're both pretty genderless in the whole thing, but I think the way that we styled – because we're wearing a bunch of vintage nightgowns – I had this friend who had just had this huge collection of these old vintage nightgowns from all different time periods, and it really created a genderless effect, which is kind of what we wanted.

The whole thing was sort of like, “well, how much of” – to me, anyways, the whole thing kind of felt like, “well, how can I lean into this masculinity? How can Chris lean into this femininity? And how does it all” – what's the phrasing I'm looking for? Like, “and how does following those restrictions constrain us? How does letting go of those free us?” And sort of, like, the death and rebirth of ourselves in order to become The Morning Doves, almost. But that's sort of a narrative that we figured out and built – similar to our music, it just kind of happened, and then we deciphered it after the fact. We just kind of moved as felt fit. It was over a really long time. Like, we were there for multiple hours – we didn't finish until like three in the morning – of just constant back-to-back changing of positions and, you know, all that kind of stuff.

And we just so happen to live – our other housemate is a photographer. Their side hustle is band photography and stuff like that, and they do really amazing concept shoots. And so I was like – I really wanted them to be the one to do this. Also, it's someone we trust really intimately and whatnot. So that's kind of – did I miss anything or misspeak?

CHRIS: Um, I don't – no, I don't think you did, honestly. That was very comprehensive. No, I don't know – I guess, other than that, it's just our friend, Missy, is a great photographer. They were the ones who took the photos.

JEAN: And they directed us a little bit as well and helped create that sort of, like – I think it helped to work with somebody who knows us personally, and Chris and I's dynamic with each other, and that kind of stuff also helped contribute to it.

CHRIS: Yeah. And also their use of symmetry I found really satisfying in the photos. But no, I don't really feel like I have anything else to add to that.

A.L.: What are the next steps for The Morning Doves? Are you working on future releases? Shows coming up? Anything you want us to plug for the future?

JEAN: We have to plug our shows.

CHRIS: Yes. Oh, we have a lot of shows coming up. People have been reaching out to us. So, I think I know all the dates off the top of my head.

JEAN: Okay, big baller.

CHRIS: We have Thursday the 12th of September, which is next Thursday. We're playing at Young American Cider² in Germantown at – I think – 6:45 or 7:00 pm. We're playing on the 22nd in South Jersey, actually, at the Pinelands Nature Fest from 1:30 to 3:30, I think. And that's in Southampton.³ And then, let's see, we've got – oh God –

JEAN: October 12th?

CHRIS: October 12th. We're playing the RoxYunk Porchfest⁴ in Roxborough-Manayunk. And then we're playing – oh yeah, we're playing in Pottstown, Pennsylvania at this tavern in October. I forget what day that is, though.

JEAN: The 19th?

CHRIS: The 19th of October.

JEAN: That feels right to me.

CHRIS: And then we have one more... oh yeah, we're playing at your guys' place. And then other than that, we're hoping to release a new song in October, that's recorded with the same recording artist, Austin Vogel. And what else? We're having – we're going to be playing a house show in October as well, at our place. But yeah, we got a lot going on. We got a lot going on.

C.G.: What kinds of hobbies or interests do you have outside of music? I know you mentioned drawing, Jean, I think.

JEAN: Yeah.

C.G.: Do you have any other, any other hobbies, interests, things that you're into, other kinds of art?

JEAN: I've recently really been getting into film and TV shows and stuff like that. My girlfriend is a film major, and my best friend was going to be a film major and stuff like that. So I've really been doing – recently I've been

² Young American Cider | 6350 Germantown Ave | <https://www.youngamericancider.com/>

³ Pinelands Nature Fest <https://pinelandsalliance.org/pinelands-nature-fest/>

⁴ RoxYunk Porchfest <https://www.roxyunkporchfest.com/>

really sitting down and, like, getting into it all the way. I do draw and make that kind of art on occasion – certainly not with the religious practice that I do music or anything like that. Reading has always been a love of mine, and writing outside of music has also always been a love of mine. Um, the hell else do I do with my free time? I like to hang out with my buds. I think community and connection is really important, and I made the decision where I was like, “if I’m not going to go to college, I have to make a concerted effort to take the real life that I’m living outside of the security of school – like, I have to make that as much of a learning opportunity as I can.” So hanging out, and getting to know other people, and – I don’t know if this is a hobby, but I’m really passionate about building community and that kind of stuff.

CHRIS: Uh, let’s see. For me, I would say I’ve got – I’m a person that probably has too many hobbies because I – I don’t know – fill up all my time with them and sometimes don’t have any time to chill out. But I love gardening. I used to work on a farm, so... I also love cooking, so those two really go together because I like to cook what I grow, and doing that in Philly has been an adventure and has been fun actually. And other than that, I’d say I’m a big fan of being outdoors. I love hiking, and I love wild plants especially. Love identifying plants. I’m kind of – I have a very small hobby of, like, herbalism, I guess. I’m growing herbs and trying to treat what I’m currently experiencing with herbs. And – I don’t know – let’s see. I also love writing letters to people. I have a pen pal, Caroline, who lives in Ohio, who is a friend of mine.

C.G.: Why are you a musician?

CHRIS: Oh.

JEAN: Want me to go first?

CHRIS: Oof. Uh, sure, go ahead.

JEAN: For me, it’s always just been, like – I have to. I never thought about it. It was never a super conscious decision or anything like that. It’s just – it always was. It always, always was. You know, before it was instruments, it was singing and writing out little plays and musicals, and me and my childhood best friends would, you know, play singing competitions and that kind of stuff. And when I fell into performance, like solo performance or musical theater or other bands, it just – it was the thing that I was doing. Like, it just made sense that that’s what I was doing and that’s what I was pursuing. It’s never been like a, “oh, I think getting into music would be a good idea.” It just always has been, and it always will be, even if it’s never successful, even if I never make a dime off of it. And even if nobody ever gives a fuck about my music or art or anything like that, it always has been and always will be.

CHRIS: I’d say, for myself, I think music has always been something that’s been inside me. Like, from being a kid, just, I – mostly as a young person, as a kid music was just something that was for me. It was something I did in my head, or I’d kind of sung under my breath. It was only until later, it kind of became something I did

outwardly. So I would say I'm a musician because I, like – I hear music, and I think it's kind of – well, I guess the one way of looking at it is kind of like a crime to not bring it out into the world.

JEAN: It is a crime. Your music is really good.

CHRIS: Thank you. And, I would say, another sense is just that it's fun, and I enjoy playing with others. It's healing for me to sing, and especially sing in groups of people. Harmonies is something that's very healing for me. And yeah, I don't know. Probably just interest. It's very interesting to me, and the healing aspect and fun, I guess. I don't know. Yeah, kind of just chose me too.