

# COLD COMFORT

**Interviewed by The Silver Age, September 12th, 2024**

Cold Comfort is the musical collaboration between Devin Nguyen (writer) and Chris Baldarrago (producer). Their latest single, “I Wish My Life Was a Sitcom” was released June 4th, 2024. They are currently working on a forthcoming album, *Blossom*, and are excited to play more live shows in the near future. For a good time, visit [www.coldcomfort.online](http://www.coldcomfort.online), follow @coldcomfort on Instagram, and listen to releases on Spotify and Bandcamp.

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ALICIA LOPEZ: First, just confirming, we’ve got your website, we’ve got your Instagram – other social media?

DEVIN NGUYEN: All the links are on the website – I worked very hard on that website.

A.L.: That website looks awesome.

DEVIN: Thank you so much.

COLE GABORIAULT: It’s a beautiful thing.

DEVIN: I spent like – how many – I don’t even know how many hours. Like, at least 14 straight, just, like, coding. I learned how to code for that. I’m glad someone enjoys it.

C.G.: I can’t imagine anybody who visits the website would not enjoy it. So beyond that, for the official record, names, ages, where you’re based out of and what instruments you play.

DEVIN: Okay, I’m gonna take those one at a time. My name’s Devin Nguyen, Cold Comfort.

CHRIS BALDARRAGO: My name’s Chris Baldarrago.

DEVIN: I am 20, turning 21 next month.

CHRIS: I am 20, turning 21 in March.

DEVIN: We’re both from Cherry Hill, New Jersey. I play guitar, a little bit of keyboard. I guess bass.

CHRIS: And he sings.

DEVIN: Oh yeah, I forgot about that. Thank you.

CHRIS: It's an instrument. I play guitar and bass and drums.

A.L.: For Cold Comfort, what type or genre of music would you say it is?

DEVIN: I mean, I'm kind of all over the place and, like, a nightmare to work with because I'm like, "oh, I wanna make this sound like this random-ass song I found, but also this." And then Chris has to figure it out, and he's just sitting there, you know, at the computer while I play Tetris. I guess electronic rock, indie rock, that type of thing.

C.G.: What's the origin of the name Cold Comfort?

DEVIN: What is it... I'm a big fan of Mac DeMarco, and he had an album called *Salad Days*. I was like, "that's a hard name. I wonder where he got that." And it's, like, a Shakespearean idiom, I think it was. I was like, "alright, let me just Google Shakespearean idioms and find one that wasn't taken," and Cold Comfort came along.

A.L.: How did you two meet?

DEVIN: Middle school, sixth grade.

CHRIS: I think we, like, *met* met in Spanish class in seventh grade.

DEVIN: Yes – or, no, sixth grade.

CHRIS: Yeah. Geez, yeah, sixth grade. We had Spanish class and science class together. And then we became friends, and then our friends all became friends.

DEVIN: And then I started playing guitar. Did you play guitar by then?

CHRIS: Yeah, I played guitar when I was in like third grade, and then in high school a bunch of other people started playing guitar.

DEVIN: I was one of them.

C.G.: How long have you guys been playing together as Cold Comfort?

DEVIN: I guess, playing together – like, because we just write the songs, we’ve been doing that for like two years now. And I guess, like, performing – because we’ve been practicing playing live and stuff, and our first show is here – so that’s like, what, six months?

A.L.: Are you guys self-taught, or did you take any lessons or anything?

DEVIN: I’ve taken lessons at, like, Guitar Center. They didn’t really go anywhere. And I took like a couple lessons for college because it was a requirement.

CHRIS: I’m mostly self-taught. I had a few lessons from, like, Sam Ash, and I learned how to play Ode to Joy on the top three strings of the guitar. And that was pretty – that was kind of it.

C.G.: So it sounds like you’re in college then?

DEVIN: Yeah.

C.G.: What do you guys go to school for?

DEVIN: I go for music industry with emphasis on technology. We go to Rowan.

CHRIS: Yeah, we both go to Rowan. I major in economics, but I’m, like, more into the music scene at Rowan than the economics scene.

C.G.: So, musical influences – what are your influences overall? Both individually and then for –

DEVIN: Cold Comfort? It really depends on what project I’m working on. Cause I have, like, a whole album I need to release, and then whatever fucking – whatever else I’m making, cause I’m always doing stuff. I’m always, like, on, you know? But, I guess, with my earlier stuff, I was really into Yellow Magic Orchestra, which is, like, an electronic pop band from Japan in, like, the ’70s, ’80s. That was a big influence for me. And you know, my album – at the time, Paramore’s newest album came out, and I had that on repeat. So a lot of those elements were, like, in there. And Midwest emo, like, you know, Mom Jeans, that sort of thing. And, I mean, I mentioned Mac DeMarco earlier, so definitely that. Probably some other shit, but those are the main ones.

CHRIS: For me, a bunch of similar stuff, sort of, at least with Devin. Like, a lot of rock stuff. I’m definitely a big emo, pop punk guy. I like Origami Angel. I like Carly Cosgrove – they’re from here. Dear and the Headlights, they’re really cool. And classic rock. That’s, like, stuff I grew up on, like the Beatles and Queen and Supertramp.

A.L.: And for the project, for Cold Comfort, are there people specifically?

DEVIN: I mean, I guess – cause usually – Cold Comfort’s mostly songs I write. And then Chris helps, like, flesh them out and stuff like that. So I guess, like, my influences would just be Cold Comfort’s.

C.G.: What does your writing process look like, then? You write stuff and then bring it to Chris?

DEVIN: Yeah. I usually start off with chords, just, like, I guess, fidgeting around – I don’t really know a lot of, like, theory and stuff, despite taking God knows how many theory classes and not absorbing any of the thing. I just kind of do it by ear. So it just starts off with chords and you know, like, two, three, four, however many. I always write in 4/4, cause that’s, like, how my brain operates. So, yeah, I always come up with the chords. And then I – this is, like, where it starts wavering. Like, it depends – I might either start with instrumental, or I might be humming a melody. And sometimes I have, like, just whatever in my notes app, and I just sing those words. It’s how they come about.

C.G.: How do you approach writing lyrics when it’s not a notes app thing?

DEVIN: Just whatever’s on my mind, really. That’s, like, how I usually – the newest album – or the album that’s coming out, that’s a breakup album. So it’s just me trying to get over my ex.

A.L.: Is that *Blossom*?

DEVIN: Yes.

A.L.: And then Chris, how about, like, for you and your part in Cold Comfort, how does it work for you?

CHRIS: So, yeah, Devin comes to me with an idea. Sometimes, like, at the very beginning, it’s just an iPhone camera video that he sends over text, and I’m like, “okay.” But even at early stages, I can start sort of hearing where it can go. And sometimes there’s, like, trial and error with songs. Like, we might have a song that we think is really good at the beginning. And then, like, we keep working on it, and then we’re just like, “alright, this isn’t that good anymore.” But, like, through it, it’s just given me a chance to try more stuff at, like, production, like, recording and stuff. So I just like fiddling around with his ideas.

DEVIN: It’s an opportunity for me to play Tetris.

CHRIS: And it’s an opportunity for me to fiddle.

C.G.: Do you have particular themes that you explore? I mean, obviously you mentioned breakups – having a breakup album.

DEVIN: Yeah, I mean, just, like, letting go, that sort of thing. And I have all sorts of ideas, you know, going back to a moment in time that's not really explored in that album. But just, like, thoughts. Like, I have a lot of – I have a lot of thoughts. I be thinking.

CHRIS: True.

C.G.: And then do you want to talk a little more about *Blossom* specifically? Like, release timeline, or anything else about it?

DEVIN: Oh my God. I started writing that two days after Valentine's Day of 2023, so it's been a while. And ironically, the first song I wrote was called Let Go, but it's now the last song on the album. But I did not let go. So, proceeding, and then I had the single "I Wish My Life Was A Sitcom" that came out recently. It's just, like – I just had so many things in my notes app. But yeah, it was just a lot of, like, just random thoughts I had in my brain. And I just combined whatever I felt like fit together as a song. And, you know, I already described my writing process and that. But yeah, I showed a lot of those to Chris, and he's already helped me with the last two projects. So it was definitely a challenge, also because we – like, now I'm actually singing on songs and stuff like that, because a lot of them were instrumental before. And I'm trying to do something completely different. So that's why it's taking so long. I keep changing my mind on what songs I want to add.

A.L.: I want to ask about how you record and produce your stuff.

DEVIN: I mean, it's all in my bedroom. I mean, honestly, Chris can talk about that more because he basically mixes and does all that. I just kind of sit there and enjoy – also, he plays a lot of the instruments on the album, even though I wrote them, because I have a horrible memory. And I'm just like, "yeah, I don't remember how to play this. Can you just do it?" So he does it. Or, like, I can't play it straight through. So I just teach him how to do it, and then he plays it straight. Yeah. So mostly you question.

CHRIS: I mean, so, for recording and stuff, it's very simple. You know, like, the Focusrite 2i2 with the guitar plugged into it, into the – into a Mac.

C.G.: DI?

CHRIS: Yeah, DI.

C.G.: Nice. Simple.

CHRIS: All free plugins and stuff, so – because I'm very – I don't know. I like doing shit for free. So, but I mean, like, yeah, it's very simple stuff. It's all in Logic. And over the years, I've been just watching YouTube videos on, like, mixing and stuff. And I'm not, like, technically good, probably, but I can make it sound, like, not

bad, so... and I've been working on Devin's project since, like, high school, and before he was Cold Comfort and just made, like, random demos. So we've been, like, working together and feeding off of each other learning more as musicians and, like, me as a producer as well. So I just – I just fuck around and find out a lot of the time.

DEVIN: Fuck around and find out.

C.G.: So then, outside of music, are there other things you guys are interested in? Hobbies, interests generally?

DEVIN: I mean – I mean, you saw my website. I have the, like, art tab. I don't know if you guys looked at that.

C.G.: I did, yeah.

DEVIN: Thank you. Thank you for looking through it.

C.G.: It deserves looking through. When you see a website like that...

DEVIN: But yeah, like, I used to paint. I don't really do it nowadays just cause I'm broke. I don't like buying, you know, materials and getting paint on all of my clothes. Like, I finally bought a new wardrobe. So I'm trying to, you know, keep it. I mean, I have experience with graphic design, like, Photoshop and stuff like that. Photography a little bit, like, with my Instagram, I have you know, film dumps, just, like, photos of me and my friends. Yeah, I think that's it. What about you?

CHRIS: Uh, I don't do too much else. I mean, I go for walks sometimes. I hang out with friends. I go thrifting with friends. I'm trying to think – I actually can't think of a lot of stuff. Sometimes I play soccer with my family cause they're a big soccer fam. And I just went to Peru to visit, like, a lot of my family. So that was really fun. So I guess I like traveling sometimes.

DEVIN: Also clothes. I'm a big fan of clothes. I like wearing them a lot.

C.G.: So we did look through the website somewhat. Saw "The Devin Experience," which is very entertaining.

DEVIN: Thank you.

C.G.: I like the, you know, early 2000s camcorder.

DEVIN: Yes.

C.G.: Sometimes even earlier than early 2000s, it feels like.

DEVIN: Depends on what camera I'm using. I have a lot of camcorders.

C.G.: So, anything you want to talk about with, like, film or that stuff at all? Like, deeper dive, you know.

DEVIN: Um, I was not expecting this question, I'm sorry. But yeah, no, I mean, it started off as, like – cause my grandma gave me an old camcorder that had, like, baby videos of me. I went to Vietnam when I was like four years old, and looking at a bunch of videos like that, and I was just like, “okay.” And I exported them all, wiped the camcorder, and then started just recording my friends. And, like, I kind of hate the name “Devin Experience.” Cause it's so, like, self-absorbent. I don't like that. But yeah, it was basically just, like, me testing out the camcorder, edited all the footage, thought what was funny, added it, uploaded it. And my friends kept really liking it. And it was like, “when are you going to do the next one?” It's like, I don't like lugging around a camcorder everywhere I go. And also, it feels weird. I'm just going up to people's faces and just, like, zooming in, zooming in and out. I don't know. But yeah, I mean, I don't know if I would say I enjoy them – like, making them. They're cool, you know, but it's more of, like, they're really easy to make. I just go on iMovie and cut whatever and just upload it, so... but, yeah, in terms of other stuff, I don't know – everything I have on that website is basically all I've been up to for the last like four years.

C.G.: Why are you guys musicians?

DEVIN: Um, I feel so – I don't like talking. You talk.

CHRIS: Oh, dang. Wait, I have to think for a second.

DEVIN: Alright, I guess I'll let you think.

CHRIS: Yeah, hold on. Let me study.

DEVIN: I mean, I guess with me, it's, like – I feel like music is a very easy way to express myself in, like, the most streamlined way. Because obviously, like I said, I paint. So, you know, I have all sorts of ideas, or, like, ways to do that. But I always say that my – I guess the end goal of what I want to do with my life is, like, I want to be able to just create stuff for a living, and, you know, have people enjoy that. And, like, whether it's painting, music, one day maybe a fashion brand, music video directing. Just, like, all sorts of stuff, you know. Like a Childish Gambino / Tyler, the Creator type of deal.

CHRIS: Yeah, definitely it's my favorite form of self expression. And with the instruments that I play, it's just, like, when you put a lot of energy into it, you can hear it. And I think that it really is something cool. And especially, like, for me, I don't like the way I talk so much. So, like, I find that just, like, hitting a drum or, like, playing guitar is easier to say some stuff than I can think. And playing drums especially is, like, so fun. And I'm not that, like, technically good at it, but, like, it's so fun when you hit it loud.