

# JUSTIN ROA

**Interviewed by The Silver Age, September 24th, 2024**

Justin Roa is a musician based in South Jersey. A member of bands Away Game and Cable-Knit, Justin is known for his intensely personal lyrics and emotional vocal performance. Follow Justin @\_jay\_roa\_ and his bands @awaygameband and @cableknit\_band for updates and show information, and listen to Away Game on Spotify.

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ALICIA LOPEZ: So, you want to say for the transcript your name, age and where you're based?

JUSTIN ROA: Yeah. I'm Justin Roa. I am 25 now, and I am from South Jersey. Egg Harbor Township, born and raised.

COLE GABORIAULT: What type of music would you say that you play in your solo stuff?

JUSTIN: Um, I would say indie rock/folk, probably.

C.G.: From what I've heard, I would say I agree.

JUSTIN: Thank you. I was questioning myself.

C.G.: Do you have any pets?

JUSTIN: Unfortunately, I do not. I do not. But I am always on the market for a dog. Always. Like, constantly, constantly looking for a dog. But it's probably not a good idea right now.

A.L.: Have you ever had any pets?

JUSTIN: I have had two hamsters.

A.L.: Oh no.

JUSTIN: Yeah, RIP Dale and Greg. They were real ones.

A.L.: Did you have them at the same time?

JUSTIN: No, Dale was first. Then he passed. He lived for a good amount of time for a hamster, maybe like a year. And then Greg came, and then he was like a couple months.

A.L.: Did your hamsters die of natural causes?

JUSTIN: They did. They did.

A.L.: That's a blessing, in a way.

JUSTIN: Right? Yeah, I think so too.

A.L.: What are your comforts?

C.G.: In life.

JUSTIN: Comforts in life. Wow. I would say... a nice hoodie. A nice hoodie, and probably, like, background TV. You know what I mean? Just, like, a TV in the background playing? Like, that's so comfortable.

A.L.: And then the follow-up: discomforts.

JUSTIN: Change. Probably change. Change is, like – I don't know about you guys, but yeah, change kind of sucks sometimes. But it is necessary.

A.L.: All the way back when we interviewed Away Game for the very first Fun House issue –

C.G.: Months ago –

A.L.: You mentioned your biggest influence is John Mayer. As you're kind of starting to do a lot more kind of indie folk-type stuff – I know Cable-Knit is labeled as “cozy rock” – you know, are there parts of John Mayer's songwriting or performance that you're hoping to pull from that maybe you don't get to do as much in Away Game, which is, like, more of a traditional indie rock band?

JUSTIN: Yeah, I would definitely say so. I would definitely say so. In terms of, like, my bigger influences for Cable-Knit, I really haven't been pulling from John Mayer too much anymore, actually. I think he's what started me to actually get to play guitar. And then from there I've traveled through my guitar journey. And I think, recently, probably my biggest influence is Alvvays, this band from Toronto. I would say they're probably my biggest influence. I take a lot of cues from them as of right now. I would say King Krule too. He's a very British – like, violently British guy.



JUSTIN: I would say those two – I’ve definitely been getting very big inspiration from those two.

C.G.: Alright, you want to talk about your songwriting process? How does that sort of start for you, and then how does it go differently for solo stuff than for things that you do as part of bands?

JUSTIN: Yeah, I – that’s a great question. I think, solo stuff, I’ve found myself not putting as much pressure on the process and kind of just letting it naturally create itself. I would say I finish solo songs way, way faster than, like, any Away Game or Cable-Knit song. I think just because I’m – I don’t know – I know nobody’s probably going to listen to it, nobody else really has to play on it. Which has been really fun and freeing, I think. So yeah, I would say it all comes, like, just me, based on what I’m feeling that day at the guitar, and then with the chords comes along the words pretty quickly.

A.L.: We know that you’ve recently started up Cable-Knit. Do you want to tell us about that band and kind of what that’s doing?

JUSTIN: Sure, yeah. Well, it started with me and my childhood best friend, Adrian. And, you know, growing up, we were kind of forced to play music together in, like, Catholic churches. And as we grew up, we found ourselves joining, you know, other bands, like me with Away Game and other different projects, and him with other different projects. At some point, we kind of just looked at each other, and we were like, “why aren’t we in a band together?” So we then decided to start up Cable-Knit, and... yeah. And along came Kira and Chris throughout the ride. So yeah, that’s basically how it started. Just kind of starting off with, like, Adrian and I’s long-time friendship, we wanted to create something together.

C.G.: If other people are interested in collaborating with you on things, how should they get in contact with you? What is the right way?

JUSTIN: Yeah, I mean, they can contact me through my personal Insta for sure. That would be great. I would love to – I’m always down for a jam. Yeah, I just love playing music.

A.L.: Do you have any plans for upcoming shows or upcoming releases for any of the bands or your solo stuff?

JUSTIN: Yeah. I would say just be on the lookout for Away Game and Cable-Knit shows. Away Game has a show scheduled kind of like every month so far until November – I mean, I guess that’s only the next two months – and Cable-Knit as well. They have a show lined up like every month so far. So yeah, be on the lookout for those. I’m excited to play around with Away Game. We’re playing in Philly a lot. With Cable-Knit we’re playing in, like, Glassboro and State College area too. So I’m really excited to just play around the area. Have people listen to our music.

C.G.: So then, is there anything that – any information you want us to include? Anything we missed?

JUSTIN: You know, in terms of inspiration, I really should shout out Adrienne Lenker. I don’t know if you guys know who that is. She is – she is amazing, and I feel like – I actually signed up to be a part of her songwriting class. I haven’t finished it at all. In fact, I only went through like the first module. But anytime I see her, listen to her, see any of her projects, like, I just want to create and, you know, just be a better songwriter or just a creative mind in general. I feel like I wouldn’t have done this solo thing if it weren’t for her for sure.