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## **CROSSES TALK HEAVIER NEW MUSIC, 2023 SHOWS, "WINKING" TO BRITNEY SPEARS**

Deftones' Chino Moreno and Far's Shaun Lopez discuss 'PERMANENT.RADIANT' EP and future plans



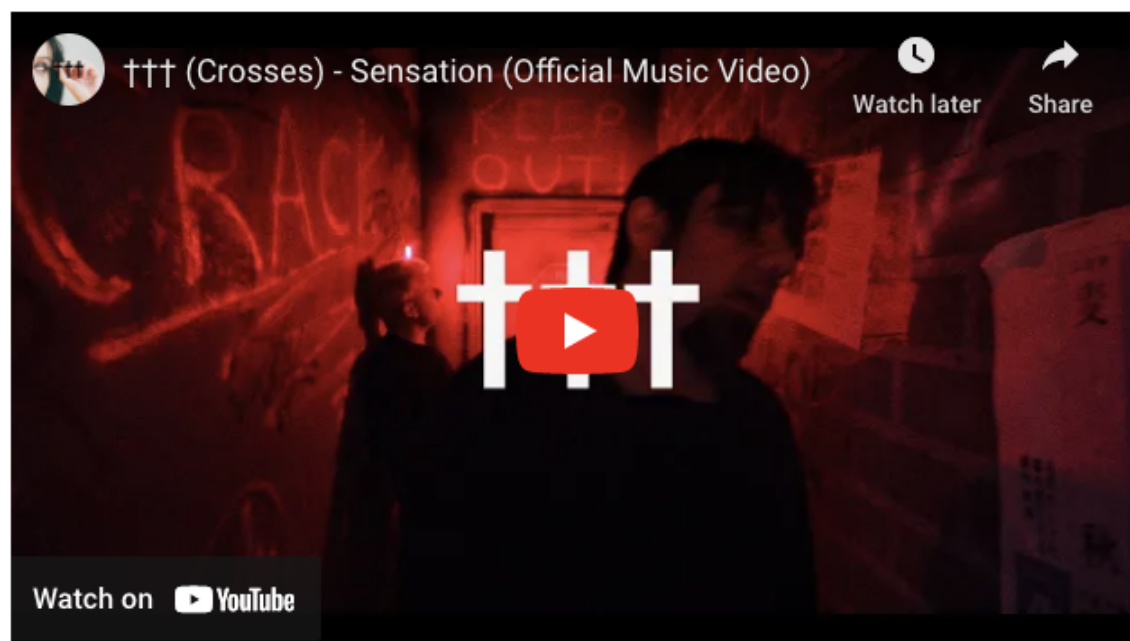
While he became a star as the shrieking, soaring frontman of alt-metal kingpins Deftones, Chino Moreno was always a synthwave guy at heart. So in 2011, he teamed with Far guitarist Shaun Lopez as well as bassist Chuck Doom to kickstart Crosses (†††), an electronic-rock side project where Moreno could live out his love for Depeche Mode, Human League and the Cure more fully.

Within the next few years, Crosses trickled out three EPs (simply titled *EP 1*, *EP 2* and *EP 3*) and then dropped their self-titled album in 2014, a captivating mélange of maximalist synth pop, darkwave and industrial dreaminess that had the gauzy eeriness of Deftones but replaced the metallic force with spacey serenity. They played a bunch of shows, dropped a couple music videos and then Crosses seemed to up and disintegrate by the time 2015 rolled around.

For eight years, the band remained almost entirely inactive (save for a couple covers they dropped in 2020 and 2021), and then in March 2022, without any warning, they suddenly returned with their first new original material since 2014, a dual single called "Initiation/Protection." What seemed like a blip on the radar was eventually followed by a whole new EPs worth of material, *PERMANENT.RADIANT*, which materialized in early December and features some of Crosses' sleekest, catchiest and heaviest music yet.

Given that the last project they released was followed by an eight-year hiatus, the group's abrupt return to form begs the question, "Is this it?" Is there more new Crosses on the way or is *PERMANENT.RADIANT* meant to hold us over for another near-decade? Will they ever play another show again?

We spoke with the the band, now trimmed down to just the duo of Moreno and Lopez, and got answers to all of those questions — promising ones, at that. We also talked about Britney Spears.



**WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO REIGNITE CROSSES AFTER LAYING DORMANT FOR SO MANY YEARS?**

**CHINO MORENO** It wasn't really anything that we put a whole big plan into. It kind of just fell back into form. Shaun and I got together just to hang out — we live in different cities now. When the first batch of music was made in 2014, we pretty much lived right down the street from each other in Los Angeles, so it was a very organic experience, how it all came together in the first place.

The second time Shaun came up to visit up in Oregon [*where Moreno lives now*], we went down in my studio and started just messing around with gear, and in a couple days' time we had a few tracks and then loosely started to [see] where that went. That was probably a couple years ago now, maybe even longer.

It wasn't anything that we really made a big plan around, it was just kind of, we get together when we can and just have fun making some noise. And sooner than later, we ended up making a chart and we had 20-plus rough ideas and at that point we were like, "Let's see what we can do." And here we are.

**WHEN DID THE SONGS ON *PERMANENT.RADIANT* GET RECORDED? HAVE THEY BEEN IN THE TANK FOR A COUPLE YEARS?**

**MORENO** Not necessarily. I think some of the ideas, but yeah, it's still a work in progress. I just got back from a session at a studio a few days ago. It's a constant thing that's going on. Some of the ideas date back a couple years, but whenever we get together we just work.

### SO THERE'S MORE NEW CROSSES MUSIC ON THE WAY?

**SHAUN LOPEZ** There is. There's stuff that's been done since before even the two songs that came out earlier this year, but we're just really thinking about how to release them. These six songs [*PERMANENT.RADIANT*] really represent what we're doing right now, and I think the newest EP, we thought about those six songs and how we really like the way they flow together. And maybe one or two of those might've been done and ready to go in February of this year. But we're not like, "Oh, we finished a song — we have to get it out right now because it's done." It's not how we roll.

### WOULD YOU SAY YOU HAVE AN ALBUM'S WORTH OF NEW MATERIAL? MORE THAN THAT?

**MORENO** I'd say well beyond [an album's worth]. I think some of the stuff's at different stages but I think that's our plan. To get something full-lengthed that would fill the spectrum and have each song kind of complement the other, and kind of put together an LP.

**LOPEZ** I think there might be five songs that are done and there might be five songs that are seeds. Like, this could really be a song, it might be a nice foundation of a track and a vocal melody but not really lyrics there. And there might be another five where the track is there and the vocal melody is there and some of the lyrics are there but it's not quite wrapped up yet. But I think that's a good description of what's going on.



**WAS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT INSPIRED THIS OUTPOURING OF NEW MATERIAL FROM YOU GUYS? LYRICAL SUBJECTS OR SOUNDS YOU WERE YEARNING TO PUT TOGETHER?**

**MORENO** I think the sounds are what spawned the creativity in the first place. Just getting together and messing with gear. Lots of different synths and drum machines and toys, basically, that sparked the creativity in the first place. There's no real preconceived concept, I don't think, behind the lot of music.

I feel like with the six songs we just released, they sort of, in my opinion, are maybe the safer of some of the tunes. I feel like a lot of the stuff we're working on right now is a little more expansive and I think that's kind of the fun part about it. We wanted to put something out to sort of solidify the return of the group without going too far from the foundation we created in the beginning.

I feel like the room that we've allowed ourselves to go with this new material is what is exciting for me. So a lot of the new stuff has that foundation there but it's a little more expansive and keeping it interesting for us.

**WHAT DIRECTION IS EXPANDING? IS IT GETTING HEAVIER? POPPIER?**

**MORENO** I'd say all over the board. There's not one sense of direction for the whole LP. But I think there's some heavier stuff. One of the songs we recorded last week is, for Crosses, certainly one of the heaviest things we've done. Although I hate saying that because people's definition of heavy can be ... whatever.

**LOPEZ** I think "heavy" is a good word for that sound, but I think what's crazy is ... it's probably the heaviest tune we've done but there's actually no guitars in it. So it's kind of a weird thing. I agree with what Chino said, it's kind of going further in every direction. Not just heavy, not just pop.

**HAS ANYONE MENTIONED HOW THE CHORUS OF "VIVIEN" KIND OF SOUNDS LIKE THE CHORUS TO BRITNEY SPEARS' "...BABY ONE MORE TIME?" WAS THAT A TOTAL ACCIDENT?**

**MORENO** I think it may have been a slight wink. I think it's funny how a lot of people are like, "Oh my god, did you hear this?" And to me, I kinda just have a little smile about it. It's one of those things where ... yeah, I would just say it's a possible little wink there.

**SO YOU WERE CONSCIOUSLY REFERENCING IT?**

**MORENO** Yeah, I'd say I embellished on a couple little things in there to give it that wink, yeah.

**ARE YOU PLANNING TO PLAY ANY SHOWS ANYTIME SOON?**

**MORENO** Yeah, we don't have a specific timeframe but we're hoping by late spring, summer [of 2023] for sure, to be out there. I think we're just trying to figure out the logistics of all of it. What the live performance is going to look like, who's going to be involved, what it would be. But we definitely want to play some of these songs live. These songs lend themselves to a lot of experimentation live. We're excited to see what that looks like.

**IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE YOU GUYS HAVE PLAYED. DO YOU THINK SEEING CROSSES LIVE WILL BE A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE THAN IT WAS THE LAST TIME?**

**MORENO** I'd like it to be. And saying that, I can't say exactly what that will be, but I always feel like, with anything, it's fun to try to think outside the box. I feel like with the last incarnation of it — there were a few incarnations of the live group, actually. In the end I always felt like we made [2014's *Crosses*], there're live drums on the record here and there, but it's basically a record kind of made in the box. And we sort of made a "live version" of that, and for that reason I feel like it leaned a little more in the rock world. Which is not a terrible thing, but I would kind of like to see where else we could go with it. Where it's not just a record that we created a sound one way and the live version is the rock & roll version of it.

So saying that, I don't want to say it's going to be completely electronic live, but I think that's kind of what I was mentioning earlier about us trying to figure out what that's gonna be. And I don't think there's a clear description