



KIDS THESE DAYS

Chris Milam

April 7, 2017 | Namesake Records

Chris Milam had a bad year.

Following a broken engagement, Milam lost everything but what he could fit in his car. Then, while on tour, that car—and everything in it—was stolen. Milam found himself with only a bag of clothes and a stack of questions: what happens when your plans fail? Where do you go when your future disappears?

Chris Milam went to the studio with a dozen new songs that tackle these questions and define his sound. He emerges after months of recording with an eagerly-anticipated new album: Kids These Days (out April 7 on Namesake Records).

For the project, Milam teamed up with Memphis producer Toby Vest [High/Low Recording, Memphis TN]. To fund the recording, Milam spent a year without a home--couch-surfing, pet-sitting, troubadouring---saving for studio time rather than rent. He called in Memphis musicians Greg Faison (drums), Pete Matthews (bass), Luke White (guitar), Jana Misener (cello) Krista Wroten (violin), and Vest (keys, effects) to illustrate the tension, loneliness, and loss in each song.

“We wanted the record to feel atmospheric, dynamic, and unpredictable,” Milam says. “It was important to me that these songs were built around live takes. Memphis musicians have a way of filling a song with life—beautiful, weird life.”

On March 3, Milam releases the album’s first single, title track “Kids These Days.” It introduces the darker sounds and carefully-layered arrangements found throughout the album. These sounds evolved in the studio, but started with an atmospheric vocal, shimmering guitar, haunting strings, and a driving drumbeat.

“Toby and I talked about combining elements of folk and classical with elements of rock and even hip hop. On one hand: there are ethereal strings and bright guitar tones. Then underneath: this cold, ominous backbeat.”

Milam’s gift for melody and lyricism revisits earlier comparisons to Simon & Garfunkel (Bookends). But this album also evokes richly-orchestrated works by R.E.M. (Automatic for the People) and Chris Bell (I Am the Cosmos). Reflecting the songs themselves, Milam’s voice has matured: plaintive vibratos shift in a flash to a shout, growl, or croon.

From its first moment, the single typifies an album full of inflection points, exploring the ways in which Kids These Days aren’t kids any more. The LP tells a story of heartache and recovery while each song examines a different answer to an underlying question: “what now”?

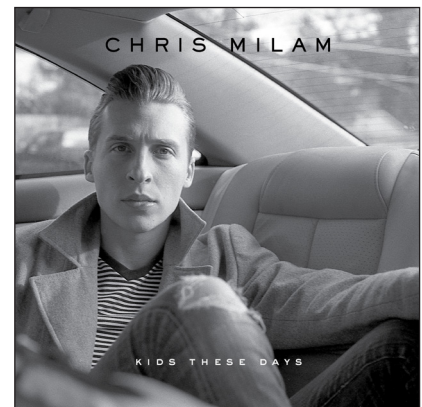
“Kids These Days,” “Autumn,” and “Tell Me Something I Don’t Know” form a breakup trilogy: the moment before, the breaking point, and the chaos that follows. The buoyant pop of “Half Life” fades, enacting love’s diminishing returns. Other tracks seek answers in addiction (“New Drug,” “Coldweather Girls”), escape and celebrity (“Hey, Hollywood”), and nostalgia (“When I Was Young”). Spirituality takes the form of a supplicant’s cry for help (“Prayer #4). In “All Of Our Ghosts,” all roads lead back to a harsh reality and uncertain future. A final moment of hard-won optimism (“The Sun Isn’t Up”) precedes a fitting epilogue. Ultimately, the album ends where Milam’s journey began: with questions.

“I’ve read about my generation growing up for a long time. But we’re here—we’re in our twenties and thirties. And I know a lot of folks who, despite hard work and good intentions, aren’t where they thought they’d be. Maybe they’re even starting over. I hope that, by telling my story, other people see theirs in it.”

For Chris Milam, Kids These Days isn’t a break-up record; it’s a break from record. The loss of a defining relationship carried with it the loss of youth. And it’s a break from that path, and that youth, that this record truly mourns.

MARCH 3, 2017
“Kids These Days” single release

APRIL 7, 2017
Kids These Days album release



TRACKLIST

1. Kids These Days
2. Half Life
3. Autumn
4. Tell Me Something I Don't Know
5. Coldweather Girls
6. Prayer #4
7. New Drug
8. Hey, Hollywood
9. When I Was Young
10. All Of Our Ghosts
11. The Sun Isn't Up
12. At The End of The Day

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