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## Chino Moreno and Shaun Lopez Talk New ††† (Crosses) Songs, Musical Inspiration, Tour Plans, and More

Moreno: "There's always other elements that are born from the live adaptation of Crosses, so I'm looking forward to [playing shows]."



Last month, ††† (Crosses), comprised of Chino Moreno(Deftones) and Shaun Lopez, released their first new original songs in eight years. The tracks "Initiation" and "Protection" are just a taste of what's to come, as the duo plan

to unveil more music in the coming months, after inking a deal with Warner Bros. Records.

The first sign that Crosses were back in the studio came in late 2020, when the outfit unveiled a cover of the Cause and Effect track "[The Beginning of the End](#)." A year later, a cover of Q Lazzarus' "[Goodbye Horses](#)" followed, along with news that more music was coming soon. In March, the two aforementioned original songs "Initiation" and "Protection" were released, cementing the fact that Crosses were back in full swing.

After releasing their 2014 self-titled debut album and three EPs as a trio (including Chuck Doom), Crosses are recording their new music as a duo, although other musicians will be featured on future tracks, including the band's touring members Dino Campanella and Jono Evans.

Moreno and Lopez recently caught up with *Heavy Consequence* to discuss the new songs, release plans for more new tracks, and the possibility for Crosses shows this year amidst Deftones' busy tour schedule ([tickets available here](#)). Moreno also discussed how he's been influenced by '80s new wave and synth-pop music, elements of which can be heard on both new Crosses singles, as well as their past releases.

Read our interview with Chino Moreno and Shaun Lopez, and see the music videos for "Initiation" and "Protection," below. Stay tuned to *Heavy Consequence* as Crosses release more new music in the near future.

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### **When did you guys back into the studio to work on Crosses music after the long hiatus?**

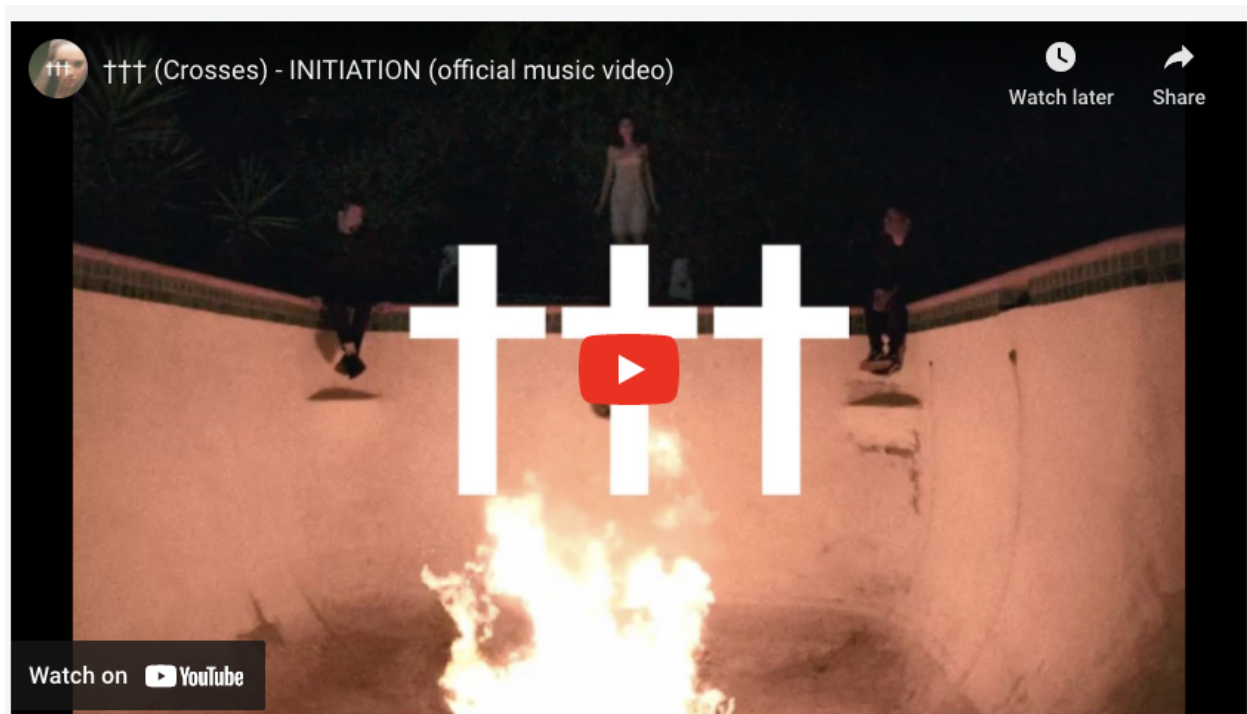
**Shaun Lopez:** We started a little bit before the pandemic. I went up to Oregon, where Chino lives, and was just there for a week. And we just started messing with stuff. There wasn't really a plan to even go in and make music. It was just like, "Oh, we're in the studio." I brought a couple keyboards and

guitars and some pedals and whatnot. And we just started messing with some stuff. And I think by the time I left, we had a few ideas that were that were pretty cool that we felt pretty good about. But that's just kind of how we always did stuff. There was never really a schedule. It was just like, "Let's make it when we feel inspired."

**Chino Moreno:** Yeah, that was ... definitely a few years ago, like [Shaun] said, pre-pandemic. And from that point, I think that excited us both — that by hanging out together, just like messing around with our gear, we were creating songs. I think we had a few maybe loop-ish ideas but there were a few things that were pretty much formatted in song form. And that's always exciting to create something when you're basically just chilling. For me, making music is always the best when it happens organically. Shaun and I have always sort of had this kinship where we just sit around and talk about music. And that usually turns into creating music, and ... he's got a nice little [studio] that he's had for some time. We've recorded a lot of stuff in that room from Deftones stuff to Crosses stuff. So it's nice to be his neighbor, actually — I used to live right around the corner from him. So, a lot of times, I would just dip in there and say, "What are you working on, Shaun?" ... I would just kind of sit on the couch and just chill while he was working on other music. And so we tried to keep that vibe when we decided get back to doing this block of [Crosses] songs.

So, I have been coming down here — I'm in L.A. right now — for Deftones rehearsals pretty much like once a month ... over the last year or so. Even though [Deftones] didn't have any immediate shows, we just kind of wanted to keep playing just to spend time together and play music together. So I'd be here for that. And I would come and I'd work [with Deftones] in the daytime and then I just go to Shaun's house and we'd just hang out. And then slowly but surely, we sort of set up this progress chart and we started to have multiple songs that were sort of very close, aside from a vocal here and a vocal there ... and we started completing stuff. And once we got to a certain point, we realized that, well, we kind of have a record, if not more material,

that we really like. Then we sort of said, “Hey, let’s make a game plan to release this.” We didn’t really shop it around too much, but ended up getting a really nice situation at Warner Bros., and having a team behind it, they helped us sort of make a plan. And since that point, we’ve just kind of been trying to meet deadlines that we have. We have a lot of stuff that’s ready to go, but the idea is to not be so urgent about it. It’s more or less just building it as we go.



**It was cool to read that the new song “Initiation” was inspired by “The World Is Yours” scene from Scarface. Can you elaborate a bit more on that track?**

**CM:** Well, the song started with Shaun basically, just with the guitar riff — there was no synthesizer in the song just yet. And I think I sent back a vocal idea on it. ... It probably wasn’t until like three or four months later that we were actually together at his studio. And I think we were listening to the Giorgio Moroder soundtrack to *Scarface*. ... So, a lot of times we’ll hear something and sort of follow that vibe. ... It just was an element that really

contrasted what was happening with the guitar, which was kind of probably the most metal thing Crosses has ever done. I don't think Crosses ever really had a palm-muted guitar part.

**SL:** But that's the thing ... I'm always trying to step out of our box a little bit ... but I think putting the synths on there was the right move because it kind of contrasted the sort of metal-ish flavor of it.

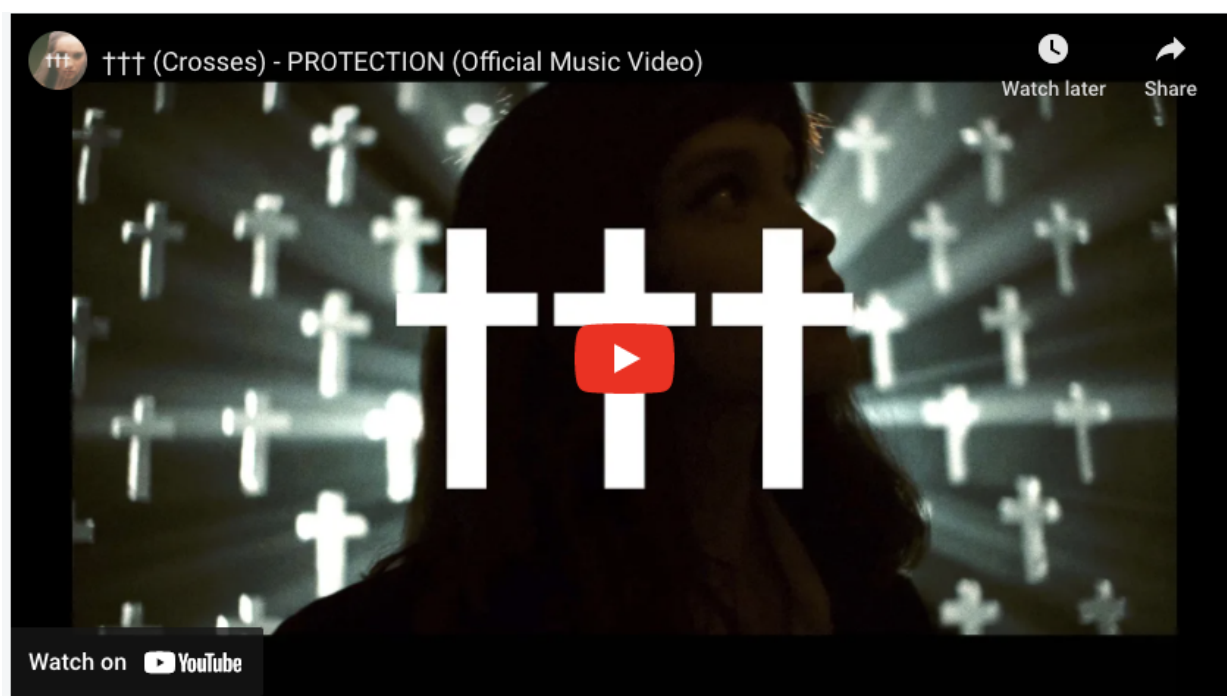
**And the other new single, "Protection," has a bit of a Depeche Mode vibe to it in the beginning. Can you talk about that one, as well?**

**SL:** That's one of the things where a lot of times Chino's just here, I'll just start going through loops or whatever that I made ... and he was like, "Oh, what's that?" And I was like, "Oh, it's like this thing" and he's like, "That sounds like [the album] *Construction Time Again* [by] Depeche Mode," or something like that. And that one was written really fast. I remember him going in, and he laid down basically what is the melody of the song.

**CM:** Yeah, I started to write lyrics to that ... and I just kind of free-styled the idea — a lot of the words just sort of came out. And those seem to be some of my favorite songs I've written throughout my career, the ones that sort of write themselves. ... It's kind of a trip when it happens. "Protection" is probably one of the newer tracks that we've written out of [the songs] we're sitting on right now. There's a lot of tunes, and a lot of finished ones, but that was one of the more recent ones. ... I think the way Shaun and I looked at it was "Initiation" sonically sort of sat [on one end of the spectrum] and "Protection" was kind of a good juxtaposition to that. I feel like there's a heavy emotional tie between both the songs, but I feel like they come from a completely different place.

Our idea is to put out songs as pairs, which is something that I've never done. ... I compare it to when Morrissey made his *Bona Drag* record. Before that record came out, I would go to the record store every now and then, and I'd

find a new single, and it had the main song on it and then it had the B-side. And they would come out randomly. And then at the end, when they were all out, they came out as the record *Bona Drag*. And I always thought that was awesome, because there was always a flow of content, and every song was different. But then when it all came together on a record, it was beautiful. And it's still probably one of my favorite Morrissey records. So I think that was sort of influential in releasing the music this way.



**Chino, you've always been inspired by '80s new wave and synth-pop, even in some of what you do in Deftones. Can you talk about first being exposed to that music as a youth?**

**CM:** Honestly, when I grew up, that music was like pop music in a way. But the thing for me, I kind of felt my attachment to it was unique because I grew up where I didn't really have any friends who listened to new wave music. A lot of the people that I went to elementary school with were into Michael Jackson. I like Michael Jackson, too, but that was more American pop — you know, Madonna, all that stuff, which I liked. But the [new wave] music to me, it was so far away, as a kid from south Sacramento. I couldn't imagine what

Europe and the UK was like. And I remember hearing Kraftwerk for the first time, and it just blew my mind. I was a kid just thinking this is music for robots. I grew up loving robots — I mean, I was obsessed with robots. And I was like, “This is music for robots, for the future,” so I loved that, and it was like breakdancing music at the same time.

So, I remember when I first heard Thompson Twins and Depeche Mode, things like that, to me they were using a lot of the same sounds, the same instruments, probably what was available then. Depeche Mode had that sound but then they had these romantic, dark sort of lyrics and themes that kind of went along with it. That was like a perfect marriage of music that was exactly what spoke to me. And then I dove deeper into stuff ... and it felt so alien, because it was so far away. So when I found it, I really attached to it. So, years later, I get in the band [Deftones], and the band I’m in is nothing like the British music or the new wave music that I grew up with, but I sort of found my way to sneak that into what we do. And I think that’s what kind of made it stand out from being in one spectrum.

**Crosses used to include Chuck Doom as a third full-time member, but you’re now recording as a duo. What has that transition been like?**

**SL:** It’s just been us two, and I think in the beginning, it was a little scary. Because it’s like a recipe for anything, if you take one ingredient out, it’s not the same. And I think we were probably both in the back of our minds thinking, “Man, can we do this?” Then, I think as we went on, we’re like, “Oh, yeah, this is this is cool.” Is it different? Of course. But I think it still holds the same spirit. I also think it kind of opened up bringing in other musicians and collaborators, which we have –nothing that’s out yet — but we have Dino Campanella, who plays drums and keys live in the group. He’s an amazing writer, and also Jono Evans, who plays guitar and keys live. He’s writing some new stuff, too. And it’s just really fun just to involve friends. It’s like, “Hey, you got something? Oh, you got something hot? Send it, bring it.”



## Deftones have a busy tour schedule in 2022, but are there any plans to take Crosses out on the road this year?

**CM:** Yeah, I hope so. That's that's the plan. I don't think we have any hard dates just yet. But we're definitely working on a timeline when we can make it happen. It's been kind of crazy. I mean, just like mentally I think even for myself sitting here, knowing that this is the longest I've ever not performed since I was 19 years old, when [Deftones] started touring. So, there's a lot of anticipation. ... This is probably the longest I'll be out with Deftones. But yeah, when I get back — obviously, I think we'll be releasing Crosses stuff amidst all this stuff — but the idea is to get a plan together to go do some shows — like Shaun mentioned, Jono Evans and Dino Campanella are still a part of it. And that's always a fun thing, too, because there's always other elements that are born from the live adaptation of Crosses. So, I'm very much looking forward to it.





