Q&A: A CHAT WITH BIRDS AND ARROWS

ing up with Valentine's Day weekend plans, fear not. On Friday night, Chapel Hill's Birds and Arrows will offer fans a preview of their upcoming record, "We're Gonna Run." The band aims to make it a Carrboro date night, as the evening falls on the same evening as the town's monthly

This week, Dive staff writer Allison Hussey sat down with husband-wife duo Andrea and Pete Connolly and cellist Josh Starmer to chat about this weekend's upcoming show.

Diversions: For the presale, you buy a ticket and get a digital download to five new songs and a handmade piece of art. Why did you decide to incentivize it?

Andrea Connolly:

I think it's because we always really enjoy adding artwork onto our music anyway, and then in a scene that's full of amazing bands where people have twenty choices, you have to incentivize somehow, because there's so many choices.

Pete Connolly: You have to have something to step it up.

AC: And we want people to remain excited about the record. I think because we know we have to sit on these tracks that we've recorded and that we're really excited about for a few more months while they're being manufactured, we can't wait to share them. We want people to hear them.

PC: Maybe not so much a few much like a standard show? months as like a month and a

AC: Well, two months, and that's a long time to sit and wait and wonder what people are going to think when you get them out there. And the artwork — Pete's a painter and I paint as well, and we just thought it would be more fun instead of just handing you a download card, handing them an individual piece of art. We're at about -150 is how many we've made so far, so we're still working.

Josh Starmer: This is how I see it. I didn't have any input on this on the art aspect, but to me I see it as sort of like — the Birds and kind of say, "Okay, here's these Arrows EPs are done in a very simi- songs that are on older records that

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If you've procrastinated on com- lar way, like the sleeves are these handmade collages, basically, and this is a five-song — basically an EP, but it's downloads. There's no actual CD, but you get the same handmade collage.

> **Dive:** This is a part of Tom Maxwell's Universal Project. What exactly is it, and how did you get involved with it?

> **AC:** We heard about Tom Maxwell's Universal Project through Lost in the Trees' last interview that they did with him, and then through Melissa Thomas, who runs our record label. And we know Tom, but we didn't know too much about the Universal.

But when I heard that interview with Lost in the Trees, I thought that they're really open and honest about what the songs are about. They play a song and then they talk about the song, and we thought they've only done this Universal Project as a sit-down interview that's just the band and Tom. But I thought, "How cool would it be to do it live, in front of people?" It's almost like Storytellers -

PC: — from the '90s —

AC: — a resurgence from the '90s. But we thought that by including Tom, we would just maybe broaden the audience in general, and people that have interest in his projects and his interviews, and then also combine that with us liking to share our stories about the songs with our audience.

Dive: So it's not going to be so

PC: It's more structured.

AC: I think we're going to play it like the way you would listen to it on vinyl, is what we'd like to do. We'd like to talk a little bit about things before it, play Side A, talk a little bit in the middle, and then play Side B. Then at the end, take some audience questions.

PC: We'll play a couple of songs

AC: A few that we've never played before that people are like, 'why haven't you played that? It's one of our favorites," so we learned these specifically for the show to

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TAKE A DATE

Time: 8:30 p.m., Friday Location: Carrboro ArtsCenter 300-G East Main St. **Info:** www.artscenterlive.org

we haven't done."

Dive: How has your sound changed since your last record? What will the new album sound

AC: I think it's different, but the main way I've been seeing it is that I feel like it maintains the honesty of our old music, but it's showing that we're branching out. And Josh can probably be a little less —I don't know. I'm so in the middle of writing it. You hear it, and you write a part.

JS: I think the songwriting is a lot more complex than it has been in the past. It's not quite as simple. It's kind of interesting. On one hand, we're trying new things and we're branching out, but on the other hand, I also feel like we're focusing.

We've tried some new things, we've kind of branched out with new, what I think are more wellcrafted songs and just sort of focused on that as that's the way we're going to make our sound.



Birds and Arrows is comprised of husband-wife duo Pete and Andrea Connolly and cellist Josh Starmer. The trio will play its new album and talk about its inspiration this Friday evening at the ArtsCenter in Carrboro.







