



### **VIEW Cover Story 2017**

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We last learned of New York Born and Toronto raised folk-pop singer Piper Hayes' journey to becoming Hamilton resident with the release of her 2016 EP *Goodbye Mister Nice Guy*. The the events of last year have been the catalyst for creating her newest collection of songs, and this time as a duo, alongside Carson Ritcey-Thorpe.

"I met Carson on his father Ted Thorpe's organic farm in Millgrove," recalls Hayes. "It was an October harvest festival with music all day long and amazing food. It was about building community, keeping sustainable farming processes alive and educating people about where their food comes from. It was three years ago, I had come to the farm to play some music and Carson was performing at the festival as well. I remember watching him play and thinking 'oh, I need that' - it's not something I normally am thinking about when listening to another musician play. It was an immediate connection we had together and we started collaborating. We had our first show together with Harry White on bass three weeks later so this album is kind of a full circle of our lives together in the last three years and the things we've faced together over time.

"My mom passed this year so we've had a different kind of year than anyone expects to have," adds Hayes. "That had a profound effect on both of our lives and we've leaned into each other in our grief. Part of this album is an honouring of my mom's life and the life she set up for us to build together. Death is a part of all of our relationships and part of being human - it's a painful process but it can also have a lot of beauty in it. We wanted to showcase songs that reflected that. My mom was my biggest champion and there was a lot of need to get this story out there - to be present in our lives - because death can have that effect on you - it reminds you of what is important. For us, it narrows down how we want to

spend our energies and our lives. We want to build community with our music and while it might sound corny, we want to make a better world. There's a song on the album called *Dear 1%* about where we spend our money. We can support local economy and create real community supporting one another."

The lead single *For All We Know* embodies the seize-the-day mentality for the recording but it's something that Hayes puts into her daily mindset and her activism. She takes music, and in conjunction with the Canadian Mental Health Association, goes to Hamilton area schools to dispel stigma around mental health with music based therapy classes. With a wealth of avenues for her music, this week the immediate focus is officially releasing the album that tells parts of the story of the last three years of life, love and learning that Hayes and Ritcey-Thorpe have experienced together on their *Piper & Carson* collaborative collection of tunes.

Recorded live off the floor in the living room of the century-old Ritcey-Thorpe family farmhouse, with Toronto's Chris Bartos as producer and performer (upright bass, piano, electric and acoustic violin, electric guitar, moog, vocals) with Hayes (lead vocal, rhythm guitar), Carson Ritcey-Thorpe (vocal, lead guitar), Kevin Neal (peddle steel) and Leah Ritcey-Thorpe (back-up vocals), the new collaboration retains brains of Hayes' core musical shades from her previous work but this time focuses on the roots and folk to let the songs shine in all their rustic glory. For the live CD release party this Thursday, Piper and Carson will be joined by Bill Simms on upright bass and Sam DeRosa on harmonica.

"We're excited to be playing this release show and we're hoping for a real party," says Hayes. "I tend to bring a lot of energy when I perform so I like having people feeling comfortable to express themselves in whatever way they want to experience the music so if that's dancing or whatever it is, everyone is welcome to come and feel the music the way they are moved. We can't wait to showcase this music - we're really proud of what we've created."