

From the file menu, select PRINT

## Chris Koster: The Speed of Music

On the Canadian music circuit, Chris Koster could be considered an anomaly. Rather than being a 12-song act that puts his best dozen on an album and calls it a day until the record company calls again, Koster is a man that's so dedicated to the creation of new tracks that he has run out of places to put them. Sure, 12 made the cut for his 2007 sophomore album *Sex, Love & Morality*, but that also meant that over 100 were left behind this time around.

When discussing the bulk left over, Koster hints at there being much more than the 100-plus remaining from this album cycle. Having finished *Sex, Love & Morality* over a year ago and not having the album come out until this February, many more songs are taking shape behind the scenes. Right now, he estimates that he has three to four albums' worth of material just sitting around ready to release, but because of the way the music industry currently works, it could be many years before these tunes emerge.

"I've come to terms with the fact that I'll never feel like I'm exactly current with where I'm at, at the time – I think it's the same for a lot of people. It takes a lot of time to do things properly, especially when you're someone like me who has little to no profile and you're just trying to get your name out there and trying to get people to listen," explains Koster from his Kingston, Ontario area home. "You have to be really meticulous in the process of when to put something out and when the best time is and how to do it. It's a necessary evil. A lot of the time you feel that you're a couple albums ahead of yourself, but I think it's always going to be that way for me. "It is a fear, but in a sense I try to be really, really careful about what I write and I try to write things that aren't dated to one particular time or one particular sentiment," he continues when asked about his songs' calendar lives. "It is a concern, but at the same time, I'm trying to write songs that have a shelf life. If I have to wait six months for the record to be released, I have faith in the quality of the work that it's not going to be irrelevant by the time it comes out."

The work Koster describes has a grandiose rock vibe with distinct pop dynamic that includes a lot of beat-driven synthesizer work – oh, and songs of sex and love. When it came time to bring this vision to life though, Koster – for the first time in a long time – let go of some of the reins and brought in one very important fan to offer some creative perspective: mega producer Bob Ezrin. Having worked with Kiss, Pink Floyd and Alice Cooper (just to name a few) Ezrin helped Koster maintain his direction while providing insight into what lyrics work, and which others needed more of a straightforward approach.

However – just to clarify – Ezrin was not the producer of this album. As a multi-instrumentalist and generally a very controlling guy when it comes to maintaining his musical vision, having Ezrin come in and help on *Sex, Love & Morality* was a big a step for Koster – something he describes as "a real learning curve," but one that definitely got this album to become realized.

"I have a deathly fear of sounding like everybody else and I know in my brain that listening to other people's opinions is not going to change that, but sometimes I want to be completely insular and make my own decisions," says Koster.

"Sometimes, I'm flailing, and just begging for somebody to tell me whether this is good, or bad, or shit, because with the way I work, it's really easy to get lost in [the question] 'what the hell is this?'

“I go through a wide range of emotions – literally from one end of the spectrum to another when I’m recording. Not on all songs, but on certain songs where I’ll think it’s the greatest thing ever put to tape one second and then listen back to it again and just think it’s shit,” he elaborates. “You just try to find the middle ground and be objective but also be extremely picky and extremely honest. It’s weird, because when I hear myself talking about this – it’s not obviously something I sit around and talk to my friends about – but when I hear myself talk about how I work, in a way it’s misrepresentative too because I’m someone who works extremely fast. It almost sounds like I labour over a song – but it’s not like that at all.” P  
[ADAM GRANT]

CHRIS KOSTER  
w/Inner City Surfers, The Populars  
@ Mansion House  
5 William St., St. Catharines.  
Monday, May 5, 10pm.  
chriskoster.ca