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Pop & Hiss

THE L.A. TIMES MUSIC BLOG

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An Internet star is born: Chris Dane Owens to singlehandedly slay bad economy via new music video

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The Internet has spoken. Calabasas-based musician [Chris Dane Owens](#) is December's chosen one. Last month, Owens was a virtual unknown. But this week, the singer/guitarist is seemingly [all over the Internet](#) with [this outlandish music video](#). We're not sure what's driving it, but G4's [Attack of the Show](#) and [Videogum](#) are the likely instigators of CDO's [newfound fame](#).

So why all the fuss? Let's just say that Owens, along with director [Robert Short](#), has made either the greatest, or the worst, music video of all time (that looks as if it was shot in the 1990s, and sounds straight out of the 1980s), depending on your taste.

His YouTube video tags -- Narnia, LOTR, witches, angels, knights, Final Fantasy, romance, Eragon, ghosts and spirits -- pretty much tell you everything you need to know. Watch the video above, which was filmed earlier this year over five days in various California locations. Our interview with Owens is after the jump, wherein he reveals the secret of his awesomeness (hint: it's anime).



I have so many questions about this video, I scarcely know where to begin. Can you give us a brief synopsis of the "Shine on Me" plot?

There's a resurrection that happens, that's kind of my journey into the spirit realm. My character is kind of touched by the hand of God, if you will. That's where the "Shine" message comes in. It's kind of a little resurrection story.

What's going on with the battle scenes and the book?



My character is part of the witches kingdom, which is the second kingdom. I'm actually part of their army and an enforcer, a general, if you will. I meet that young lady Arra who is secretly being trained by the angels and they hand her a book. That book is the Book of Golden Symbols which can only be understood by the spirit, by the living soul. She's being trained secretly to be the queen of this realm, to overthrow the forces of darkness. My character actually meets her and falls in love with her and decides to leave the dark side, so he has an epiphany.

OK, got it. I think. Are you finding that people are getting the message of the video?

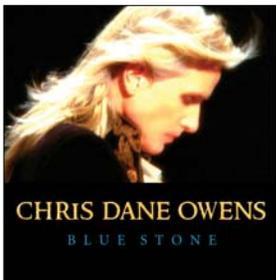
I find that people like putting together the pieces of the film for themselves and I hope that they will attach their own meaning to it.



Are you surprised by just how quickly your video has spread? You uploaded it in October, but "Shine" didn't really take off until a few websites picked it up late last week.

I was in a mix session on Friday and all of a sudden I'm getting all of these e-mails and I don't know why. I initially got a very small amount of hits, and now, it got 30,000 [near 50,000 by Wednesday morning] hits over the weekend. I can't account for it. I don't know what's going on. I've gotten calls from the Wall Street Journal and a company that distributes to thousands of video retail chains

throughout America [that] would like to represent the video and get it out to clubs and bars and fitness centers and restaurants, and that's really exciting for visibility, so it's all kind of exploding right now.



What do you attribute your overnight Internet celebrity to?

I don't know what to attribute it to. My album is not done yet. All I really did was put the video up on YouTube thinking, 'Well, maybe I'll get some comments or response before I go out in the marketplace with it.'



What do you do for work when not fighting the forces of evil on horseback?

In addition to being a musician, I'm actually a television show creator and producer. I have a [production] company and I've been creating shows for a number of years. We just got an Emmy nomination this year and we have a series going on the Style network called "Instant Beauty Pageant" that my partner and I created and we produced with *The Wolper Organization* [who are on the Warner Bros. lot]. We had a series on Animal Planet called "Who Gets the Dog?"

What prompted you to make such a lavish music video for "Shine On Me"?

I wanted to get back into music. I took a couple years off of my music career to establish my production career. And so when I got back into it and decided to do an album, the market had changed since I had been in it last. I don't need a major label, per se, and granted, I had made some pretty good money as a television creator and executive producer, so I funded myself and I got together with my good friend Bob Short, who directed it along with me.



How did you guys come up with some of the incredible shots? Bob created a lot of really cool fantasy environments that you see in the video. It's a [redacted at Owens' repeated request, but trust us, it's a lot] budget. This is me taking a leap of faith, if

you will. It's my dream and my passion and I really want to say something specific and interesting. I had a little bit of success before in the Asian market, and the video is really targeted more toward that Asian market.

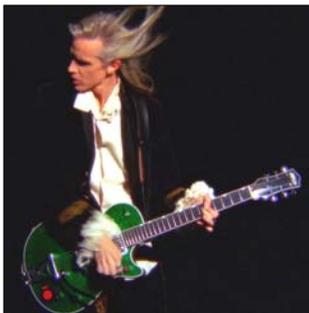


So "Shine On Me" is just a teaser then? Will there be more video like this in the future or a full-length movie?

My intention is to develop a manga [comic book] for this story and these characters, for which I call "Arra of the Third Kingdom." My hope is to tell the story in two more installments, to take these characters on more of a journey, with different songs from the album, and maybe in the second or third video, do something like Michael Jackson did where he sets everything up in a 5-10-minute movie before the video begins. There may be a 5-minute prologue so people understand more where the story is coming from.

The songs on your MySpace page are different than "Shine On Me." What can people expect on a full-length?

The music on the album will be what I'd call alt-rock with pop sensibilities. The tracks on the MySpace page are very diverse, some techno stuff, and some more straight-forward rock. The '80s vibe is my thing... bands like *U2*, *The Cure* and *Flock of Seagulls* had a really big influence on my thinking and guitar work, and I'm sure my vocal stylings are influenced by that as well.



What's the deal with your green guitar?

I'm kind of geeky about my guitar, it's a Gretsch sparkle jet... a custom Gretsch, customized quite a bit with all new hardware.

Would you describe yourself as a geek?

I'm way geeky! I'm a comic book guy and anime guy. That's my passion and I'm hoping that comes through. I think it does. I think a lot of people are picking up on that.

And what do you say to those who are mocking you on message boards all over the Internet?

It makes me laugh...it's all good to me, honestly. Some of the comments really amaze me, especially the ones where I feel the people are really getting the message of the song. It's about love and transcending all. There's a battle going on... so the basic message is that the world is a cold and harsh place and it's through true love that we find hope.

I noticed a couple of familiar-looking shots in the video. Are those grabs legal?

We licensed a few still images that we used cut-graphic motion on them to make them look like the characters are in a 35 mm *film*. The aerial shots, etc. that give it more grandeur and scope (*and fill in the blanks*). Towards the end, the shot with the ship, that's from "Interview with a Vampire." When I found that shot and licensed it, I got very excited about the scope of it all and the story I wanted to tell. *Loads* of other shots were all created, like all that fortress stuff was my director -- he did the visual effects on that and did a great job on creating the witches' castle and the interior.

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