

NEVER LOVED

There was a period of time when Camm Knopp wasn't sure what he was going to do. He'd already played in a few bands and had even ghostwritten some songs for another artist, even approaching acclaimed producer Matt Squire (Demi Lovato, All Time Low, Panic! At The Disco, Ariana Grande) for his expertise. The problem was that nothing was really clicking. Undeterred and still inspired, however, he began writing songs for himself, using his own frustrations as inspiration. Never Loved wasn't even a glimmer in his eye at the time. That soon changed.

"I was going from project to project and it just wasn't right," he explains. "I was in college and not having a good time. I didn't know what I was doing or what I was going to do. I knew what I loved and what I wanted to do, but people thought I was crazy that I wanted to make music. I was just fed up and felt like I had to do something, because I was so frustrated and wanted to move forward."

Knopp took the reins by sending a few demos to Squire to see what he thought. They hadn't had all that much interaction and had never met in person, but Squire remembered him and, more importantly, really liked his demos. And so the pair began working together and everything just fell into place. After a period of creative stagnation, Knopp had found the inspiration he'd been lacking. "Dead Inside" – this debut EP's punchy, catchy, hooky opener – was the first track the pair recorded and it proved to be something of a catalyst. In fact, Knopp was so certain about these songs and working with Squire that he took the plunge and self-funded the recordings.

During this time period, while Knopp was in and out of the studio, he started assembling the rest of Never Loved, namely bassist and long-term friend Jay Gayoso, and drummer Kevin Blackburn, who the pair knew through the local scene. And while Knopp already had the absolute courage of his convictions for this set of songs, the chemistry with the other two cemented it. Slick yet savage, they navigate his internal anxieties, insecurities and emotions via crunching, riffs and a knack for killer yet off-kilter hooks and soaring choruses. Underpinned by a '90s grunge/alt. rock aesthetic, these four songs are vital, heartfelt bursts of intelligent and emotional angst. "Dead Inside" battles against Knopp's feelings of creative stagnation and uncertainty, while "Charged" is an almost sinister take on power-pop, all fizzing, fuzzy guitars, visceral screams and existential subject matter. Yet, Never Loved isn't a band who want to stick to just one genre, either – "Gone" is one long crescendo that's riddled with intense electronic flourishes, while "Goddamn" is a perfect pop song that doesn't sound anything like a pop song and is all the better for it. Not only that, but it leaves the door wide open for the future.

"With this EP," says Knopp, "I was just writing to write. Everyone always says that you've got to pick a sound, but I'm like 'No way – just write you.' People will see with this EP see that we have a few different sides, so we can go down different paths in the future. I like that we're not pigeonholed into a genre."

Together, these four songs mark Knopp out as a truly passionate, skilled songwriter, and Never Loved as a tight, cohesive unit. Each track also echoes the grand ambitions and ideas they have when it comes to being in a band. This is what they want to do and the only thing they want to do. They've already shown they've got the work ethic, the drive and the determination to make it happen, not to mention the songwriting chops. It's early days – this debut EP on Equal Vision

is just the very first step – but they've already looking far into the future, both literally and metaphorically.

"I've already written a lot of new material," he says of Never Loved's next steps. "The goal is to build a really solid fan base – and to be the biggest band in the world. It'd be awesome to be the next Nirvana, but we want to just keep growing and become the best we can be." On the basis of this EP alone, none of that actually seems like too much of a stretch.