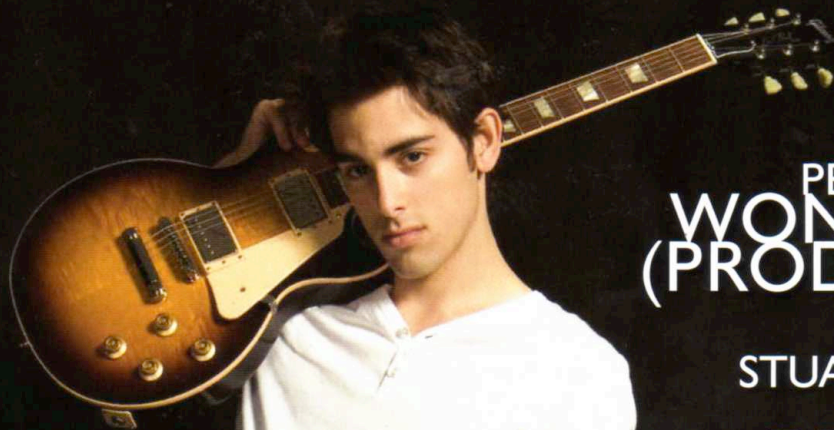


OCTOBER | 2010

Mann About Town

| LIVING WELL IN NEW YORK |



PETER SHAPIRO
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STUART SLOTNICK
FIGHTS
FOR RIGHT

RABBI SHMULEY
BOTEACH
IMPARTS
INSPIRATION

JACKSON HARRIS MAKES SWEET MUSIC

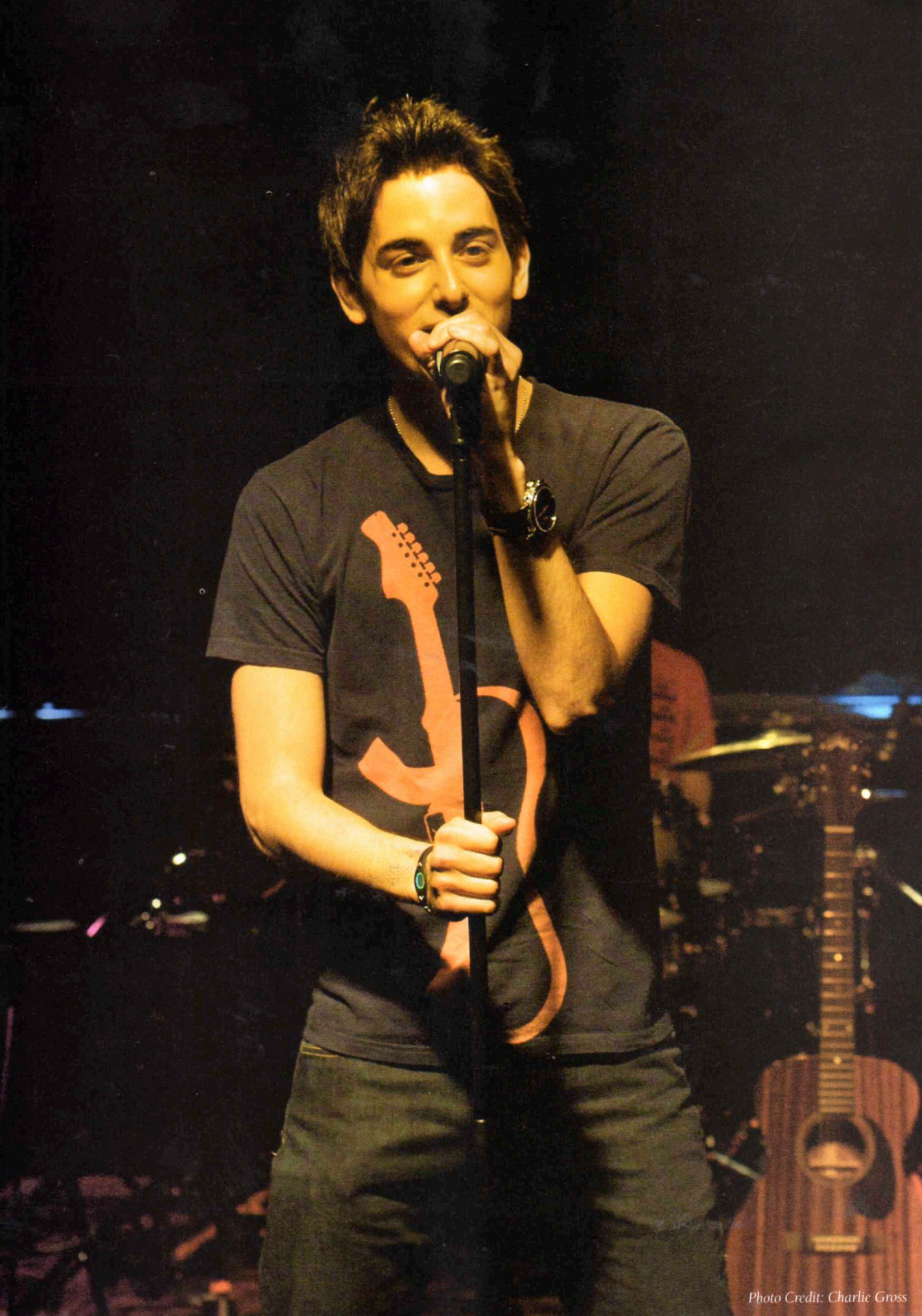


Photo Credit: Charlie Gross

Jackson Harris

Following His Dreams

by Shayna Halper

Lots of times you don't know what interests you most till you start talking."—Holden Caulfield, *The Catcher in the Rye*.

It has been covered in books (*The Catcher in the Rye*), movies (*Cruel Intentions*), TV shows (*Gossip Girl*): the Upper-East Side-prep-school kid, the one whose life is all mapped out (prep school, college, law school) by the time he's six years old. There is a stereotype, sure, but what happens when someone doesn't fit? When, despite the road that's available to him, he chooses a more difficult path? The one kid that ends up defying what is expected of him?

Meet Jackson Harris.

Jackson Harris's story seems short. But it is very simple to him. He has made the decision to do what makes him happy. Harris chose not to go to college when he graduated from Riverdale Country Day. He admits that from a young age it was music that caught not only his ear, but also his heart.

Harris's heart is what he puts into his music. He's honest and he is straightforward. He believes in total communication. As a songwriter Harris wants to be relatable. He wants his listeners to feel his words, and he speaks miles in his songwriting.

It seems like a dream for a kid who

likes music, and loves singing to actually become a pop star. It also seems like a dream that one of the most popular current to date rappers is Jewish. He's called Drake. Jackson Harris will tell you Drake is one of his favorite musicians.

Zac Efron, Justin Bieber... Jackson Harris? That's what *Seventeen* magazine online says, according to a July 2010 online posting. The website refers to Harris as a "rising musical sensation" and a "heartthrob." To be placed in a league with Efron and Bieber, many would think this is an accomplishment in itself. Harris says he is "incredibly honored." At 22 years old, Harris knows this is just the beginning and there is no limit. "You can literally do anything if you keep at it long enough," says Harris.

As a young boy, Harris proudly admits he "sang around the house all the time." With a noticeable "ear" when he banged out tunes on a tiny toy piano at the age of three, to being moved out of the chorus to a solo spot in a lower school play, there was never any doubt to Jackson where his career would lie. And he calls himself a good Jewish boy because "he loves his mother." Harris says his mom wanted to see her son happy, and she gave him the opportunity to take singing lessons. Right now is the time for Harris to find out if his love for singing could really be something more than just a love.

"My mother always encouraged me to follow my dreams," says Harris. Some of his initial musical inspirations were the Beatles, Frank Sinatra, and Billy Joel.

Now music is a life, and Harris calls it a "career." Music has become synonymous for college in Jackson's world.

"School isn't for everyone. Classes, tests, studying, everyone has different interests," says Harris. "Some of my friends were more academic, some were more athletic, and I think I was sort of the dreamer of the group." Harris took his singing career into his own hands and is making his own dreams come true.

Harris's love for the stage started when Harris was cast to play Frank Sinatra in a middle school performance. Although he forgot all the words, he enjoyed it so much he gave it another try. Jackson admits to loving the stage, and the feeling that comes with being on it. Harris started playing in a garage band in ninth grade when he was attending Riverdale

*"A bad situation
or a good situation,
I want people to feel
it, feel like I sing and
write what they feel"*



Photo Credit: Charlie Gross

Country School. It was fun while it lasted—the group opened a few shows in New York City—but soon the garage band ended. Harris explains there were no garages in New York City for them to play in.

He was finished with high school. Harris graduated as planned and took his music into his own hands.” Young and inexperienced, Harris still felt big.

Big enough to make the decision that he would not go to college. Now Harris practices everyday with his guitar, just playing and “figuring it out,” he says. “When all my friends went off to college, it was difficult to figure out how to explain to people that I wasn’t. I hated going to parties with my old friends who would ask, ‘where do you go to school?’ ‘What do you do?’ I do something different, and it became too hard to keep telling every one.” He often found himself saying, “Too make a long story short...” and the story went from there. It became annoying to even answer the question, and the frustration built up.

“Long Story Short”, explains Jackson

“was born out of a necessity. I wrote this song to explain why I chose this path. This is real to me. I am not in it for fame or money; it’s what I love to do. As I say in the song, ‘I am taking the road less traveled.’”

This epiphany would prove to be the thread that holds together *Long Story Short* (album). Produced & written by Jackson, Valentine (Push Play), Andy Marvel (Avril Lavigne, Jessica Simpson, Celine Dion) and Jeff Franzel (’N Sync, Taylor Dayne, The Temptations), perhaps nothing describes this feeling better than the instantly catchy lead single, “Long Story Short.”

Harris took the frustration and put it into simple words. Simple words that mean a whole lot, which is the key to a lot of his song writing. “A bad situation or a good situation, I want people

to feel it, feel like I sing and write what they feel,” says Harris.

Often times that is heartache. The song, “I Don’t Speak Silence” reflects his ability to communicate and take the good from every situation. Similar to Taylor Swift’s style, Harris says “that’s what you get for breaking my heart, but look what I got.”

While a good story is in the telling, Jackson made it his business to tell those tales in four-minute capsules. The creation of his songs came from the strength that motivated him to challenge opportunity. His musicality is the outcome of lessons learned by living a life that is uniquely Jackson. While his exposure to many of the better things was plentiful, he never used it to get further. Instead he infused himself with a complete confidence, taught himself

“All you have to do is go to a different neighborhood in Manhattan on any day, and you can experience a different world”

to play guitar by watching musicians such as John Mayer and Coldplay on youtube, and got to work.

For Jackson Harris, home is where the heart is. And for him it's in his music and in New York City. You may have seen a Red Ford 1955 pick up truck around NYC with Harris riding out back. Harris did a cover and music video of Jay-Z and Alicia Key's "Empire State of Mind." It was at the Yankees World Series game when Jay-Z and Alicia came out and performed their song live that Harris came to his own realization. "It was clear during that performance that the song had become the new unofficial anthem for NYC, so that's when I decided I wanted to do my own take on it," says Harris.

The cover video featured Harris riding around New York City on the back of the 1955 Ford. The idea is to invite everyone into Jackson's world, to make everyone part of his accomplishment. "It's not just my work, it's everyone's," says Harris.

The video includes all areas of Manhattan. "Being in New York City is everything, I don't really know any place like it." And at the same time, Jackson doesn't always know New York City as the place he grew up in, but also a place he calls "something new."

"All you have to do is go to a different neighborhood in Manhattan on any day, and you can experience a different world," says Harris. The singer has always been into making music. It is the dream he choose to follow despite how many people could question "Why?" Jackson Harris questions "Why not?"

So now drinking tea is something Harris does religiously. He has taught himself the guitar and piano to accompany his singing and songwriting.

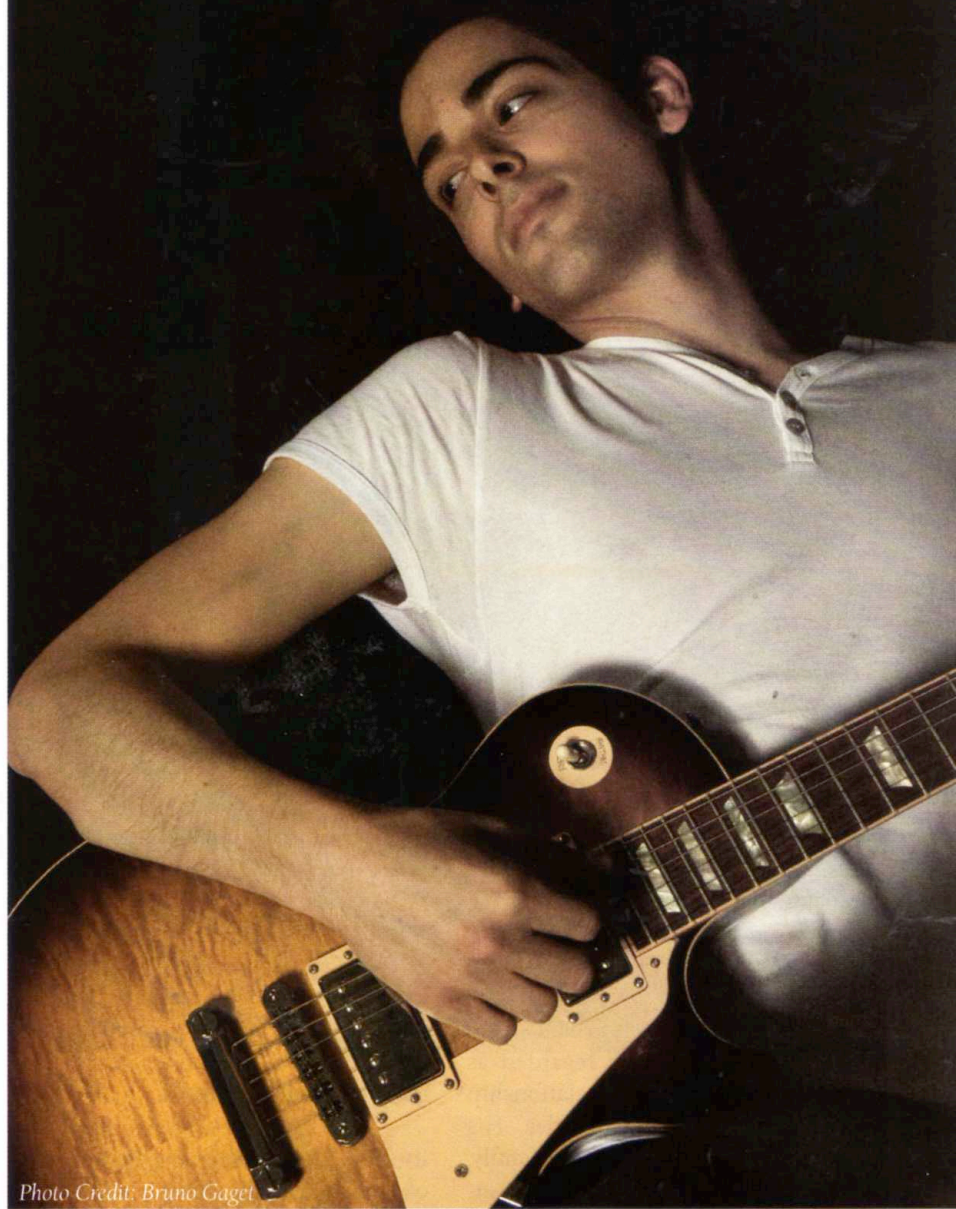


Photo Credit: Bruno Gagel

The artist loves his candy sour—sour patch to be specific—but he speaks sweetly like his favorite French toast.

"I do music," says Harris. Music is something Harris has always done. And this time it's the song "Too make a long story short."

With his six-song EP under his belt, fans clamoring to his Facebook and Twitter pages and New York and LA showcases scheduled, Jackson no longer stresses out when he's at parties. "Now, when people ask me where I went to school, I say UCLA—Under the Corner of Lexington Avenue! By the end of listening to this record, you will know what it took for me to get here. I went to the school of life. I'm really proud of the work I've done and

the music I am making. This album is my diploma."

"To make a "Long Story Short" here's what I've been up to, I've been blazing my own trail, meeting new people, falling in and out of love. The album is really the autobiographical story of my life [so far]." **M**

Long Story Short is available for purchase on iTunes.

For more information on Jackson Harris, please visit:

<http://thejacksonharris.com>

http://twitter.com/Jackson_Harris

<http://www.facebook.com/jacksonharrisnyc>

His EP will be released on 77 East Records, a subsidiary label of Universal.