



## The Broken West

Words by Bryan Borzykowski

The day Ross Flourney found out that his band The Broken West were going to be on Merge Records was the best day of his life. "I was so excited," says the lead singer from his home in L.A. "It was a dream come true. I had dinner with my girlfriend and then the band got together and got drunk."

Three and a half months later, Flourney's still on cloud nine. After slogging it out in Los Angeles for two years with only an EP to show for it, the band is taking everything in. They've got a six-week tour on the horizon, a brand new full-length to promote, and their media blitz has just begun (this was the band's first interview since signing with Merge). Needless to say, the group's a little giddy. Flourney even took an entire morning off work for this interview.

Getting to this point, though, was not without some hiccups. Until last fall, The Broken West were known as The Brokedown. For two years they played under this moniker, but an Illinois punk band put a stop to that. "We knew there was another band called The Brokedowns, which was our original name, so we dropped the *s* and thought that would be fine." Turns out it wasn't. The Brokedowns sent The Broken West a cease-and-desist letter, forcing the band to come up with a new name. "We were upset," says Flourney. "That was the name we were used to and that's how we thought of ourselves."

Since the band had finished recording their debut album, *I Can't Go On, I'll Go On*, the pressure to come up with a new moniker was on. "We were in panic mode," says Flourney. "We needed a new name really soon so we could keep on track for our January release."

After contemplating various names, such as Western Bells and, Flourney's choice, Southern Jet ("people in the band and at Merge thought that was an awful name"), the group settled on the phonetically similar Broken West. But, as Flourney points out, it doesn't really matter what their name is—it's the music that's going to speak to people.

With *I Can't Go On, I'll Go On* already garnering positive reviews, it's likely the disc is going to reach a lot of '60s pop-loving indie kids. It draws heavily from The Byrds, The Kinks, and Big Star, among other infectious pop bands. With their contagious choruses, lush harmonies and a mean tambourine, The Broken West won't be relegated to The Golden State for much longer. But the band isn't setting their sights on world domination just yet. Like every young and naive group, they just want to play. "Our job is to turn as many people on as we can," says Flourney. "Everything else is gravy."