FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Friday, May 17, 2013

The Sweetest Condition Launches Debut ‘Truth and Light’ EP

“Musical chameleons.” – Indy InTune

Meet Jason.
An adventurer with a chip on his shoulder, this pianist has run the gamut from composer to frontman to music producer and back. The gearhead of the group, his mathematical brain computes numbers and figures like a mad scientist. He can design blueprints for almost any creation, bringing visions to life—a real musical Doctor Frankenstein. His reach is all-encompassing. He turns words into music with the touch of his keys, channeling emotion through his instrument like a medium.

Meet Leslie.
She’s half-peeled. In a new era where technology reigns, simplicity is no longer the way of life. This girl has traded in her heels for steel-toe boots. She’s an artist, an observer, a student, a teacher and a survivor. Her peacemaker mission involves lifting up others to the light, while her own demons nip at her toes. For her, The Sweetest Condition means fight or flight. She’s empowered to grace by writing what she feels. Her words come from a vulnerable, very real place.

Pictured: Jason Reed Milner (Keyboards/Guitar) and Leslie I. Benson (Vocals/Lyrics) of The Sweetest Condition
About the Band
The Sweetest Condition (2012 – present) is an Electronic/Industrial/Alternative Rock band founded in Fishers, Ind., by singer-songwriter Leslie Irene Benson (Burning Veda, Irene & Reed) and pianist Jason Reed Milner (Nimbus, Form 30, Seven Mile Radius, Irene & Reed).

Blurring the lines drawn by synth-based bands like Depeche Mode, Nine Inch Nails, Ladytron, The Birthday Massacre, and Shiny Toy Guns, Fishers-based band The Sweetest Condition (TheSweetestCondition.com) found inspiration to launch the duo's first EP, "Truth and Light," which they released internationally on iTunes, Amazon, CD Baby, and Google Play, on April 30, 2013. The five-song introduction to an upcoming full-length album, in the works for late fall of 2013, focuses on themes of sin and salvation, sensuality versus spirituality, holding on and the art of letting go.

The Art of Letting Go
Haunted by the suicide of her high school sweetheart in 2011, singer-songwriter Leslie I. Benson penned the poem that became “The Ghost & the Girl,” the band’s first single and also their first original music video. The stripped-down, intimate track holds nothing back, describing the nightmare of losing a loved one at such a young age. The theme continues throughout the EP in songs like “Where is the Light.”

“When he passed at just 30 years old, we were still friends; he had such a strong influence on my years as a young musician that helped define who I am today,” Benson says. “We formed our first garage band together with our friends, Mr. Eyetooth & the Majestic Moose, a metal/gothic rock band during high school. He played guitar, and I sang. He encouraged me up until the end to keep playing. The last time I saw him was at our show (in my hometown of Dayton, Ohio), when he approached me and said, ‘Leslie, I’m proud of you.’ That’s the last night I saw him alive. His memory and those last words kept playing in my head. For nearly seven months I was paralyzed from the loss. When I almost gave up on music, those words kept me going. He would’ve wanted me to keep trying. Music was his love as much as it is mine.”

From Lounge Act to Emerging Electronic Band
Armed with five new songs, The Sweetest Condition’s “Truth and Light” EP features the vocals and lyrics of Benson and the music of seasoned electronic/industrial rock musician Jason Reed Milner, who found his musical footing in the 1990s with his band Nimbus, which became Form 30, and then, more recently, Seven Mile Radius, a project he formed with his best friend, Von Stultz. Between playing keyboards, guitar, and standing in for a short time as a frontman, Milner, a Terre Haute, Ind. native, has had over 20 years of experience in the “underground” Midwest music scene.

In 2009, he and Benson formed a dark-tinged Americana band peppered with hints of piano pop, jazz, and ragtime. As Irene & Reed, they released their debut album, Closer to Home, in March of 2010, which had been recorded at Sony Tree Studios in Nashville, Tenn. After a full year of playing shows at piano bars, restaurants, and venues throughout Indiana and Ohio, the duo temporarily shelved the project in favor of a new musical direction.

“Turning in my high heels for combat boots, I decided once again to embrace my darker musical roots (Depeche Mode, Bauhaus, Nine Inch Nails, Siouxsie and the Banshees, etc.),” Benson says. “We’ve been called ‘musical chameleons,’ due to our ability to shift between performing everything from torchy lounge songs to gritty, aggressive rock. This new band, The Sweetest Condition, is giving us the opportunity to be
more versatile in a live setting. We’re gearing up for a tour with the onset of our upcoming full-length album. The songs have already been written; we’re just fine-tuning tracks, recording final vocals, and then everything will head to the studio for mixing and mastering.”

“Truth and Light” was mixed and mastered by Milner’s brother Brad, a former sound engineer from Sony Tree Studios.

**When Music Had ‘Balls’**

“Remember back when music had balls? That’s what we’re hoping to bring back. None of this candy-coated, cookie-cutter stuff you hear on the radio,” Milner says.

Milner’s early music influences by artists such as Trent Reznor are evident in the tracks on “Truth and Light,” with songs like “You Don’t Know Me,” which is overlaid with Benson’s angst-ridden alto vocals. However, the duo’s favorite track on the EP, as well as the fans’ favorite, is the addictive floor-shaking bass sound and dark, foreboding 1980’s synth chords of “The Wound,” a throwback to songwriters like David Gahan and Martin Gore of Depeche Mode. It’ll find its way on “repeat” in your stereo.

**The ‘Sweetest’ Army**

With help from an unofficial street team of friends around the globe and band manager Mark Cline, a music marketing student from Full Sail University, The Sweetest Condition has ranked No. 1 on the local Indianapolis, Ind. electronica charts on ReverbNation.com for a steady two months. The band has also reached No. 42 on the U.S. electronica charts on ReverbNation.com, and is ranked No. 119 globally in the electronic music category. They have yet to play their first live tour.

“We’re honored and humbled to be among some of our favorite electronic artists on the charts, including Ayria and The Azoic,” Benson says. “Just five years ago, I was interviewing such artists when I was a music editor at the local alt-weekly newspaper. We are blessed, especially as part of an unsigned band, to be ranked among these talented, international musicians.”

**DIY ‘Til We Die**

The DIY (do it yourself) mantra as independent artists has been a hard road for Benson and Milner, but they believe the challenges are worth it. “As a marketing professional by trade, I’m fortunate to be able to use what I have learned in the workplace on this music project,” Benson says. “Of course, everything is trial and error. One day, one thing may work better than on the next. All I know is that social media has been our saving grace.”

Recently, The Sweetest Condition collaborated with Bishop (the new music project by Milner’s former bandmate Stultz) on a trance-inspired remix of “Where is the Light? (Bishop’s Nocturnal Mix).” The band promoted its new EP by giving away the track as a free MP3 download to all mailing list members. Other promotional campaigns on the horizon include various giveaways—anything to get more music in the hands of potential fans.

“Ten years ago, we would’ve printed flyers at Kinko’s to hand out and never reached this many people,” Milner says. Today, The Sweetest Condition has tripled its followers on Facebook since launching its EP, and they’ve found themselves having conversations about art, culture, and music with fans from as far away as the UK. “This is amazing proof that being an active part of social media networking really does pay off!” Benson says. “Of course, there’s nothing that can beat live interactions with fans; just being there and making face-to-face personal connections has an even greater impact. So, needless to say, we can’t wait to finish up our full-length album and hit the road. We’ve already had some fans in Germany ask when we’re playing there. All I can say is that if there’s a will, there’s a way. If we can ‘wow’ you online, we can find a way to come play in your city. Of course, fans’ word-of-mouth about our music and sharing our posts across social media sites will help us get there that much faster!”

###