



LIVING IN CHAOS

IN THEIR LATEST, QUITE POSSIBLY GREATEST RECORD, PUP HAVE REFINED EVERYTHING THEY ARE INTO ONE HUGE, CHAOTIC CHUNK. HERE, THEY TELL THE ALBUM'S STORY.

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PUP's career has been defined by chaos. The Toronto four-piece arrived with their frenetic, perfectly scrappy debut in 2013, going on to refine their sound across two further albums that culminated in the Juno Award-winning 'Morbid Stuff'. Each record added another layer to their now-characteristic blend of fun and self-deprecation, and for vocalist Stefan Babcock, their most recent album marked a fitting end to a suitably chaotic chapter. "The first record... we didn't know what the fuck we were doing, we were just stabbing in the dark," he laughs, speaking from his home alongside guitarist Steve Sladkowski. "The goal of the two records that followed was to do what we did on the last one, but way better. I think we accomplished that, and reached a logical conclusion with 'Morbid Stuff'."

Placing a prominent full stop between what has come before and now, the band's new record, 'The Unraveling of PUPTHEBAND' launches with a piano ballad intro. "I don't play piano... I suck at piano," Stefan says with a grin. "One of the most chaotic things I can think of is to start a record with a guy who can't sing or play piano, alone." It sets up a record that welcomes synthesizers into their sound, simply because there was one in the studio. A record whose continuing thread and humorous interludes are a private joke that has picked up some serious momentum, it

was forged over the course of five weeks, the band moving into and isolating within a mansion until the last note was done. It's the product of a band stepping outside of their comfort zone and, in Stefan's eyes, their most chaotic release yet. "We allowed ourselves to make choices that I think most people would consider the wrong decision," he expands. "We made a lot of decisions because we thought they were dumb and funny, or ones that are exciting for us because we would have made the opposite decision on previous records. Stepping outside of our comfort zone took the band to a new place for me, one that I'm really proud of."

This evolution of PUP is, in part at least, due to the record's unusual creation, one that Steve admits came close to going sideways, but even moreso down to the stronger-than-ever relationship between the band's four members. Across months of touring far away from their homes and loved ones, PUP have become a unit, equally as solid and chaotic as their sound. "There's a level of trust and a bond between the four of us that has only deepened the longer we have done this," Steve notes. It's this comfort and confidence among themselves that pulls it all together. Although their decision to hole up in a shared home for the creation of their fourth record didn't come without its difficulties, it's one that could be only have been made

by a band prepared to support and inspire each other. Being comfortable as a band also allows PUP to stretch their imagination, singing with puppets on CBC Kids, creating an interactive video game, or spending a \$20,000 video budget on doing the most stupid thing they can think of. "We are serious about our craft, but the last thing anybody wants is for four guys who look like us to be self-serious all the time," Steve explains. "At least for us, that's not who we are as people. We are most successful and most happy when we are being ourselves and letting our personalities shine through. There's an emotional honesty there, and an attempt to be real with people while not taking it too seriously. I think that's what connects with people." This confidence is split across PUP's ability to create and their openness for new opportunity. For some, it may sit at odds with their downtrodden lyrics and repeated self-deprecation, but it's in this space that PUP thrive. Over the course of four albums, the band have battled with imposter syndrome, and in Stefan's repeated mantra, there are only so many times you can sing about being a piece of shit before you realise you're good at it. For Stefan, PUP have landed on a confident acceptance of their lack of confidence, in the process strengthening their song writing. "So much growth in this band over four records has been finding a bit of confidence



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in our own self-hatred piss puddle,” the frontman smiles.

This narrative runs deep into ‘The Unraveling...’, culminating in closing track ‘PUPTHEBAND.Inc Is Filing For Bankruptcy’, which is direct as they come.

“There’s no place I’d rather be instead / even though everyone here is fucked in the head”, Stefan shouts, competing with a wall of dirty guitars.

“A lot of the tongue-in-cheekness of our lyrics is often missed,” he notes, referencing a time when the media took their song ‘If This Tour Doesn’t Kill You I Will’ a little (well, a lot) too literally.

“We love being in a band, and it’s also sometimes very bad for us. At the end of the day though, we’re here because we want to be. Every day it’s a choice. I wake

up every day asking if this is still where I want to be, and the answer is always yes. I feel like sometimes you just need to say that as clearly as possible.”

‘The Unraveling...’ soundtracks PUP’s acceptance of both sides of the coin, and how demons such as imposter syndrome have unexpectedly provided the catalyst for creativity and experience. It’s this skilful chaos that has driven PUP forward and has allowed the band to reach a growing community of fans.

The band’s cynicism and realism ensure they remain grounded, never taking opportunities for granted, and the album’s corporate thread, played out across a series of satirical interludes, shines a light on the reality of being this far into their career, and - much like we’ve come to expect with PUP

- places humour firmly at the forefront. “It’s funny to think about the four of us starting this band in a basement because we wanted to drink beer with each other and make each other laugh,” Stefan recalls. “And now we have corporate meetings with each other where we are not here to fuck around. It’s kind of ridiculous. A lot of artists lose their way at this point, at the intersection between art and commerce. The way we haven’t lost our way is by treating it the same way we treat everything else, as another hilarious twist in this weird journey we are on.”

PUP’s new album ‘The Unraveling Of PUPTHEBAND’ is out on April 01 via BMG/Rise.