



THE SHAKE UP

MEMPHIS MAY FIRE ARE BACK, AND IT FEELS... FAMILIAR. MATTY MULLINS EXPLAINS HOW HE AND HIS BAND WOUND BACK THE CLOCK, AND MADE SOME OF THEIR MOST VITAL WORK YET.

WORDS
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Matty Mullins still thinks about the taste of ham and cheese hot pockets.

He'd often pick one up on the walk to the studio to record Memphis May Fire's debut album, 'Sleepwalking'. It was the back end of the noughties, and he had just uprooted his life, jetted across the United States to settle in Dallas, only to end up in Seattle on the phone to his wife ahead of recording sessions.

Hot pocket in hand, he said all the things he couldn't say in the studio. How excited he was to be part of something he knew would be massive. How he felt out of his league, but had experienced nothing like it, standing in the studio's vocal booth with producer Casey Bates at the helm.

How right it all felt.

"They say you have your whole life to write your first album, and after that everything is just chaos," he smiles.

And now, almost a decade and a half later, and working up to his band's seventh album 'Remade In Misery', he found himself more preoccupied by demanding touring cycles, being pulled in every direction by countless voices in his ear, and a general lack of focus from just being caught in the tide.

"You never end up devoting the amount of time to a record that you should," he nods.

"But when everything shut down, all we had was the music. Every other aspect of being in a band was gone and we were right here making music the way we started. When it was simplified, everything started to make

sense."

Ham and cheese hot pockets aside, Matty admits he is looking at the band's early days through slightly rose-tinted glasses. "Getting halfway through recording that first album, I realised I had no idea what I was doing, but I was going to keep faking it. 'Blissfully ignorant' is a great way to put it," he grins.

"I was ignorant enough to take risks where had I known more, I probably would have been too scared to," he furthers, comparing the boy that made their first album to the long-hauler he is today.

"Making 'Remade In Misery' was the first time that I had fun without pressure. That first record, I was jumping into something so far outside of the realm I was used to. I was just trying to stack up...

"This time around, having made so many albums, it was only about making the record. I had time to breathe. In the midst of an awful time for the world, there was magic happening around us here, making this record."

As the pandemic raged around them, Memphis May Fire hit a sweet spot somewhere between the raw fire of their debut, the confidence of a band writing their seventh record, and a total lack of distraction.

Matty had teamed up with friend and neighbour Cody Quistad (who you'll recognise from similarly heavy hitters Wage

War) for writing sessions, while production duties had been picked up by Memphis May Fire's guitarist, Kellen McGregor.

Collectively and unintentionally, the band were making the album they had always hoped to.

"The way that everything came together, it feels like a rebirth of what gave us a start in the first place," Matty grins.

"With the new record, we rediscovered that we didn't have to go so far left or so far right. That this is who we have always been. It was like going back and talking to the young version of us and saying, 'Hey, we love that fire that you have, let's bring that back. Then let's incorporate everything we learned along the way, and we can be even better'. It's a tip of the hat to the fans that have stuck with us."

That attitude has led Memphis May Fire to the heaviest album they've ever put out. Opener 'Blood & Water' packs in industrial riffs made to stop anyone in their tracks. And from thereon out, the crushing guitars, breakdowns and chest-beating vocals are relentless.

"Angsty lyrics really cater to these songs," Matty continues.

"It's always been difficult for me to write in a way that didn't seem like every song offered hope. Having fun with this record gave me the freedom to do that. I realised if somebody came up to me in life and told me everything was going to be okay, that never helped. When somebody would say what I was going through sucks, I realised I



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wasn't alone. That I wasn't the only person feeling this way.

“I wanted to write songs that didn't have to feel like they offered this supernatural hope. It's just songs about what it's like to be at the bottom. There was a lot of beauty that was birthed out of that, a whole new discovery of how I can write and be perceived once the weight was lifted.” It's one of many lessons Matty has learned writing ‘Remade In Misery’. An album has allowed him to take stock of all that has come before, recognising when Memphis May Fire were dangerously close to flatlining.

“No matter who is saying what, or what you read in the comments, you carry this natural knowledge of who you are. People will try

to pick at that, but don't let people take it away from you,” he says.

“When you think something should be a certain way, it's probably because it should be. This is something I definitely lost along the way.”

It's a mantra he's excited to take forward as Memphis May Fire continue to grow. With renewed passion, Matty is ready to take things back to basics.

“When we sit down to make a new record, no matter what opportunity comes our way, we aren't going to step out until the record is done. If you're in the process of making a record and you take an opportunity because you're hot, you fail to make the record the best it can be, and more opportunities like that will not come. You need to start

to get good at saying, ‘No’, because everything starts with the music. If we make the best music we possibly can, then the opportunities will come,” he nods.

“This record has made me a fan of Memphis May Fire, and I don't know if I've ever felt that way before. I've always been proud of what I've done, but I've always emotionally been running to try and catch up with something I could never reach. The way we made this record, it made me feel like instead of chasing something, I am one with it.”

Memphis May Fire's new album ‘Remade In Misery’ is out on June 03 via Rise Records.