

Ok Goodnight Brings Prog Metal to Boston and Beyond

By Ryan Forgosh

Formed in the halls of Berklee College in Boston as a side project for its members, Ok Goodnight is a rising force in the progressive metal scene. With two albums under its belt, a nationwide tour, and now a headlining gig at ProgStorm, a music festival dedicated to the prog metal scene, Ok Goodnight is now gearing up to release its third studio album.



Photo courtesy of Ok Goodnight

Ok Goodnight was founded by former guitarist Martin Gonzalez. Guitarist and pianist Martin de Lima, vocalist Casey Lee Williams, bassist Peter de Reyana, and drummer Augusto Buissio soon joined him.

“I came into the project through meeting Martin Gonzalez,” Williams said. [The songs] were all instrumental at the time, and they were really interested in adding vocals on top...I immediately loved it.”

The name Ok Goodnight, thought up by Gonzalez and former bassist Ron Bernhaut, came from an inside joke amongst their friend group where they would say, “ok, goodnight” to each other over and over when going to bed.

"It was like, oh, well, that would be really silly and, like, a funny inside joke, but it also sounds kinda cool and mysterious," Williams said.

Getting its start in college, it only makes sense that the band's first gig was playing its school's cafeteria.

"We played in the cafeteria, where there were frequent shows, and we did a show with a couple of other bands," Williams said. "It feels very, like, juvenile, but not not in a negative way."

At other schools, there are frats and clubs that students participate in. For the band, Ok Goodnight was the members' extracurricular.

"Music is your extracurricular," Lima said, looking back on the band's college days. "We kind of tried to incorporate some of the Ok Goodnight stuff into our school projects."

Ok Goodnight is a progressive metal band, a genre focused on technical proficiency and guitar driven sound mixed with the heavy sound of metal. Despite falling into this genre, Ok Goodnight doesn't feel boxed into the sound.

"In a lot of ways, yes, it's very prog metal," Lima said, "But we also liked to dabble with sort of like ambient music. And then we were like, 'Okay, what if we add some like more, like indie pop song elements to it'...we liked that in the progressive world, it's almost anything counts, you know, you can do whatever you want, and it still fits under that umbrella."

Ok Goodnight released its first studio album, *Limbo*, in 2019 while the band members were still in college. The album was not carefully planned or thought out. Rather, the band saw that they had written enough songs to fill an album, so they did. Despite the circumstances of the album's creation, *Limbo* still carries a strong through concept, something the band would later expand on with its second album, *The Fox and the Bird*.



Limbo cover art courtesy of Ok Goodnight

“We just really liked this idea of a girl sort of waking up and being in this sort of limbo world where just everything was surreal, and there were no people around, almost like a bad dream,” Williams said. “There are these sort of like Attack on Titan-like Junji Ito-esque creatures like these giants all around that were stalking her and chasing her down, and she’s basically just lost completely on her own and trying to survive. The intentions of these creatures are entirely unknown, and just wanting to get back home.”

Ok Goodnight begins its songwriting process with a single part presented by one of the band members, then expands it into a full song through a collaborative process.

“There’s a lot of us either, Pete, Casey, Augusto, or me bringing some basic ideas that we have.” Lima said. “Then from there on, we were like, ‘This is how we think this is gonna sound

like. Let's take it there”

After the success of *Limbo*, the band released the EP *Under the Veil* less than a year later. The development of this release was more deliberate than *Limbo*. Where *Limbo* was a product of jam sessions culminating in an album's worth of material, *Under the Veil* saw the band members sending demos back and forth during the COVID-19 pandemic, putting more thought into the song structure rather than writing by playing.



Under the Veil cover art courtesy of Ok Goodnight

“The first album, I would say, was more jam based. And then this EP was sort of more thought out in terms of structure.” Lima said.

It was also during this time that Peter de Reyana joined Ok Goodnight, replacing Ron Bernhaut

as the band's bassist.

"I remember when [Ok Goodnight] asked me to record one song on that EP. I was like, 'oh, man. I better get to work.'" Reyna said, chuckling. "This was such a big deal for me as well... So I had just graduated. I was at my parents' place, and it was a really big moment, and it was so cool to see that come together."

Ok Goodnight's next release came three years later with 2023's *The Fox and the Bird*, a concept album detailing the journey of the titular fox and bird trying to fulfill a prophecy to end their forest's drought and bring rain back to the forest.



The Fox and the Bird cover art courtesy of Ok Goodnight

Unlike *Limbo* where the concept followed the album, the concept for *The Fox and the Bird* was

the first thing the band worked on. In fact, the only piece of music that had been worked on prior to the concept being developed was the album's lead single, "The Bear," though at that point it was simply titled "13/8," the song's time signature.

"We definitely approached this in a completely new way than we had ever approached anything else that we'd done before," Williams said. "The concept came first, so we actually spent a number of months before really writing much music at all, actually conceptualizing and outlining the story. I think at a certain point, we did get pretty specific about what we sort of felt was happening in the story, but we wanted to leave a number of things open ended because we didn't want it to be a cut and dry."

This new style of developing the album paid off for the band. Williams said that her favorite song that the band has written is "The Fox and the Bird," though she noted that it would likely be dethroned by one of the new songs the band is currently working on.

While *The Fox and the Bird* was a success for the band, Ok Goodnight is looking forward to going back to a simpler process for its next release, with the band stating that its next album will not be a concept album. Now that the band members are no longer all living in the same place together, a return to the jam session style of writing found on *Limbo* is impossible, but they would still like to implement some of that style into their next release.

"We would love to introduce a little bit more the jam writing at some point just because it would be a really interesting and nice return to form," Williams said.

Shortly after the release of *The Fox and the Bird*, founding member Martin Gonzalez exited the band due to creative differences.

"As it happens, people have different goals in the kind of music that they wanna make," Lima said. "So at some point, it just became incompatible with what we were trying to do. But that's just stuff that happens. Like, in general, things are good. But the approach changed a bit from being so guitar focused into being more of a balanced production in general. Although still very guitar heavy..."

Now that *The Fox and the Bird's* album cycle has concluded, Ok Goodnight is looking to the future. The members are currently in the early stages of making its next album, though the members couldn't comment on when it would actually release. Additionally, the band is performing at ProgStorm in August, acting as the headliner for the first day of the festival. They even recently released vinyls of *Limbo* and *The Fox and the Bird*.

Outside of Ok Goodnight, Williams, Lima, Reyna, and Buissio all have their own side projects that they work on. Williams is best known for her work on the television show RWBY in which she lends her vocal and writing talents to the show's soundtrack. Recently, she has been featured on a song for an official Sonic the Hedgehog cartoon as well as performing with the Sonic Symphony, has released a solo EP titled *Hues*, and has been invited to be a special guest at this year's Ambience Synesthesia concert series in Shanghai, China to perform music from the game *Arknights*.

Lima has worked on soundtracks for indie films, with the most recent being *Reigns over Babel* which recently premiered at Sundance.

Reyna is a member of another band called Seven Spires, a symphonic metal band also formed

in Boston.

“This band has always been just a group of goofballs, like, that all of us every time, even when members have changed or left, like, it is every single person, is very silly even though we started off playing a very, very serious kind of music.” Williams said.



Photo courtesy of Ok Goodnight