



ROCK EDITION | PERIPHERY

Rock Edition Brings You Living in Duality An Interview with Spencer Sotelo of Periphery

The Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end; words that are a lot to live up to even for the modern metal mavericks in Periphery. Yet the dual Juggernaut albums released via Sumerian Records on January 27th, Juggernaut: Alpha and Juggernaut: Omega, do more than just live up to their titles. Guiding listeners through a sweeping tale of self-discovery, moral ambiguity, and even sadistic cultism, the Juggernaut albums make for an astoundingly intricate, full-bodied work of horror-infused fantasy more akin to a Stephen King novel. In the so-called Internet Age where getting someone to focus on a three minute song can prove difficult, this roughly 80-minute listening experience complete with character and plot development is certainly an investment, but according to vocalist Spencer Sotelo, an investment worthwhile.

Rock Edition: The albums are a combined concept effort, the first part of which focuses more on the backstory and the character. Who is this character and what is his journey about?

Spencer Sotelo: The story starts out with this character that's being born into this sadistic underground cult. From there it goes through his life and the back and forth between trying to live in the real world and the way he was raised, and having to try and balance the two.

RE: Where did the idea for the concept come from?

SS: I guess it kind of caught me at a weird time. I was into watching a lot of older horror movies. Around the time we started writing I was really into "Rosemary's Baby" and I had just finished watching the first season of "True Detective." I thought it would be cool to play off that style of writing for this record. It's a lot different than anything we've ever done. I wrote a short story and the band was really into it, so we just ran with it.

RE: Is it totally fictional?

SS: Absolutely fictional. Not to say that there aren't things like that out there, but we brought a lot of supernatural aspects to it to keep it interesting.

RE: Do you write short stories a lot or is this something new?

SS: I don't. I really just did it for the record. That's not something I really do in my spare time, but maybe it'll be something I explore from here on out because I actually really like it. The lyrics and the instrumentation matched the feel and the vibe of what's going on in the actual story. I feel like it's very true and very intentional.

RE: Why did you decide to release two albums at the same time instead of staggering the releases?

SS: We just figured that the whole story should be told at once instead of staggering it. That's just been our artistic vision for the whole thing. Regardless of what management and labels want, we just thought that would be the best thing for the record as a whole.

RE: How did you decide where one album ended and the other began?

SS: There is a track that opens the first record and the second record that are almost exactly the same song with the same cadences, but they're in different tunings and the lyrics are different. We decided to split it there and it works as a duality.

RE: These albums were a highly collaborative effort from all members of the band. How do you think that shows in the final product?

SS: It was a fully collaborative effort, which is the first time we've ever done that and I'm really stoked with how it turned out. I think it definitely sounds way different than our past releases. It has a Periphery signature sound, but it sounds way different song-writing-wise. I don't think we could have come up

with the same product had we done it individually.

RE: Can you talk a little bit about what's going on in the album artwork for both albums? What part of the story are we looking at?

SS: On Alpha, the cover is this ceremony that the cult is having on the verge of the main character coming into this sadistic cult. The second one, on Omega, is this sanctuary that this cult uses to hold their practices and it has the main character out in front of it. So, it's him being brought into this on Alpha, and with Omega it shows the turn of him being one of the people that takes part.

RE: How do you think these albums will translate to music video or in terms of visual representation?

SS: It's very dark in nature and it's very abstract. That was kind of the goal with this record, if you could close your eyes and listen to the record and hear the lyrics and feel like you're watching a movie with the imagery you see in your head.

RE: Do you think it will make for a difference in the live shows?

SS: Absolutely, and we would cater our live performance to that with the lighting and visuals live. We're moving toward that for sure.

RE: If there is one thing that you'd want listeners to take away from this 80-minute behemoth, what would it be?

SS: I would just like them to take away what the story is and immerse themselves, like you would going to watch a movie in a theatre, and coming away from it with a feeling like a sci-fi or a horror film.

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