

A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS

by Hillary Johnson

Rock writers like to say that a band has been "making noise" for a certain amount of years. In the case of A Place To Bury Strangers, this sentence is almost an understatement. The band makes a crazy loud noise, and they actually manage to sell records! Their latest self-titled, self-recorded CD climbed the InSound Top Sellers chart up to #2! We tried to expose the secret of their approach to recording and making music in this brief interview.

Where do you guys rehearse?

I have built a studio where I live and work in Williamsburg. It was a run down building that we gutted and converted into a recording studio/practice space.

Do you consider making demos to be an important part of making an album?

Yes, I think it is crucial to making an album and to the song writing process. Although in my experience the first

recording is usually the best, because when a song is recorded it is written right there to fit in the confines of the particular situation – which may not be the one you record properly.

How much and what kind of pre-production do you do before going in to record?

We have never done much pre-production but we are about to for the next record. I have a lot of ideas and things I want to try. You can't really plan how something is going to turn out exactly, sounds interact in different ways and only when you have them all before you do you hear exactly how it is going to fit or what is needed to make it work.

Do you record your own records or do you hire an outside person?

I like to have a hand in what I am doing only because I know my vision and I want to be in complete control. Our records are not capturing audio of a live performance but something completely different. I'd love to work with someone else because I feel like my ears are shot and I know there are producers / engineers who have made

many records that amaze me. It is an inspiration and an art form.

Describe the process of recording the last record.

Everything on the last record was recorded in Cubase on different Apple computers - some through a Cubase M14, Alesis USB board, and then the Firewire-1884. Junky Realistic Mics with 1/4" ends, lots of mics that say things like "dynamic" and "voice" on them, Shure SM-57s, and lots of other stuff. Mostly it is just knowing which mics have what kind of response and using them to record what you want to hear appropriately. It is all just about knowing your equipment. There was one song where we mixed a track mixed by Paul Kolderie and Sean Slade with our own mix. It was really an honor working with them and although I wasn't completely happy with their mix it had elements to it that I just couldn't touch. I would love to work with them again in the future. A lot of producers put up a wall and have boundaries... Not Paul and Sean - we just didn't have the time to do everything that I wanted to do.

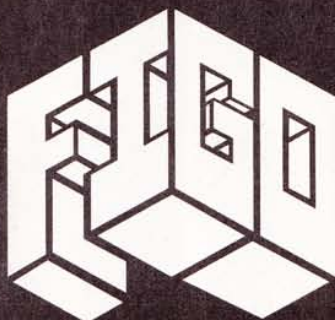
Did you record together live with amp bleed, with isolation, or was everything pieced together?

Some recording is live and some has lots of isolation. Lots of overdubs. Basically whatever sounded best and seemed to be appropriate. The ideas can be wild but if there is some sort of thing you want to experiment with you may as well go with it. There was pitch shifting, time bending, drum machines, cutting and pasting, and lots of other computer aided editing.

What's something you learned from making the last record?

People actually like what we are doing. It seems like people like the record but I can never tell. I like it but I still remember music like I was in High School and I only knew a couple of people who liked the same sort of thing back then.

www.aplacetoburystrangers.com



CMJ 2007

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