

Sevendust's raw sound and lyrics reach 'alpha' form

By Erin Lemke

THE DAILY CARDINAL

Releasing aggression and frustration through music is nothing new in the world of metal, but it takes a special finesse to turn raging feelings into a true work of art.

After venting to the world for over a decade, Sevendust have reached new levels of maturity and craftsmanship in their latest release, *Alpha*. Their blend of screaming vocals, thundering drums, vicious guitars and smooth moments of tranquility has never sounded so polished, despite the fact that this album is more belligerent than any of their previous releases.

This is evident from the moment the first track, "Deathstar," begins. There is no distinct intro, just an immediate assault from the growling vocals, accented by stampeding drum intensity. A technique that Sevendust uses more than once—mixing a quick,

grinding guitar section with a steady percussion beat—creates a subtle contrast that reeks of conflict, oftentimes mirroring the lyrics.

"Under" has a steady and lingering feel to match the weight and elusiveness of introspective lyrics, such as "If I was under / Could I see myself on the floor? / If I should trip inside my mind / Would I be under control of it all?" The song represents the fear of the thoughts within and internal battles.

Other common themes of the album are revenge, manipulation, respect and not taking life for granted. "Story of Your Life" is a furious attack on people who stumble through life unobservant, expecting the answers to fall into their lap without any reasoning or effort.

Ironically, "Aggression" begins with a mournful piano intro that seems anything but aggressive. However, the tension slowly builds as the instru-

mentation becomes more layered into a dark compliment to the chorus of "Took a wrist and cut it open / And now it seems I'm throwing you over the edge / We had a gift no one had / You never thought I'd be cutting you open again."

Although *Alpha* is very intense and dark, there are a few tracks with a less harsh vibe. "Clueless" is a fuzzy track about living life with-

out taking things for granted that renounces hypocrisy. The verses are a bit rough, but the chorus can only be described as beautiful. The distortion melts away and once again, the growling gives way to a more traditional style.

The longest and most unique track, however, is "Burn." Although it is nine minutes long, it never drags along or gets dull. The verses have

a guitar riff quick enough to cause dizziness and are short and sweet. Halfway through, the track changes into a soft blend of piano and percussion, allowing all the fury to simply fade away into wondering.

Alpha is a great fusion of unbridled rage and meditation. Sevendust are clearly growing up and adapting to a new stage of their lives with enormous success.

CD REVIEW



Alpha
Sevendust
(Asylum)

DAILY CARDINAL

MADISON, WI
MONDAY 10,000
MAR 5 2007

D - THE MAGAZINE OF DALLAS

DALLAS, TX
MONTHLY 70,000
MARCH 2007

Sevendust. The Atlanta-based band has an alternative metal sound, and they're known for their angry lyrics. Song titles from their self-titled debut album include "Black," "Bitch," and "Will It Bleed." Sounds like this might be the perfect concert for a first date. Mar 3, 6:30 PM. The Palladium Ballroom, 1135 S. Lamar St. 972-343-2444. www.ticketmaster.com. 18769AF

SUNDAY EAGLE-TRIBUNE

LAWRENCE, MA
SUNDAY 53,911
MAR 11 2007

'Alpha' Sevendust

Sevendust has been reborn on "Alpha," the group's sixth studio release and first for its own 7 Bros. label.

After seizing creative control of their career, battling personal difficulties, and overcoming near bankruptcy in label disputes, this Atlanta quintet has emerged with renewed focus and energy.

The group's previous three efforts had their moments, but Sevendust hasn't been this consistently hard-hitting since its self-titled 1997 debut or 1999 follow-up, "Home."

The guitar attack of John Connelly and Sonny Mayo is punishing and melodic, Vince Hornsby holds a tight bass groove, and Morgan Rose's relentless drumming and backing vocals are as focused and angry as his tortured lyrics.

Breathing life into Rose's confessionals are the versatile lead vocals of Lajon Witherspoon, who growls and spits fire in defiance before soaring to incredibly soulful highs.

Without question, loyal fans have always hoped Sevendust had a few records like this left to give.

- Associated Press



PHOTO COURTESY ASYLUM RECORDS

The members of Sevendust look just as firm and aggressive