

GO&DO

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NB: I was talking to a reader last week, and really casually they asked me who I would be interviewing next week — one of the members of As Tall As Lions, I said, and they said 'Sounds cool, what do they sound like.' I fought my way through it — from your perspective, what should I have said?

DN: That's always the dreaded question. I probably don't have a better answer than you do.

NB: What I said was your last album was a bit Coldplay-ish, the songs were really melodic and used piano here and there; the new album is taking a few more chances, a bit more spacey and is a bit of a deeper effort. Analyze that.

DN: I wouldn't go as far to describe what the band sounds like, but maybe say it's very drum and bass oriented. This record, we would write a lot of songs on acoustic guitar and piano — everybody in the band writes songs. Before we go and make it your typical singer/songwriter, we'd work on trying to make a unique rhythm for every song. A lot of songs are based around that. A song could've started with acoustic guitar, but when recorded there weren't even chords being played in the song.

NB: This self-titled album is definitely more adventurous rhythmically — I noticed in the first few tracks lots of off-beat, something a lot of bands aren't doing right now. What did you want to do different versus *Lafcadio*?

DN: Simply, we wanted this to be different than *Lafcadio*; we wanted to push ourselves, as musicians, to create something that would chal-

lenge us. A lot of it was challenging us to be as creative as possible, and to impress each other.

NB: How does that dynamic work, impressing each other?

DN: I feel like when you're in a band, you should be surrounded by people that inspire you to be a better musician. That was part of the writing process, trying to be up to par with everyone else and pushing each other to take that next step.

NB: I don't know what influences you had coming into this album, but I think of The Mars Volta and the way they have no rules, they're very adventurous and take chances.

DN: Our whole band is a big fan of their first record. For me, personally, there were a couple songs I liked on the second album, but I kind of lost my desire to know more about them. It just didn't impress me as much as the first one did. I wouldn't say there's no rules to our band, but it is somewhere along those lines, where other bands might say 'We have to do this' or 'We have to go back to the chorus,' it definitely doesn't apply to our songwriting.

NB: At the same time, there's this underlying ambient, almost a soundscape thing that makes me think of Brian Eno. It almost sounds like he produced this self-titled album.

DN: I have a couple Brian Eno records, *Music for Airports* and *Another Green World*. I wouldn't say he's a direct influence, where we listen to Brian Eno and want to imitate some of his sounds, but at the same time he's seeped his way into our



blood in terms of when we write; we know his music fairly well. It definitely comes out subconsciously.

NB: Tell me about your band name. I like it. It's kind of a mighty thing; it seems like a great tag for you guys.

DN: Our guitarist came up with our name six years ago, he had written a poem. I remember seeing the phrase 'As Tall as Lions,' and as soon as I read it, it hit me in a certain way. I've always liked it a lot; I've always found it to be a band name with an actual statement, whereas a lot of band names have no relevance to anything.

NB: How are you looking forward to playing in Detroit? You're coming to The Shelter.

DN: What's that place like? Is it nice?

NB: Yeah, it's a cool little place underneath St. Andrew's Hall, which is, to some people, a legendary club in

Detroit. The big thing about The Shelter is that's where they filmed the battle scenes in '8 Mile,' the Eminem movie.

DN: That's kind of cool!

NB: Are you guys going to do any rap battles during the show?

DN: Now that we know it was filmed there, we'll definitely do some rapping — we'll find some MC's on the street and bring them into the show. But we're really excited about the show — we've only played in Detroit two or three times, but I have a feeling, with the new record out, there will be more people to see us this time than there has in the past.

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