

STRIPPED AND REDEEMED SEVENDUST

By PJ Yatar

With his brain picked and his butt kicked Sevendust's lead songwriter forwards contrition on his broken family and the worst year of his life. On the road of life if your foot is on the pedal in the wrong direction Morgan Rose will tell you it is ok to take a U-turn. In 2006 seams of Rose's life began to fray as internal conflict with then wife Rayna Foss-Rose (former bassist of Coal Chamber) resulted in a bitter divorce and a tumultuous custody battle for his daughter. Soon after his grandfather passed away trouble with the law led to his father's arrest, conviction and five year sentencing to federal jail. Rose's frustration boiled over with his own spat with the law after he was arrested, before charges were eventually dropped. Fast forward to 2007 and one can sympathize why Rose embraces Sevendust's latest release Alpha as a new beginning, a notion inspired but powerful and one Rose kept close to his heart while architecting the band's sixth studio album. Set to be released March 6, music critics have opened their arms to Alpha as Sevendust's celebratory homecoming. "We are extra proud of this record," Rose said. "It was the most heartfelt album we have ever done."

From Simple To The Complex.

"Oh God... things were much more simpler," Rose recalling the time when Sevendust formed in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia in 1994. Named after a pesticide (Sevin dust), Sevendust's abrasive guitar riffs, methodic neo-metal vocals and abrasive energy created a horde of new metal fans by the late nineties as the digital age of music grew in abundance and influence. However at Woodstock 1999 the band appeared transformed, this at a time when the lines of metal and alternative music began to manifest as one. "We started playing and Jewel was playing on the other stage and we could see



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other people coming over from her stage," Rose recalled like it was yesterday. "It was like a bomb went off over there. We started playing and they kept coming." Fans would continue to draw closer by 2005 the band had achieved three gold records, performed hundreds of sold out shows while national music publications acknowledged Rose for his innovating drumming and straight forward songwriting.

Before the Alpha recording sessions in the summer of 2006 began, Rose was in need to put to rest the issues that played havoc on his mind. After receiving a few riffs and chord progressions from guitarist John Connolly, Rose trekked off to the studio alone to spend time to add melodies and scratch vocals before meeting the rest of the band for production. "My mind set personally was destructive. I had just been going through a divorce and dealing with the custody issues with my child," Rose said. "I had been exonerated on a court case where I was arrested." It was also during this time, the fragile Rose waited for his father sentencing fearing the possibility his father could serve up to 25 years in federal prison. "I was imploding bad. When we got to a point where I could let lose some of those feelings on to some music it became very therapeutic for me."

New Approach Meets A Different Result.

The decision to stay in Georgia to record Alpha rather than hop on a jet to Los Angeles or New York was relief for Rose. "We have worked hard to keep ourselves motivated and in line without getting a little crazy," Rose recalling past attempts at recording outside of Georgia. "Back in the day we did some records out of town where we got a little hury and it took us a little while to finish those records because we were pre-occupied." Past delays were parlayed by the band's youthful approach to recording music. In the past members of Sevendust would give into inspirational whims and free form thrash sessions that lead to hours of recordings, however once the tape stopped rolling and with the deadline looming over them the band would have dozens of uncompleted songs to show for eventually leading to delay, backtracking and frustration. But with age comes wisdom and in Sevendust's case lead to a well-organized and no-nonsense approach recording Alpha. "We probably had about almost half of everything. I mean there was probably a verse and chorus or a verse, bridge or chorus on maybe half of the record," Rose speaking on the time when he approached his band mates with the new material. "Lajon has to feel it, he has to sell it. He has to believe what is going on in the song."

The band finished recording Alpha ahead of schedule. They used the extra time in the studio to listen and add different elements to the new recordings. "It was like by the time we were done and everybody went home it was like ok what do we do now," Rose said.

Headed In The Right Direction

"After we got done with the recording I thought I would be in great shape, but to be honest with you the more talking about the record, the mind set and lyrical content and where I was that makes it therapeutic," Rose said. Currently Rose is on the road performing with Sevendust as part of a 57 date North America tour, which began February 8 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. With 2006 behind him and 2007 ahead, Rose accepts his new course in life. Thirteen years and six records later Rose trusts that people still care about Sevendust's music. On the road or at home with his new bride Teri Harrison, Rose confides he is a better man today than he was a year ago. "We are a little older and wiser," Rose said. "But you know there is a whole new generation out there of people who are coming in and we don't know where music is going... we are not going to change what we have been doing. It's just now things are a little more complicated." 