

Sevendust still kicking with new album

Brandon Weiss

THE TRIANGLE

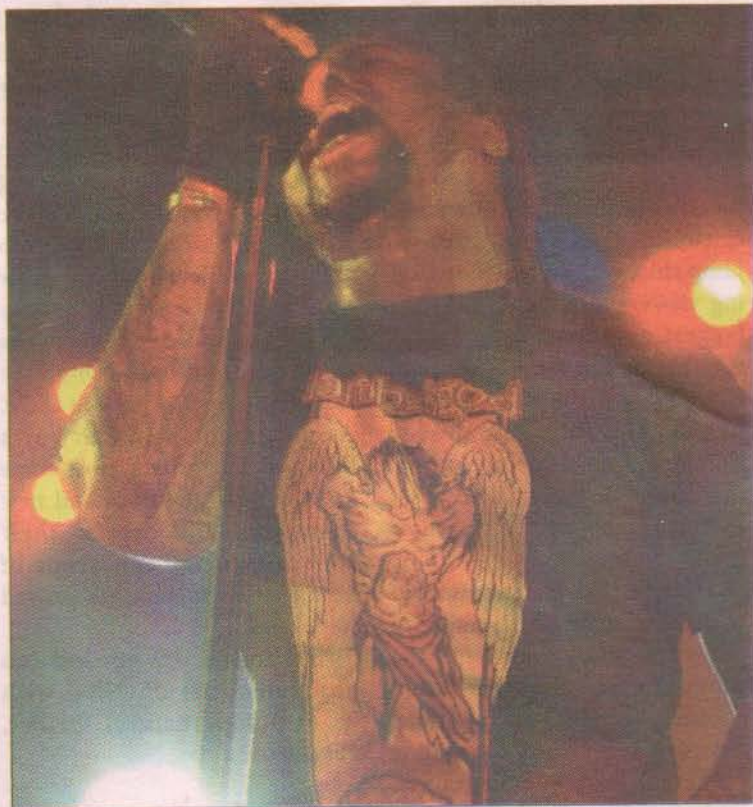
With a touring schedule that lasts almost year 'round, it's a wonder how the five members of Sevendust keep themselves alive, let alone find time to write new material, manage business affairs and tend to their fans. The upcoming release of the band's sixth full-length album, *Alpha*, shows that Sevendust is more than alive — they're alive and kicking. The band is currently in the midst of a demanding, 53-date trek across the United States in support of their new record.

"We're waiting for the new record to get its ass out on the street," said drummer Morgan Rose, the band's creative staple and founding member.

"It's been a long time since [the record]'s been done. We're already ready to do another record, but we gotta wait another year and let this thing do what it's gotta do. It's pretty exciting, though. [We're] nervous, excited, scared, happy, all the emotions that go along with putting [a record] out there."

The release of *Alpha* comes close to 10 years since the release of Sevendust's first full-length, self-titled album. Of course, it had most likely crossed their mind that it's been a decade since their initial success. But not much has changed over the years, according to Rose. The band finds themselves wiser, more able and as creatively high in comparison to 10 years ago.

Over the past decade, "We



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Vocalist Lajon Witherspoon of the alternative metal band Sevendust takes his voice to its limits during their performances.

were a little bit out of control at times," Rose said. "But we're all good now.

"It's one of those things where we've grown up and stuff. We've gotten a little more business-savvy from getting screwed numerous times. But we're pretty much the same guys. The thing that's nice right now is that we've got our integrity back so that we can write the songs that we want to write and continue what it was that got us started before people started to sort of level with our creative process."

Getting down to business is another thing that Sevendust

does well. For the release of their latest album, the band signed a unique deal with Warner Music Group label imprint Asylum Records.

"It's a very interesting deal," Rose said. "We funnel ourselves through Asylum [Records]. We're distributed through [Alternative Distribution Alliance]. The people that are kind of running the show for us radio-wise are under the Warner Music Group umbrella. It's pretty interesting. We've basically got ourselves in a position where our avenues are whoever is in the office that can

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do something to help us out, is going to jump in and help. It's a pretty cool place to be."

Most importantly, Sevendust feels comfortable and secure with their new record deal, something the band hasn't felt in a considerable length of time.

"We're in a position where it's like, we don't have to worry about being the big guys anymore," Rose said. "Everywhere we go, it's been like people kind of benefit from the little bit of success — well, a lot of success — that we've had over the years. When we were with TVT [Records] and we went to Winedark [Records], we were the big band. Now, we're in the

position where we have people working for us who have a very long history of dealing with much bigger acts than us. It's a nice place to be. It's nice to have some strength behind you."

As for the preliminary work it took to write their new album, Rose says that he took charge.

"We had a bunch of material that was sent to me, music wise," he said. "The preliminary stuff was, I just kind of grabbed the reins on the first two songs lyrically and melody-wise. Then we started to piece to stuff together."

When getting down and dirty is something you do best, sometimes it's not easy to go back to the basics, especially

when the ball is already rolling on a new project. However, in the case of their latest effort, the group decided to do just that.

"We went in a room in Atlanta where we started out when we were young," Rose explained. "We went back to that home base that we had at the beginning. We just started jamming, and I started going a little wild with lyrics and getting these songs done. It was a relatively painless process, other than the fact that I was worrying about some stuff that was pretty deep for me. But it felt good. We felt like we had the ball in our court to do what we wanted, so it made us feel real comfortable without sort of having someone telling us

what to do."

While writing songs for their new album, Sevendust turned to a dark side of themselves that they had never tapped for creative inspiration. Although Sevendust has always been known to create heavy, raw and emotional music, they, and most specifically Rose, unleashed an angry beast in the development of their latest album, that hadn't been explored since their earliest efforts.

"It's not a very uplifting album," Rose said.

"I didn't want to make it a biography on the record or anything," he added, "but my mood was definitely in a dark place. It was cool to get that out and everything. People ask you if it was therapeutic. I thought it would be, and it really wasn't. It took me until we got back out on the road and played some of these songs that I realized that this is what I do. I play music live. That's what I've been doing for decades. I'd been without it for seven or eight months, and I went a little bit crazy."

The drummer says that *Alpha* is something of a concept album; an album that contains a story similar to that of *Fight Club*.

"If you look at it, it's kind of like *Fight Club*, where your mind is getting tormented so much that instead of the lyrics just hurting, you start to feel

a little more serious than that. Then you start looking around and saying, 'Am I losing my mind here or what?' By the end of it, you're paddling to try to get control of yourself. When you finally do get rid of whatever the other side is that's in your mind, after you're done with all the doubting, you start to wonder which side has actually been knocked off. Was it the positive or the negative side? People deal with so much that when they're done finally medicating themselves or fixing themselves, the damage is irreversible, and it's a bad thing."

With regard to the future of Sevendust, the charismatic drummer insists that, aside from a case of the flu currently brewing in his system, he is as strong and as able to play shows and make music as ever.

"I'm playing harder right now than I think I've ever played — ever," Rose stated firmly. "I'm playing real hard, I'm hurting myself real bad, but it's what I feel like doing. I'm excited about this record; I'm excited about the shows. I can't stop myself. I feel like crap, but I just can't stop myself from unloading."

Alpha drops March 6 in stores everywhere on Asylum Records. Sevendust will visit the Electric Factory April 17 with supporting acts Diecast and Invitro.