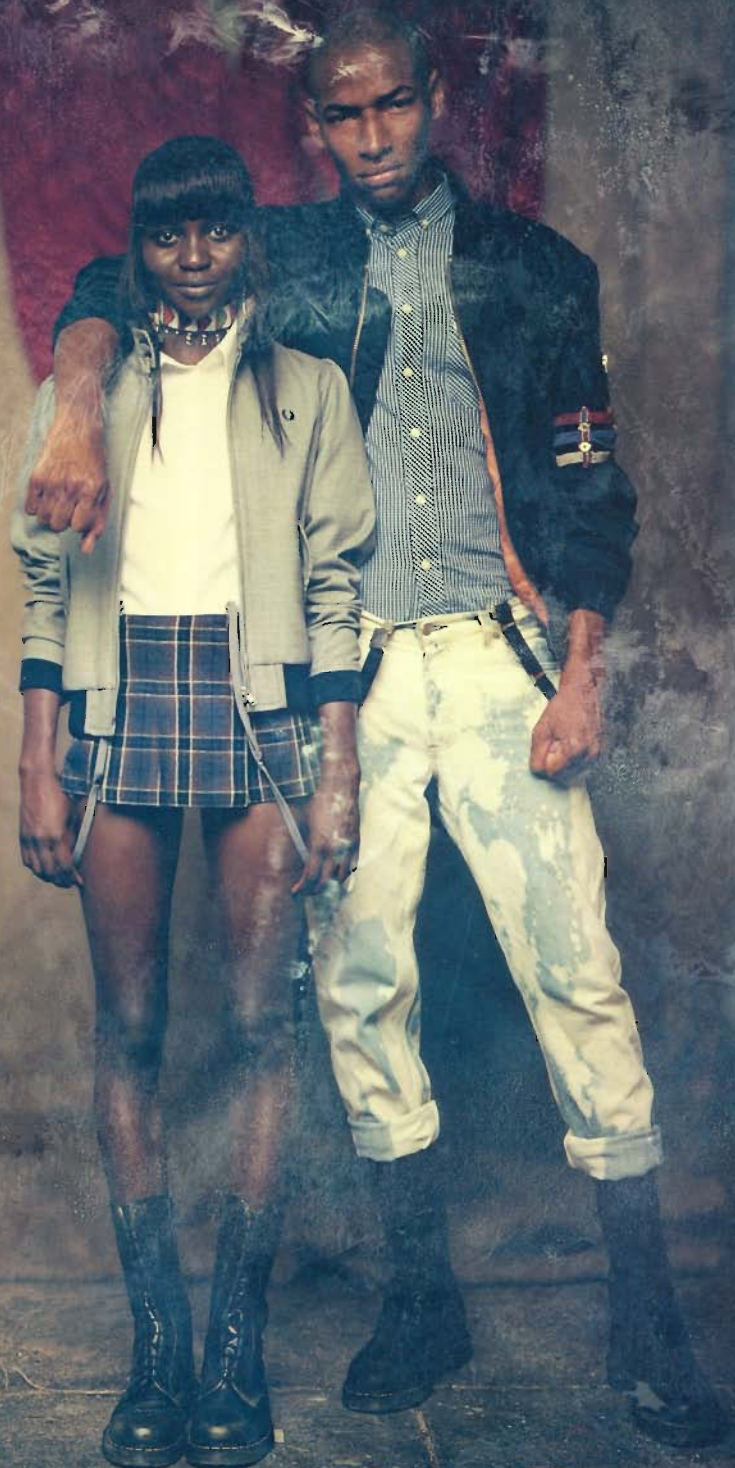


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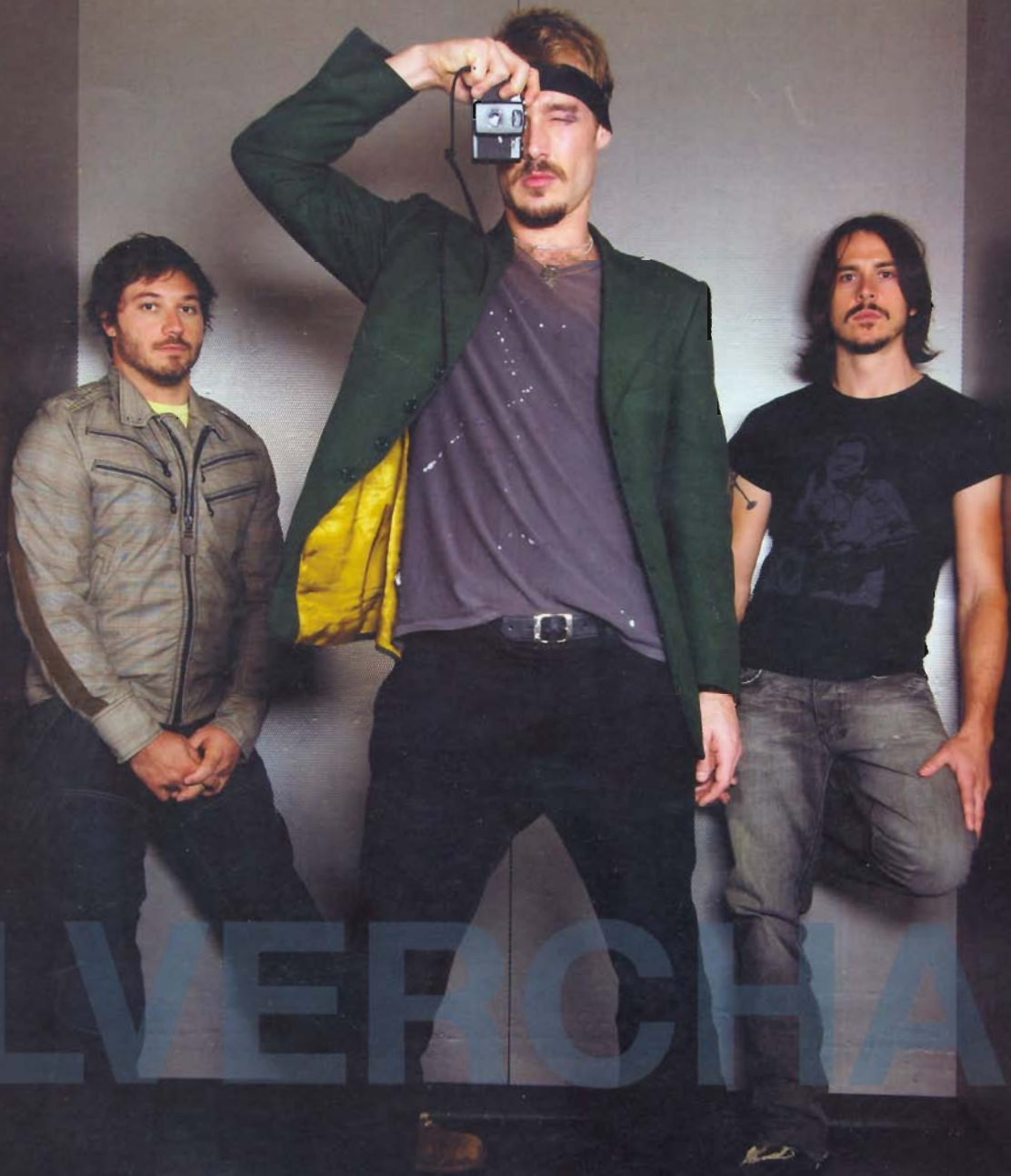


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## A NEW BENCHMARK

SILVERCHAIR RISES TO DANIEL JOHNS' AMBITIOUS VISION

words\_sasha hnatkovich  
photo\_martin philbey



"We're not great musicians, but we produce something that's honest, organic, natural."

Silverchair's Daniel Johns is no longer the "little stoner idiot" who accidentally wrote "Tomorrow," 1995's most-played song on U.S. modern rock radio. The 27-year-old singer/guitarist has focused his songwriting, pursuing an evolving sound that continues to surprise fans and defy critics' expectations. Now, after a two-year hiatus, his band has reunited and released their most ambitious album to date.

*Young Modern*, the band's fifth studio recording and first album of new material in five years, features a big theatrical pop sound inspired by '40s film scores and Judy Garland musicals. Set to be released in the U.S. on July 24, the disc has already gone double platinum in the band's homeland, Australia. With *Young Modern*, Johns sought to write an accessible pop album while further embracing the complex melodic arrangements that helped lift their last record, *Diorama*, to critical acclaim. "If you can communicate an ambitious vision in three minutes," he explains, "it's powerful."

Originally from the suburbs of Newcastle, Johns first began playing with drummer Ben Gillies when they were eight years old. The band's current lineup with Chris Joannou on bass was solidified by age 12. They were not musical prodigies, just friends cribbing their favorite grunge tunes.

In 1994, the three got lucky, winning a national demo contest that they had entered in hopes of securing a little cash for new equipment. Recorded just a few months later in only nine days, their debut LP *frogstomp* became an international sensation. "If we had known that it would be the benchmark we would always

be judged by," Johns muses, "we would have waited; we would have worked harder on it."

After Silverchair's initial success, every time Johns began to write new material, he felt pressure to avoid a uniform sound: "I didn't want to play music that was expected. I wanted to write something that was timeless instead of something that was just a reflection of what was popular at the time."

According to Johns, *Young Modern* establishes what Silverchair sounds like when they are not backed into a corner. While the band was on hiatus, he had the freedom to experiment, working on a number of side projects. Then, after getting married and moving London, Johns wrote 52 songs over the course of a year. "I wasn't writing for anything. At first, these weren't Silverchair songs. I was just trying to figure out what I wanted to do, what was important to me," he explains.

In 2005, Silverchair reunited to help organize a benefit concert for the victims of the Asian tsunami. Afterward, the band began to jam around some of Johns' new songs. They missed playing together and wanted to do something special. "It's hard to articulate what we have as a band," says Johns. "We've been together for more than half our lives. There's an unspoken bond. We're not great musicians, but we produce something that's honest, organic, natural. It just feels good and we don't want to stop."

Silverchair tours the U.S. this summer. For dates and more information, visit [chairpage.com](http://chairpage.com).