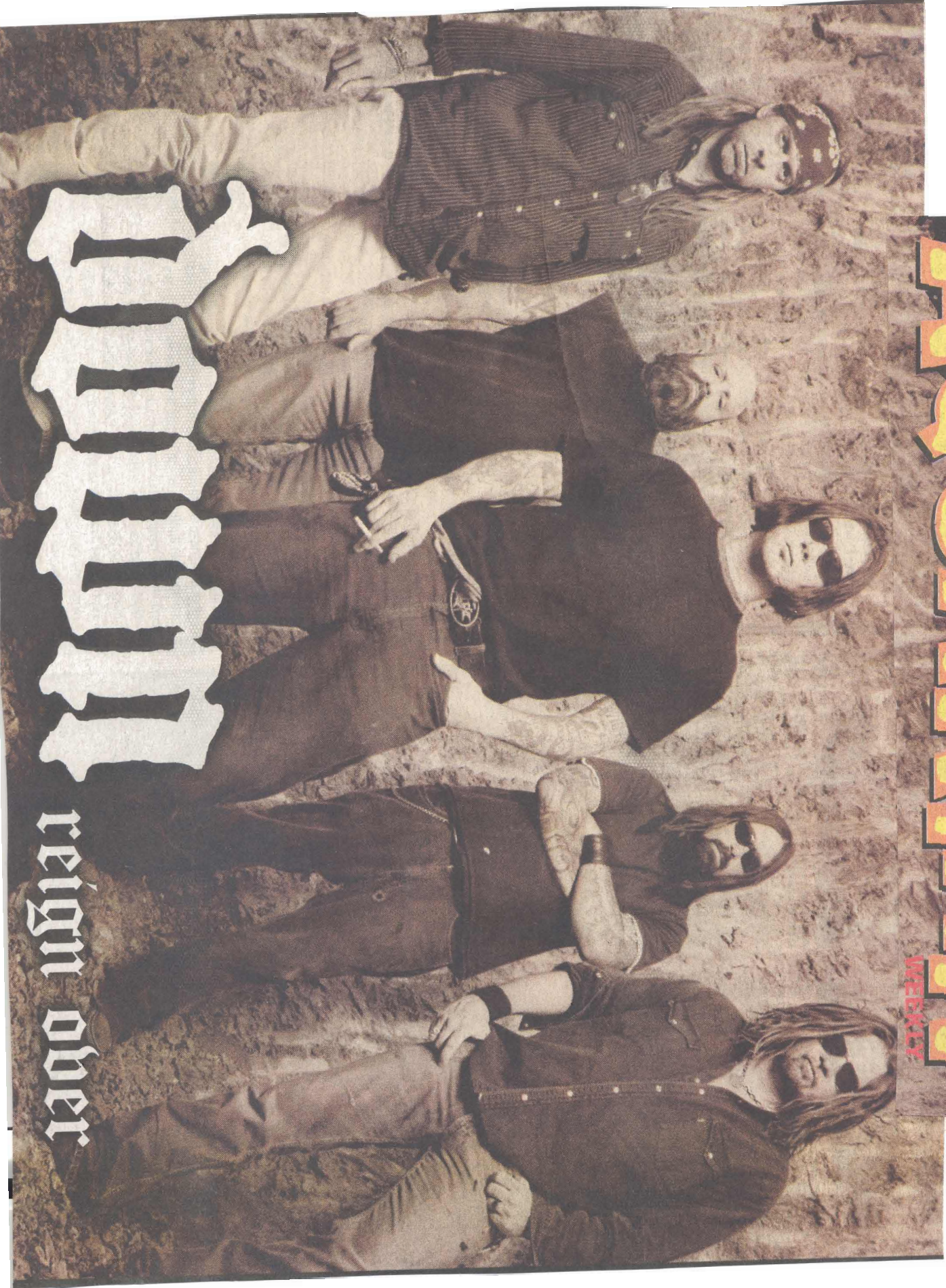


AQUARIAN

WEBSITE

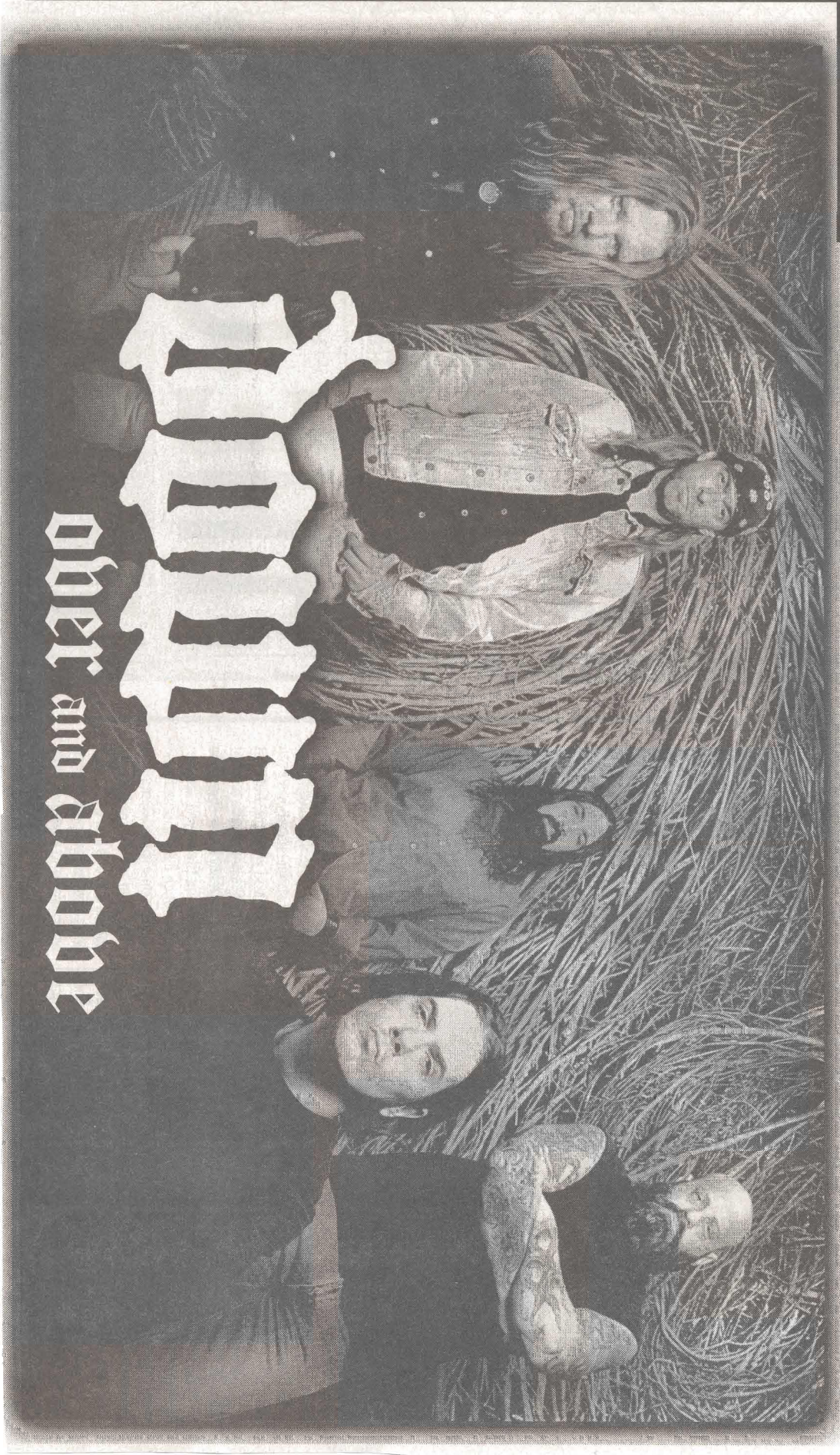


REVIEWS

by Robert

COVER

Obey and Rhoads
WIND



THE AQUARIAN

by Patrick Slevin

It's been a long road for Down. The loss of a dear friend and brother in Dimebag Darrell in 2004 and the ravaging of their New Orleans home base the following August left the band as a collective with little more than bone, nerve and sinew. The raw emotion and ensuing separation, combined with recovering from various addictions, could have easily caused lesser bands to retreat and call it a day. Not Down. Instead, they're determined to reach beyond the landmark material they've been laying down, intermittently, since 1995's *NOLA*. And it looks like they're doing it.

For the unfamiliar, the cast hasn't changed from 2002's *Down II*: on guitars, Pepper Keenan (Comosion Of Conformity) and Kirk Windstein (Crowbar); bass, Rex Brown (Pantera); drums, Jimmy Bower (Eshenatogodi); and vocals, Phil Anselmo (Pantera). They've been called a supergroup, and it's a pretty fair assessment: You'd be hard pressed to put greater Southern heavy metal talent in a room together than this lineup.

After Phil made some phone calls in the winter of last year, the quintet did just that, and in the end, they've released, this week, *Over The Under*, their phoenix rising. It's a hell of a story of rebirth and renewal, but I'll leave it to Rex to tell it.

Going back to last year, at what point did you know you would be doing Down again?

Phil had called, and you know we went through a hell of a fucking deal with Dime and that whole tragedy, which I really don't like getting into, but we miss him dearly. So Phil and I were on the phone constantly, and he was going through

some battles, the back surgery and the whole bit, and then Katrina fucking hit. I could't get him on the phone, nobody could get in touch with each other, didn't know where anybody was, literally, for fucking months.

In February of 2006, we all flew down, and I had already kind of put management into place after we had all said, 'Yeah, let's all sit down and see what we want to do.' Everybody had it in their thick skulls that we definitely wanted to jam again. So we wanted to test the waters and see where we were. Let's book some dates in Europe, around the festival time, and see what happens. 'We go over there, do 21 shows, we sell out every fucking show, sell out every t-shirt that we could possibly print up. The fans were still fucking there, rabid. Down had never been to Europe before. And then we started writing songs and kind of putting everything together.

It's been a long process, because of all the Katrinas and the Dimes, and all that stuff that we really had to be positive with each other and help each other out through. When you lose a lot of people dear to you, it's one of those processes. We got in and started writing at Phillip's place in July or August, something like that. We had already done a little bit of jamming here and there, and I was living in Los Angeles, where I am, I'm back and forth. So I was going down there and jamming and coming back, about every two weeks or something like that. Then this album started taking a form all its own. We just decided to get all the gear, put it in a truck, go out to L.A.

Compared to the last Down record, this was done over a very long period of time, the last one was less than a

month.

Those songs (From *Down II*) were pretty much written; we just got in there and hashed 'em out from day to day. We'd get the drum sounds and work guitars through the night, and then have Phillip come in. Me and Pepper and Kirk were working the whole fucking time, basically putting the tunes together.

It was one of those records that, it was fucking cool to do a record like that, but I didn't want to do another like that. (Laughs) After those 27 or 28 days, literally in the swamps, it was a great experience. Being the seasoned vets that we are, we had a blast doing it, you know. But for this record, it was way more focused, and we wanted to make a fucking amazing, classic record. I'm satisfied in knowing the fact that this thing will stand the test of time here in 10 years.

How was it feeling, getting back into a room and writing again?

It felt good again, it felt like a band again. We had to learn to be a band again, and that's why we went to Europe and did the thing. Played those 21 shows, and every one of them sold fucking out, where bands of other calibers couldn't sell half the tickets that we were doing, and we're putting a shirt on everybody's fucking back at the end of the night. We'd never been to Europe before, here we are we're fucking selling these things out, we're having fun playing as a fucking band again, that's what it's all about.

And the kids giving back like they did. It's like, fuck these other bands, this is where we have to be. This is what we have to do, this is what we were born to do. It's either in you or it's not. That's basically where we wanted to take this,

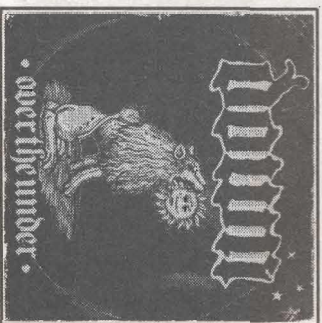
and after everything that had happened, Katrina and losing Dime and the whole bit, it was a real positive goal. Let's put this down on music and use that positivity to help us through these rough couple of years.

Down was always kind of a side thing, alongside all these main projects. Is this a phase of the band where you're looking at it as a long term, permanent thing?

This is the real deal. Nobody's running off to all these other bands; if they do, it will be for fun only. There'll be no major fucking tours or anything else. Anybody wants to get together with somebody else, jam, go do it. You just can't make a record. This is what everybody's focused on right now, and this is what we're going to stay focused on. Everybody kind of looked at each other and said, 'Yeah, I guess I'll go ahead and marry you for the next 20 years. You look good enough.' It's pretty much a no-brainer, you know. (Laughs)

When it comes to it, we just get in a room together, and we know that it's a bona-fide, stay-together band. And there's so much more music that we have written that's just amazing. This is one of those bands that we could easily grow old with, because we all feel comfortable with it, we don't have any preconceived notions. We don't have to be metal, if we all decided to get banjos and play bluegrass and still enjoy playing together, that's what it's all about. That'd be alright. It would suck. Is this going to be another solo headlining tour or are you bringing anyone along?

No, we've got a new movie in the fucking works. We just like it so much fucking better. It's our show, man, we don't have to have some other band that maybe sold two records or some shit, or somebody owes somebody a favor in the business. 'Yeah, we'll get you on the Down tour' and some shit. And the fans have to sit there and go, 'Yuck!' We're definitely doing a new movie, we've got so much fucking footage, there's not enough time in the day with all the stuff that we have. We really need a staff of about 10 to do all this shit, but we don't. It's just trying to put it all together, and it comes in pieces and waves, but now we'll be playing a whole bunch of new stuff, so expect two and a half hours easily. And that's so cool to get up and jam for that amount of time. I don't know if it was a fan of sitting there watching it, but as a musician, I love playing all night.



Over The Under is available now. Down will be performing at Roseland Ballroom in NYC on Thursday, Oct. 25 and at House Of Blues in Atlantic City on Friday, Oct. 26. For more, visit down-nola.com