

## Band members committed to Down

*Down sprung from its various members' downtime, which (duh) is how the band got its name. The group started more than a decade ago when singer Phil Anselmo, guitarists Pepper Keenan and Kirk Windstein, drummer Jimmy Bower and bassist Todd Strange took a break from their main bands (Pantera, Crowbar, Corrosion of Conformity among others), got together in New Orleans and banged out a pretty fantastic debut album in 1995's NOLA. But they never seemed fully committed to Down. Seven years passed before a second album, and another five years passed before the new Over the Under was released.*

*In between the second and third albums, Down's hometown got flooded by a monster storm. And fans hoping Anselmo might bury the hatchet with his Pantera bandmates had to give up hope when guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott was shot and killed onstage. There is some darkness on Over the Under.*

*But there's also an upside. During the past few years, Down accidentally became a main project for its members, who no longer treat it like a side project. In advance of their Tuesday concert in Houston, Windstein talked with the Chronicle's Andrew Dansby about getting up for getting Down.*

**Q: Did you find it difficult to get everybody together?**

**A:** No, it's something we've discussed. We wanted Down to be a type of band that we could grow old with. And we really believe that. We've all done the heavy-rock thing, this is our priority now.

**Q: That sort of runs contrary to the band's name.**

**A:** Yeah, we've discussed that. But we wanted to get

together and make it a real band. Make a killer record and tour, tour, tour. Then do it all again.

**Q: I'm sure I'm not the first to ask, but is there a particular meaning to the album's title?**

**A:** To us, it means we're over all the negativity. Obviously there was "Dimebag" Darrell's death, the storm in New Orleans. I know people are sick of hearing about it, but I still have FEMA trailers on my street. You see reminders every day. So it's about appreciating simple things, being alive, having food to eat, a roof overhead.

**Q: Even with a new commitment, Down won't eat up all your time, will it?**

**A:** No, we'll always take other breaks, do other projects. I'll always do Crowbar. But after a tour, we'll catch our breath and relax a little. Do something different. I'm a firm believer that everybody should play in different bands. We do that a lot in New Orleans, it's incestuous, with guys jumping from one band to another. We just like different styles of stuff. I'm a music lover. I like good music, regardless if it's soft rock, reggae, metal.

**Q: Why, I, too, enjoy soft rock! What album do you own that would most surprise people?**

**A:** One night, it was very late, I'd been drinking beer and I ordered one of those Time Life collections from the '70s. '77 is my favorite year on that. But it's not odd for me to rock on to Sade. I can listen to Venom and two minutes later



**PRIORITY:** Down was formed by musicians of various bands getting together on their downtime. They will play at the Meridian on 7 p.m. Tuesday. BIG MACHINE MEDIA

play Sade. You'd be surprised, Phil's got an iPod in his dressing room. He'll play stuff on shuffle while he stretches. It'll play (Norwegian black-metal band) Immortal and then Morrissey. That's just how it goes.

**Q: So is the process typically handing music to Phil who writes lyrics?**

**A:** Usually somebody has a main riff. Then we all sit in a circle and bang them out again and again. Everybody puts in his two cents. It completes the sound of a band when everybody does something with it.

**Q: Does everybody play nice?**

**A:** Well, we can butt heads, don't get me wrong. We do that a lot. You have five heavy hitters in this band. Everybody's got strong personalities. We don't agree on everything, but in the long run, that makes for great songs.

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### DOWN

**When:** 7 p.m. Tuesday

**Where:** Meridian, 1503

Chartres

**Tickets:** \$27.50; 713-629-3700 or

[www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)