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SEVENDUST

A New Chapter

CHAPTER VII

By Travis Tutwiler

"Last night we rehearsed until 3 o'clock in the morning," explains Sevendust front man, Lajon Witherspoon, as the band prepares to embark on a four-week tour with Saliva. "We rehearse today and then tomorrow. We're just getting everything down again." The tour will be in support of Sevendust's newest release, *Chapter VII: Hope & Sorrow*, and will mark the return of original guitarist, Clint Lowery, who left the band in 2004 after the *Seasons* Tour.

"Yeah, we fired him (Clint) last night. No, I'm just kidding," Witherspoon says with a laugh. "Man, it's like a family reunion, and it's so cool. Last night we jammed together for the first time with live instruments turned on. We all looked at each other and, I promise you, just the energy,

people are able to hear this music, then we might as well get it out there."

"It's the story of our lives," is how Lajon describes the meaning behind the album title. "It's the sorrow and hope that we all go through. The title tells the story of everything that's happened for us." Expanding, he adds, "We hope for something better to come along. It's all the trials and tribulations that we've gone through as grown men in a band. So it just fits us, period."

Chapter VII, the band's seventh studio album, continues to progress from its predecessors. "Pretty much this whole album is so different. I think it's one of the best things we've done. You know, we weren't afraid to be heavy or too afraid to venture into other things and mature," explains Lajon.

tone, it was Sevendust again," Lajon says with excitement. "Not saying that we weren't Sevendust, but we are definitely back on that track. It's a distinct sound, and I don't know how else to explain it."

Lajon and his band mates — Morgan Rose (drums), Vinnie Hornsby (bass) and John Connolly (guitar) — are glad to have Clint back in the fold. "No matter what, Sevendust is home to all of us, and I don't care if any of us left to do things — because we're all grown men and have to venture out and definitely learn about our destiny," adding, "This is always his (Clint) home and he was welcomed back with open arms."

The return of Clint meant that Sunny Mayo, guitarist and long-time friend and band member since Clint's exit, would be replaced. "Sunny is an incredible guy and we love him to death, but it's just the way it was and the way it should be, as far as we're concerned," advises Lajon.

The news of Clint's coming home coincides with the release of the band's album of *Chapter VII: Hope & Sorrow*, which featured Mayo on guitar. The new record hit the shelves just over a year from their previous release, *Alpha*, breaking the mold of releasing a new studio album every two years.

"That's the luxury of being able to have your own label," referring to the 7Bros/Asylum label. "We feel like if the music is there, you don't have to wait that long to put it out. You have the control to do that. So that's what's cool. As long as we have the chance and opportunity to make sure

"Not necessarily what people would think would be the norm, like (Chris) Daughtry on the album."

"I know we get a lot of flack," he admits, "but we've grown up in this music industry and it was a pleasure working with someone so talented who was a fan of our band. "Daughtry just called me yesterday and told me, 'I just bought two copies (of the new CD),' he says of the *American Idol* star who appears on the emotionally-charged song, "The Past."

Also making appearances are Alter Bridge singer and guitarist, Myles Kennedy and Mark Tremonti, respectively. It's cool to be able to work with Myles, who is one of the best rock singers in the industry," admits Lajon. "To collaborate with people like that and to have a catalog — so you can go out with someone like Alter Bridge — and then turn around and go out with Slipknot. It's truly amazing."

Sevendust was originally scheduled to join Slipknot on the Rockstar Energy Mayhem Tour hitting Dallas on July 25, but had to decline. "We wanted to do Mayhem so bad, but with prior commitments we weren't allowed to do it," he states.

So when can Dallas expect the Sevendust crew to make their way to Big D? "

Definitely in the summer," advises Lajon. "Something real big will probably be happening with us when we come back through Dallas. I don't want to talk about it right now, but it looks like it might happen."

We'll be waiting.



Sevendust

Photo: Mitchell Davis