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SEVEN SEVEN SEVEN

The latest studio album from Sevendust, *Chapter VII: Hope & Sorrow*, came out in April from 7Bros. Records, and is reviewed this issue (see page 81). Sean Groove produced the 11-song CD at Atlanta's Tree Sounds Studios along with the band's drummer, Morgan Rose, and guitarist

John Connolly.

"There was a really relaxed vibe in the studio this time around," says vocalist Lajon Witherspoon. "I think *Hope & Sorrow* shows a different side of Sevendust. Heavy but yet still growing in a direction that explores a lot of different things musically for us. I'm excited about the album." The new disc features three guest appearances: two from the band Alter Bridge (guitarist Mark

Tremonti appears on "Hope" and singer Myles Kennedy lends his vocals to "Sorrow") and one from Daughtry mainman Chris Daughtry, a longtime Sevendust fan who contributed to the tune "The Past." Sevendust originally planned to spend this summer taking part in the Rockstar Energy Mayhem tour with Slipknot and Disturbed, but pulled out in advance, citing scheduling conflicts.

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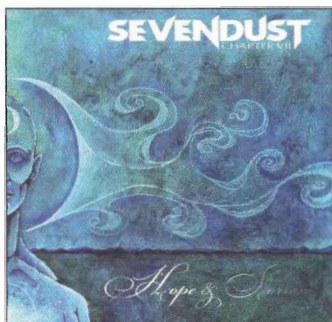
SEVENDUST

Chapter VII: Hope & Sorrow
7Bros/Asylum

There's big news for Sevendust in 2008.

Along with the exit of guitarist Sonny Mayo and the return of original member Clint Lowery to take his place, the band is releasing their seventh studio album, *Chapter VII: Hope And Sorrow*.

Quick – really quick – history. Diehard Sevendust fans will remember Lowery from the early years; he was with the band from their inception in 1995 through their tenure on the now-barely-extant TVT Records, when, in 2003, the group and their guitarist parted ways. Lowery formed Dark New Day with his brother, and the rest of the guys recruited Sonny Mayo, formerly of Snot. So while 1997's *Sevendust*, 1999's *Home*, 2001's *Animosity*, and 2003's *Seasons* and *Southside Double Wide* are attributed to Lowery, Mayo was on board for 2004's *Next*, last year's *Alpha*, and this album. Yeah, I'm ignoring those two best-ofs that the band released because, let's be honest, best-ofs are just bullshit label



strategies to soak up cash from the asses dumb enough to buy music they already own.

Now that we're all up to speed, let's talk about this album. First off, you'll notice that Sevendust has dragged a host of guest contributors in for this one. The pop-friendly names in the credits

include *American Idol* veteran Chris Daughtry and Alter Bridge's Miles Kennedy and Mark Tremonti, and suffice it to say that the only people that care about their contributions to this album are Chris Daughtry, Miles Kennedy and Mark Tremonti. I know I didn't. In fact, had it not been for the huge FYI plastered on the press release that came along with the disc, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have even noticed.

Like most of the recent releases that we've seen from bands that have been around for a decent amount of time, *Chapter VII* doesn't blaze any new trails for Sevendust. I wasn't surprised to find blatant, similarities between these tracks and those found on previous discs; just as

Serj Tankian's voice immediately conjures System Of A Down, there is something very specific you can expect when you pick up any Sevendust album.

Funny story, and I dare you to try this: I sat in my apartment one recent, rainy Saturday afternoon and played every album Sevendust has ever released, from start to finish, from the first track on 1997's self-titled debut, through the last track on this one. It's kind of crazy; each song meshes quite nicely into the next in a neat and massive conglomerate of Sevendust-ness. I wish I was exaggerating (actually, I kinda wish I didn't own all of their albums to be able to test the theory), but I speak the truth. Is their sound dated, or time-tested? I guess it depends on whether you were a fan to begin with.

Well, I, for one, am not complaining. My boss may scoff, but I happen to think Sevendust kicks ass (and anyway, he's got three Kylie Minogue albums in his iPod), and I'm glad to see that they haven't really changed. I'd call this album a nice tweak to an already solid formula. My favorite track is "Scapegoat," but I'm pretty sure I only love it because it reminds me of something else they've released before. Oh well.

—Rosa Henríquez

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