


REVOLVER

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ROOTS
BLOODY
ROOTS



DRIVEN BY
EQUAL PARTS
FERVENT FAITH AND
FRENZIED FURY,
METALCORE PHENOMS
**THE DEVIL
WEARS PRADA**
RETURN WITH A
RIGHTEOUS AND RAW
NEW ALBUM

BY RICHARD BIENSTOCK
PHOTOS BY DALE MAY



IF THE MEMBERS OF THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA HAD to do it all over again, they'd have probably gone with a different moniker. But in their defense, the name does have a nice ring to it, what with its summoning of all sorts of vividly doomy notions: wolves in sheep's clothing, the base idolatry of celebrity culture, the wicked allure of material goods. (As TDWP frontman Mike Hranica puts it in their song "Hey John, What's Your Name Again?" "The concept of fashion is the one to blame/Painting the portrait of conviction-less existence.") Sure, the band nicked the phrase from the 2003 novel of the same name, but that was before they realized just how popular it really was. And by the time the book was turned into a major motion picture—a *chick flick*, no less—it was too late for the six-piece metalcore group from Dayton, Ohio, to do anything about it.

"When we signed our record deal [in 2005] we had no idea there was a movie already being made," says guitarist-singer Jeremy DePoyster. "When we found out about it we were just like, Oh, crap."

When *Revolver* attempts to console the group members with the fact that there are plenty of bands out there with names taken from the titles of literary works—As I Lay Dying, um, Genesis—Hranica smiles and says, "But at least those bands chose good books!"

The merits of the name aside, by all accounts the Devil Wears Prada are doing just fine. The band—Hranica, DePoyster, guitarist Chris Rubey, bassist

From left: Daniel Williams,
James Baney, Mike Hranica,
Andy Trick, Jeremy DePoyster,
and Chris Rubey



Andy Trick, drummer Daniel Williams, and keyboardist James Baney—is in the midst of a national headlining tour with A Day to Remember, Sky Eats Airplane, and Emarosa as support. The prior evening's gig, at the Fillmore New York at Irving Plaza in NYC, was sold out; the same goes for tonight's repeat performance at the venue—it's still hours before show time, and the line outside the building already stretches a city block.

Inside, Hranica and DePoyster are relaxing on a couch backstage following soundcheck. Sitting beside one another, they couldn't appear more dissimilar—DePoyster is thin and lanky, with longish hair, an ever-present smile and an overall gregarious demeanor, while Hranica is quietly intense, with close-cropped locks, thick-rimmed

time we've done something like that," says the guitarist. "I actually wasn't too sure at first if it'd be right for the band, but the rest of the guys were into it."

Even though he doesn't perform on "Louder Than Thunder," Hranica wrote the lyrics that DePoyster sings, and had a hand in the overall direction of the music. "It was a challenge, because I didn't want it to be the cliché 'slow song on a metal record,'" he says. "It just kind of flows in and out and breaks things up a bit, sort of like an interlude. And I think it's a defining element in making this record different from the last one."

“WE WERE THINKING, CONTRACTS? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WE’RE STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL!”

—JEREMY DEPOYSTER

glasses, and loads of tattoos. Emblazoned across his knuckles are the words GODS (right hand) and WILL (left).

Although the band members are barely out of their teens, the Devil Wears Prada already have two full-length records under their belts—2006's *Dear Love: A Beautiful Discord* and '07's *Plagues*—and are about to release their third (and debut for Ferret), *With Roots Above and Branches Below*.

Hranica took the album's title from a verse in the Book of Jeremiah: "The idea behind it is putting the roots—which are the basics, the love—up on top, and the branches, which symbolize complexity, down in the ground," he says. Like their influences, Underoath and Still Remains, the Devil Wears Prada are a Christian band. "Dez Moines," the first single off the new album, according to Hranica, is about "people who go to church and don't feel the love of God as much as they should." Which is not to say that the band doesn't also have a sense of humor—the title, "Dez Moines," is a dig at DePoyster's mispronunciation of the Iowa capital, and other song names on the new album include "Big Wiggly Style," "I Hate Buffering," and a nod to the Dwight Schrute character on *The Office*, "Assistant to the Regional Manager."

The band's music, however, can still sound as fierce and unrelenting as that of their more serious, and perhaps spiritually indifferent metal peers. The new album's leadoff track, "Sassafrass," kicks off with a throat-shredding scream from Hranica, who then proceeds to screech and growl his way through a roller-coaster ride of metalloid riffs and practically nonstop tempo shifts. "We definitely beefed up the heavier parts this time around," says Hranica, though the fact is they also got mellow. The new disc's penultimate track, "Louder Than Thunder," is a piano-heavy ballad on which DePoyster's high, clean vocals, typically relegated to backups and breakdowns, take center stage. "It's the first

IN A WAY, you could say that the Devil Wears Prada are a product

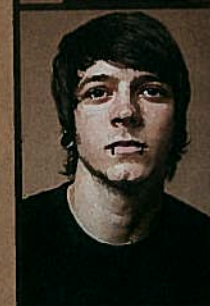
of the Internet age. They signed their first deal, with Rise Records, based on a demo, 2005's *Patterns of the Horizon*, which the label heard on their MySpace page. "We recorded that demo only a few months into the band's existence," says Hranica. "We were in the process of making press

packs to send to labels, and almost as a joke Chris emailed Rise and wrote, 'Hey, sign us!'"

"All of a sudden Rise got in touch," DePoyster says, "and they were like, 'We really like the songs and what you're doing with your MySpace page. Let's talk contracts.' And we were thinking, Contracts? What are you talking about? We're still in high school!"

In June '06, Rise issued *Dear Love: A Beautiful Discord*, essentially a re-recording of *Patterns of a Horizon* with two additional tracks tacked on. The album garnered a positive response within the insular metalcore scene, but there was a problem: With four of the group's six members still in high school, Prada weren't able to tour in support of it. "We basically went to school during the week and would play shows on weekends," says Hranica. "I think during Christmas break we did a short tour with Silverstein, but other than that, because of our situation we couldn't get too far from Ohio."

Instead, the band took to promoting the album on MySpace and working up songs for their follow-up. Within a year, they had recorded and released *Plagues* and, with high school diplomas now in hand, headed out on the Gwar-headlined 2007 Sounds of the Underground tour. Which presented its own set of problems: Apparently, your average Gwar fan tends not to be the church-going sort. "That was by far the most 'metal' tour we've done," says Hranica. "And it wasn't every show, but we got our share of people



yelling things and flipping us off."

It probably didn't help that Hranica made it a point each night—as he has done for every Devil Wears Prada show before and since—to make explicit his band's beliefs, announcing to the audience that "Jesus Christ loves each and every one of you."

"If you read the Bible," DePoyster says, "it says that you should never be ashamed to talk about God. So it would have been dirty for us to go out there and not say something just because we were worried about getting crap. Before some of the shows even our manager was like, 'Maybe it's not such a good idea for you guys to do this tonight.' But it was almost a test of faith."

"The thing is," Hranica adds, "we're just stating how

we feel, not telling anyone else how they should feel. We have respect for everyone, and for all other religions." He pauses. "Except Scientology."

He's kidding...maybe. Either way, it's another example of the bandmates' tendency to temper their dogma with humor. Take their contribution to last year's *Punk Goes Crunk* compilation, for which the Devil Wears Prada recorded a version of Big Tymers' ode to ghetto fabulousness, "Still Fly." Says DePoyster, "Originally we were going to do [Shop Boyz'] 'Party Like a Rockstar,'

but we felt it would be a little too hypocritical given the message we're trying to put out there. So we went with 'Still Fly' because it's not about ho's and drugs; it's just about being broke." The fact that the band refuses to curse on record, however, meant that some reworking of the song's lyrics was in order. "We changed the line 'The sex is so hot' to 'My syrup's so hot,'" says Hranica. "And instead of using the N-word we said 'fella.'"

In the end, the Devil Wears Prada don't take lightly their responsibility to their audience, or the potential influence of their actions on impressionable fans. Says Hranica, "The reason I got into this was because of As I Lay Dying and Underoath, and local acts around Dayton that talked about God. When I saw that those guys were doing it, it made me think that I could do it, too. And maybe some kid will see the Devil Wears Prada and go start his own Christian band."

Realizing this, the group members also understand that despite their newfound fame, they're really no cooler, wiser, or otherwise better than anyone in their audience, and that at their core, they're still the same six goofy guys who, four years ago, picked their band name on a misguided whim. "There are kids that come up to us and are like, 'Dude, you're my idol,'" DePoyster says. "It's flattering, but it also kind of sucks, because that's such a horrible word. The problem is that you see all these bands get big egos, because people are always telling them how awesome they are. One thing I've started to think as we play with bigger acts and get to meet famous people is How can you walk around like you're so great when you know for a fact you're no different than anyone else? I mean, Bono's just a dude who went to some little Irish school and grew up to sing in a band, right?"

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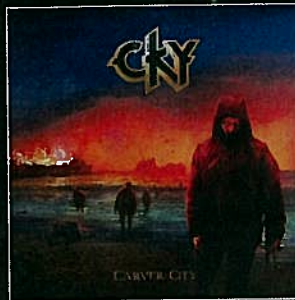
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