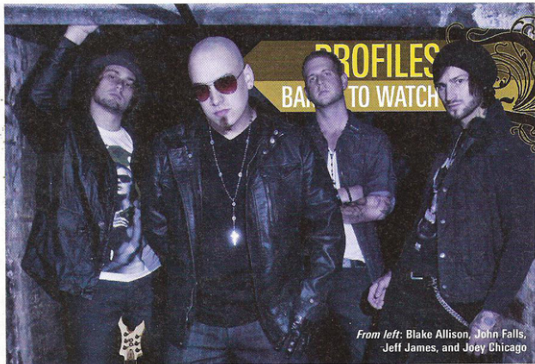


Egypt Central

THE SOUND
OF PERSEVERANCE

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE Equal parts hard-rock hooks and nu-metal crunch, Egypt Central's second album, *White Rabbit* (Fat Lady), is as powerful as it is catchy. A lot of this has to do with the emphasis the band places on making each song unique. "We like to try doing new stuff for every song," frontman John Falls says. "The only rule is that everything has to be melodic. Beyond that, there's no compromise on any level."

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL When Egypt Central were signed to major label Lava/Atlantic eight months after their formation, they thought they were on the fast track to success. That wasn't the case. Their 2004 self-titled debut was released in a period of record industry turmoil and Egypt Central were eventually dropped. Stung and broke, the musicians descended into a pit of substance abuse. "I got really depressed and drank all the time," Falls says. "Some of us went through drug problems. We were living in a band house and still making music, which was fun, but when the party would end, it felt like we were in a shithole with nothing to believe in."

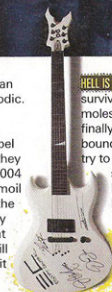


From left: Blake Allison, John Falls, Jeff James, and Joey Chicago

HELL IS FOR CHILDREN Part of Falls' sense of perseverance stems from surviving a tragic childhood full of abuse. "I was brutally beaten and molested from the time I was 4 until 16," he reveals. "My school finally discovered what was happening. They called DHS, and I bounced between group homes and foster homes, but they'd always try to send me back home and then I'd get more abuse from my stepfather. Finally, when I was 16, I got the hell out of there and lived on my own. But I've never cried or whined about my past. I never had anything to lose from day one, so I've always felt like there was nowhere to go but up." **JON WIEDERHORN**

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From left: Stewart Hill, Luke Williams, Kim Benzie, and Rob Maric



AUSSIE PROGSTERS AIM FOR GOOSEBUMPS.
GET BROKEN RIBS

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE Proggy rapture-rockers Dead Letter Circus are already a sensation in their native Australia—their debut, *This Is the Warning* (Sumerian), even debuted at No. 2 on the Australian charts underneath

Justin Bieber. Full of swirling electronic textures and headphone-ready production, the album takes the most ecstatic moments of Tool or the Mars Volta and spreads them across 53 heart-tugging

minutes. "What do you guys call those bumps you get on your arm when you're having an intense moment? 'Goosepimples' or something?" asks frontman Kim Benzie. "We're always chasing the hair-standing-up-on-your-neck thing."

LEAP PARALYSIS The group has built their rabid Aussie fan base thanks to massive touring and opening arena shows for Muse and Linkin Park. The adrenaline of performing eventually caused Benzie to grow into a fearless stage-diving junkie. "It was getting out of control. As soon as we'd get to a venue, I'd be eyeing whatever could be jumped off," he says. "I actually broke my ribs. I got really drunk and did a stage dive. I hit the crowd and white light just erupted around me. I nearly blacked out. It definitely slowed me down."

AGENT SECRET MAN Before he was a soaring space-rock, Benzie spent three years as a travel agent—though, he says, he spent an estimated 80 percent of that time daydreaming about playing music. "I basically lied my way into this job," he says. "I said I'd been to all these places that I'd never been to. I just read up on the internet. I hadn't been out of the country yet!" So, has he finally seen these places as a globe-trotting musician? "After this tour, definitely." **CHRISTOPHER R. WEINGARTEN**