



MASTODON

ONCE MORE 'ROUND THE SUN

SONG-BY-SONG

“Tread Lightly”

Troy Sanders: “I was personally very proud of it because I was able to mask a lot of thoughts metaphorically between my wife, my daughter, and myself. These were things we had talked about and experienced. It’ll only probably show itself to me personally, but I remember I was very happy to create a song that meant something on multiple levels for only those who are super close to me. Hopefully, the rest of the world will like it too. Brann’s chorus just killed it. I knew that would be the winner of the song. I want things to come across as meaningful and not just as cupcakes and sprinkles on top of a pretty jar of Play-Doh. We’re not a kids’ band. We’re trying to be men here. The word *trying* is the most important! That song will hold its substance for me personally as I listen to it hundreds and hundreds of times in the future.”

Brann Dailor: “I love that opening riff. It’s super-driving and heavy. I couldn’t believe it when I heard Troy’s vocals over the top of it. I think he did such a good job. It’s one of my favorite moments of his. I picture him on top of a mountain. It’s got a total *Game Of Thrones* vibe. Troy sounds like a total badass. He delivered.”

“The Motherload”

Brann Dailor: “Lyrically, it’s personal. It’s not wanting to lose someone and the powers-that-be are trying to take that person away or the world is just against it. You’re doing everything you can and scrambling to hold on. You’re going to do everything you can to salvage it.”

“High Road”

Bill Kelliher: “I wrote that on a day off while we were on tour in Luxembourg. I was sitting in this rainy city on a Sunday, and nothing was open. I felt like I needed to write something to reflect how I was feeling. I started banging on a guitar. I was thinking Neurosis and The Melvins low-tuned with a little more pop sensibility for the chorus.”

Brann Dailor: “You can headbang to that one for days. I love the simplicity of it. Lyrically, it’s an angry number where you want to see someone destroyed. It’s heavy-handed in that sense, but it’s the fantasy I felt at the time.”

“Once More ‘Round the Sun”

Brent Hinds: “When you listen to it, it makes you feel like you’re going around in a circle because of the slide guitar. That was a total accident. It was not a pre-conceived thing. It’s an in-depth topic in terms of the lyrics. It’s like the grind of getting caught up in your job. Where is your passion stemming from? It hits on all of those issues you encounter through day-to-day life.”

Brann Dailor: "Quite literally, it means a year-in-the-life. Lyrically, we were coming from things that had happened recently whereas in the past we dug into things that had happened a long time ago for content. Everything seemed closer to the surface for this album. Everybody had a tough year for some reason. It was one of those years where a lot of big things happened. Everybody's still in the middle of it."

"Chimes At Midnight"

Troy Sanders: "We were wrapping up the sessions of recording another album, and I was like, 'It's so cool that all four of us are here, and we're all still into it'. I always liked this idea of nodding to an earlier album. I said, 'I've never repeated a line on purpose, but I'm going to right now'. It was a completely intentional nod to the record we put out ten years ago that boosted us and started elevating us to continue climbing and ascending this mountain that we're still nearing the top of. Brann and I wrote a bunch of lyrics that ended up being those verses. Brent tackled the chorus."

Brent Hinds: "That song was originally written under the working title of "Arnold" in one day on the spot. After it was done, Bill looked at me and said, 'That was one hell of a song, Arnold'. It was a quote from *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. He got fired from the fast food joint because his friend Arnold was pissing, 'That was one hell of a piss, Arnold'. We started calling the song 'Arnold'. Songs flow out of me when I'm at the right time and place. That's how that song happened. It's a true Mastodon collaboration with me, Brann, and Troy writing together."

"Asleep In The Deep"

Troy Sanders: "From a musical standpoint, I'm really happy with the pushing agitation and overall sound of the bass guitar. That pleased me. I think that's a really pretty song that came together quite nicely as a band. Brent and Bill's guitar-work is wonderful. The vocals begin to carry you away. At the halfway mark of the album, you can start to take a mental adventure. That was and still is one of the highlights of the album. I'm very fond of that song. It's got a sense of maturity to it that I really dig."

Brann Dailor: "I love that song. It's so bizarre. The first time I heard it, I was like, 'What the hell kind of music is this? I don't know where to put it as far as genre is concerned'. It's just a Mastodon song. It's another relationship song, which they all sort of are because I feel like relationships are the most important thing with your friends, relatives, significant other, kids, or dog and cat. It's hopeful. It's a tear-down and build-back-up song."

"Feast Your Eyes"

Troy Sanders: "That one stems from an angry vibe, which I don't have a lot, but certain riffs and experiences can bring it out of me. When they do, they sure are fun as hell to perform. I'll be kicking rocks every night when I get to play that with these dudes. The obvious angry vibe is during the chorus. 'See the red' refers to those angry flashes. I'm not trying to sound tough or angry, because I don't like to be angry hardly ever. It sure does work when you can channel it through the outlet that is Mastodon. I enjoy being able to have done the majority of vocals on that song."

Brann Dailor: "That reminds me of an older version of ourselves. There are some really cool moments in that song. It's a fast, crazy heavy song, but it's catchy at the same time."

“Aunt Lisa”

Brent Hinds: “This one came out pretty effortlessly. It’s about Brann’s Aunt Lisa, her wild spirit, and free personality. I love what The Coathangers did. They’re good friends of mine, and they owed me a favor because I got the Mastodon guys to dance around like girls in their video.”

Brann Dailor: “My aunt liked anything I did. She definitely lived life to the fullest. If she walked in the room, all eyes were on her. I loved it. I don’t think I’ve ever come across energy like that before, and I don’t know that I will. You never knew what was going to happen when she was around. She had a huge impact on my life. I didn’t get to say goodbye to her properly. This is me trying to say goodbye.”

“Ember City”

Brann Dailor: “Something important was on the line. It’s when those unforeseeable forces try to take something important to you away. It’s everything in your power. That subject deserved a couple of songs because it was happening. It’s a big important song for me. It rose to the top for me. I love that song. What Brent solos over is an old Bill riff we had. I remember jamming it on the Opeth tour. It’s been around since then. We’ve been wanting to use that for a long time.”

Bill Kelliher: “‘Ember City’ and ‘Tread Lightly’ were the same song for a minute, and then the nucleus split into two. I was on a Baroness vibe when I was writing the verses of the song. I was listening to a lot of their *Yellow & Green* record. Those little trills reminded me of John Dyer-Baizely and Pete Adams going on. The riff under the solos was totally separate. I pulled that from my memory banks. I came up with the chorus after that. There’s also that whacky prog-y part towards the end. It used to be the beginning, but Brann talked me out of it. The beginning has that Thin Lizzy dueling guitar thing going on.”

“Halloween”

Troy Sanders: “It’s another badass Brent Hinds rocker!”

Brent Hinds: “I found some interesting chords because I was in this weird tuning. I came up with the chorus Brann sings on. He wrote the chorus he sings, but as far as the music, I wrote all of that. It came together pretty quickly. The ending of the song is separate from the beginning. It doesn’t do the classic bookend. It keeps going on a rock bender. I thought it would be fun. I love Halloween. The song talks about drinking gasoline and fucking shit up basically. It’s perfect for the season.”

“Diamond In The Witch House”

Brann Dailor: “We always heard Scott on it because it reminds us of Neurosis. It’s indicative of their influence on us. We sent it to Scott, and he immediately gravitated towards it. He was driven by it, and his performance is incredible. The end part is an amazing send-off. The album couldn’t have ended better. We’re always looking for that epic piece to end the record. That’s it. The whole send-off at the end is perfect.”

Troy Sanders: “It’s about the fragility of taking responsibility. That’s what happens when you have kids. Precious lives are in your hands and dependent upon your actions. The idea spun from that. It’s about proving your worth and prevailing.”

