

# HOUSE OF HEROES

## *The End Is Not The End*

War and peace. Safety and emergency. Comfort and dissonance. The tension between opposing forces is a reality we see around us, especially in the sonic realm. Music today, in itself, is a battlefield wrought with adversaries; on one side lies the safe, the pop, the commercial, and on the other lies the daring, the experimental. There are bands on the right, and bands on the left.

And very rarely, there is a band that plays the tedious role of double-agent.

House of Heroes. ...*The End Is Not The End*. A spy in form and function, playing both sides against one another. House of Heroes has found a sound that is both creatively inspiring and commercially viable. Look no further for enigmatic songwriting, bold epics, yet clever chorus lines. Front man Tim Skipper and company have concocted an opus which will, most certainly, wake the dead. He gives a glimpse into the inspiration:

“When we started writing this record we talked about writing 'songs about love,' that weren't necessarily 'love songs.' There are several songs about war, but we made a conscious effort to place the songs in wars of the past such as World War Two or Vietnam so that they wouldn't be applicable to our current situation in the Middle East. We didn't want people to view these songs or this record as 'anti-war,' but rather 'pro-humanity.' The title, *The End is Not the End* comes from a song called “By Your Side” about one brother who lost his other brother in a war. He's coming to terms with the pain and the anger and the uncertainty of what happens to us when we die. So it has a very deep spiritual meaning. The character feels that he will see his brother again. The lyric goes, ‘the end is not the end. I'll be by your side on the other side.’”

This Columbus unit converted to a four-piece unit after years as a three piece for this new chapter as a band. As musicians, this was a calculated decision that has proven to be a masterful one. Former bass player A.J Babcock returned to the fold while Jared Rigsby moved from bass to his preferred instrument, guitar. The result is House of Heroes firing at full potency. And you will not find a foursome that takes more pride in playing music the way it should played--without pitch-tuning or digital manipulation; Each song on the album is heard exactly as it was performed without the aid of any sort inhuman machine.

“We spent a lot more time getting the tones we wanted and playing the parts perfectly.” Skipper explains. “And to give the record more of a live and human feel, we sang all of the background vocals standing together around one mic. Like Queen used to do. It's the best part of the record for me, hearing these huge, thick vocal harmonies.”

From song to song, the range of emotion and instrumentation is as broad and diverse from tempo changes and structure to time signature, but falls within an understandable formula. All is tangible and accessible with verses and choruses you can grab hold of and make your own. Case in point, is the track "Code Name: Raven." Catchy lines and melodies abound from intro to anthemic sing-alongs. But above the purely infectious nature of the track itself is the undeniable vocal prowess and instrumentation. Welcome to *The End is Not the End*.

Deeply spiritual, at times apocalyptic, and at all moments passionately universal, House of Heroes touches on the deepest recesses of every human's soul on these tracks with these calculated words. In an era where profound words are beyond scarce, here again the band has proven they are not like the others. On "Code Name: Raven" the lyrics speak of loyalty and faithfulness across the backdrop military metaphor: "You're the only reason I stay. In this coward's melee, I'd rather die than live without mercy and love. Sing while the city decays. We'd rather go up in flames. Lest we betray the names of dignity and love." The album offers clever commentary on the emptiness of human desires on "Faces": "I'm in love with the faces of a thousand nameless girls. I'm in love with the chases for the unattainable. I'm in love but I'm tasteless. I only want what's bad for me. I'm in love with a waitress if only I could drink for free...I'll dream until my dream comes true." And on "In the Valley" it portrays a very personal realization of the Almighty: "All through the night I wrestled the angel to undo the curse that burdened me all of my life. And for the first time I could see that God was not my enemy." Heartfelt and urgent, these are songs that contain the messages a generation of identity-less youth need to hear.

House of Heroes has played hundreds and hundreds of shows along the way, with everyone from Silverchair, Relient K, and MxPx to Phantom Planet, The Rocket Summer, Simple Plan and Family Force 5. If you have never seen them live, then you are truly missing out on something special. This band takes pride in capturing every note, every harmony, and every nuance of their recordings in their live performance. They are road-tested, and more than determined to leave many more stages crumbling in their wake in the months to come.

For all their depth and personality, Skipper summarizes the band's goals from this point forward in a concise and simple fashion. They are the words of one who is satisfied and content with what he and his cohorts have accomplished. And why shouldn't they be? One listen to this record and you will understand.

"We just want to be surrounded by people who we can love and who are passionate about the band and this record. After that we want to get on good tours. Continue to grow as musicians, as songwriters, and as friends. And eventually be able to write a song with someone like Paul McCartney, Elvis Costello, or Brian Wilson. That would rule all."

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