

BLUE OCTOBER – December 2008

Most people fail to make The Leap in life because they make the same mistakes over and over again and fail to correct them. Justin Furstenfeld made The Leap *precisely because* he made the same mistakes over and over again and failed to correct them. The jarringly frank “Hate Me,” the first single from the band’s 2006 breakout album, *Foiled*, is one of the many reasons that his chameleonic modern rock outfit Blue October made the evolution from an intensely beloved cult band to fledgling mainstream radio conquerors. While first three full-lengths *The Answers* (1998), *Consent to Treatment* (2000), and *History for Sale* (2003) resonated deeply with rock fans craving sincerity, eclecticism, and unpredictability, *Foiled* has shattered the glass ceiling, soaring past platinum sales on the strength of “Hate Me” and the luxuriant “Into the Ocean.”

To follow-up on their newfound success, Blue October, want to push further into new territory and to accomplish that, they have enlisted the help of Steve Lillywhite, the five-time Grammy Award winning producer best known for his work with U2, Peter Gabriel, Jason Mraz, Talking Heads, Morrissey and more. “We wanted to make an album like we’ve always wanted to do,” claims Justin. “With the eclectic style of it being beat-oriented, it being ballads, it being hard rock. Whenever we do rock, we make sure it’s the heaviest it can possibly be. We want to come out sounding as heavy as Deftones would. And as light as Cowboy Junkies would. And as thought-provoking as Peter Gabriel. Musically and lyrically we try to [extend] our bounds as far as we can.”

To make the album, Lillywhite temporarily relocated to the band’s turf to record the album at Willie Nelson’s, Perdarnales Studio, about 25 miles outside of the band’s adopted hometown of Austin, TX. They spent two months making the album before taking a break to absorb it all. Finishing touches will be completed in December and the album, *Approaching Normal*, will be released in early 2009.

The Texan quintet—rounded out by violinist Ryan Delahoussaye, guitarist C.B. Hudson, bassist Matt Noveskey, and drummer Jeremy Furstenfeld—has been practicing their exhaustingly intense games of emotional give and take since forming in 1996. Frontman and principal songwriter Justin (the younger Furstenfeld by 14 months) naturally assumed the lightning rod position, literally crafting diary entries into shockingly forthcoming tunes about all things abuse and addiction (“Hate Me” being the watershed). Blue October’s rabid admirers responded in kind, roaring confessionals right back at them, a phenomenon gorgeously captured on the band’s 2004 double-live CD/DVD *Argue With a Tree*, which synchronizes the vocalist’s telling lyrical anecdotes with similarly heartfelt fan testimonials. So what exactly *is* going on during those infamously cathartic live outpourings? “Frustration and getting it out,” Furstenfeld chuckles. “Or complete mad love. I try to live every song as I can. The ones that I wrote years ago, I can’t take it back to that spot, but I try to sing it for the fans who are actually going through those situations.”

Blue October have clearly benefited not only from twelve years of endless rinse-lather-repeat tour cycles, fortifying relationships with their followers, and by playing two hundred shows in support of the album *Foiled*. And, that won't change, because the essence of Blue October lives on the stage, and to support the release of *Approaching Normal*, the band will expand its sphere of touring beyond North America and, for the first time, reach out and into the UK, Europe, Australia, Japan and South America.

After over a decade of hard work and development, Blue October are just getting warmed up. Their Leap is still peaking, and they aren't leaving anyone behind. "It's all walks of life: black, white, Asian, Hispanic," Furstenfeld notes of the devoted. "And it's not just one genre. It's people who like hip-hop, it's people who like rock..." He pauses and laughs. "I don't really separate them as categories."