

Trey Heffinger – vocals
Shannon Cochran – guitar
Jon Poole – drums
Josh LeBlanc – bass
Neil Tankersley – keyboards

The most engaging art can come out of the most challenging personal circumstances, a concept which boldly manifests itself across Echoing Angels' self-titled CD. The sophomore outing for the Atlanta-based act isn't just a diary exposing the five members' extremely personal emotions, but also a springboard to solace for listeners encountering hardship across any spectrum.

"Right after our first record, *You Alone*, we hit the road and at that point we asked ourselves what this ministry was all about," notes beat keeper John Poole (better known to fans as simply JP). "The consensus was it was about serving God and spreading His word, and while everything appeared to be on track for the band, we learned that faith isn't always tested when things are going well. It turns out we ended a previous label relationship, our manager passed away and then we lost our booking agency. By industry standards, we could've been considered done, but it all brought that initial conversation full circle. God called us to do this and He's way bigger than all of that."

Though most artists would quickly brush unflattering facts under the rug, the band's merit was confirmed time and time again on the road by faithful followers who never gave up on the meaningful modern rockers (who are now splashed with a hearty dose of soul). In fact, by airing their dirty laundry so to speak, the guys became all the more relatable, while inspiring listeners in their resolve to press on and stay committed to the aforementioned calling.

"We've run into fans that've lost their jobs, dealt with a lot of unrest and uncertainty in this economy and are just dealing with all sorts of roadblocks," notes front man Trey Heffinger, of a thread that soaked up in the current songwriting process. "Broken marriages are a huge topic we've encountered, kids dealing with their parents fighting and even wider issues like the tragedies of Haiti and Hurricane Katrina. The song '(Love) Way of Life' takes all of these ideas into effect to remind believers to constantly build one another up instead of just waiting for a tragedy to start lending a hand. Even though we're a Christian band, life isn't always roses and candy, but getting mud in your face makes you that much stronger."

Another case in point comes in the form of the stirring ballad "I'll Give You Peace" (co-written with acclaimed singer/songwriter Sarah Reeves), which was inspired by Brooke, Trey's wife's best friend who suffered a severe neurological disorder that eventually took her life. Even amidst her debilitating condition and weary surgeries, she never complained or was anything but a light of the Lord.

"It got so serious that the doctors had to screw a halo into her skull, which is so intense that it specifically led my wife to pray for her be blanketed with peace," he recalls. "A few days later, Brooke said to my wife that she could hear the words 'I Will Give You Peace' over and over in her ear during the surgery and that gave her the strength to lay still even though the pain was excruciating, which the doctors had never witnessed before. It's our hope that the song will inspire people in even the most frail condition to feel peace and to know that God hears our prayers and is there to catch our tears."

From there, the band beckons with the rally cry "Say What You Believe," about never being ashamed to share one's faith, along with the empowering "Taking Back Love Tonight," a redemptive track strewn around concepts of forgiveness, mercy, and ultimately, second chances. The forceful "All I'm Living For" takes a windows rolled down approach to diving in your dreams face first with complete dependence on the Lord, while the heartfelt acoustics of "The Life You Give Away" pays homage to the guys' wives and families for their unconditional support of Echoing Angels' outreach actions.

"It talks about that we leave our wives on a regular basis, but they've collectively chosen to give us to the Lord and the ministry God's called us to do, in turn, giving us nothing but unconditional support and always covering us in prayer," assures Tankersley. "They've even started a blog called 'The Real Angels' that talks about life at home and we really all are best friends with one other to the point where we just consider this family."

In terms of Echoing Angels' musical kinship, its membership expanded to include co-writer/multi-instrumentalist Chris Rodriguez (Keith Urban, Faith Hill, Kenny Loggins) across several tracks, plus super producer/session player Calvin Turner (Marc Broussard, Amy Grant, Jimmy Needham). "Being musicians, we're big credit readers and working with Chris was a dream come true," verifies guitarist Shannon Cochran. "We were working five feet away from a wall of platinum records, but he never played the card of 'I played on all of these' and was just the most down to earth guy who was great to hang out with."

Adds bassist/audio guru Josh LeBlanc about tag teaming with Turner: "We've been playing these songs live for so long, so we were able to have the kinks worked out, as far as the arrangements, in advance and then go to Calvin to add his flavor. It was fun to sit down with him and go through the sounds, plus the place we recorded, Castle Studios, was an open air room that brought so much energy to the sessions instead of some basement studio where it's dark and you feel like you're in a cave."

The results of such sessions not only find the fellas at their most infectious to date, but also at their most mighty with the guitars, percussion and keys getting cranked up yet another notch, alongside smoky pipes from the full-throttled front man. "We're really excited about the new musical direction, which we've affectionately called rock n' soul," reveals Poole of the band's exciting evolution that could be most readily compared to Kings of Leon, Needtobreathe or Marc Broussard. "Trey has such a soulful element to the way he sings and delivers each line, and as a result, you'll hear more swagger from everyone."

Though not in the songwriting or studio sense, Echoing Angels is quick to credit both their label and management team, each of whom have partnered with the band via a remarkable resolve to reach as many people as possible. "We've all heard each others hearts and are seriously on the same page when it comes to spreading the word about these songs," continues Cochran. "They see our vision and we had that instant connection with both places to the point where we knew we needed to all work together."

With all the pieces to the group's career back in place and everyone sounding more muscular than ever before, the players' visions have been refined to the purest place any faith-based band could desire. Put plain and simply, the self-titled CD is meant to be a mouthpiece of optimism, patience, and perhaps most of all, perseverance in God's plan for each and every listeners' life.

"The bond of unity in this band is stronger than it's ever been and this record is really an imprint of who we are and where we're at right now," sums up Heffinger. "We definitely feel like we have a story to tell and it's an honor we've been given this chance. With God, nothing is wasted and we want to relate to people with all we've been through to let them know there's always hope."

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