

BASSNOTES

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Alkaline Trio

Dan Andriano

On Punk Production

PAUL ESCOBAR

DAN ANDRIANO AND ALKALINE TRIO are looking forward to a vital year. The Chicago-bred band just released its seventh studio album, *This Addiction*, on its own imprint, Hearts and Skulls. Since 1996, the band has practically lived on the road, garnering a rock-solid support base of fans. In signature style, the punk-rock trio will tour hard in support of their latest album.

Your band is a trio, but on past albums you've used overdubbed strings, keyboards, etc. How would you characterize your production aesthetic?

We've always wanted to experiment; we'd try anything we thought might sound good. Some of those overdubbed tracks ended up

sounding fairly grandiose. This time, we didn't set out with the intent of stripping that all away; we just wanted to write songs that would stand more on their own no matter what the production value. Our goal is to write songs that sound good with just the three of us playing. Stripping it down makes songs easier to get across live, since we don't have to play with sequenced tracks. It can be fun having lots of crazy sounds going on, but it's nice not to worry about it.

What's the band's songwriting process?

Generally Matt [Skiba, guitar] or myself will write the skeleton of the tune—maybe just a verse and chorus—but we don't really structure the songs until we get together with Derek [Grant, drums]. Derek's really

good at putting song structures together in interesting ways. We live in different cities, so we share music and ideas online. That's worked out pretty well. It's not until the three of us are in the same room that the songs really come together.

In your years playing with Alkaline Trio, what are some of the things you've learned about getting the most from your gear?

When we worked with producer Jerry Finn on *Crimson* [Vagrant, 2005], I played his '62 Fender P-Bass, which was the nicest bass I've ever played; it was all worn out in all the right spots. As soon as we finished making that record, I bought two Fender '62 Reissue Precision Bases and sanded the finish off the necks to give them a worn-in feel. Now I do that to all my basses.

Live, I play through an Orange rig, but the amp I like to record with is a 1971 Marshall Major head. It's the best sounding amp I've ever played through. I don't know why more people didn't get into them. It's a 200-watt head, so maybe it's that guitar players can't get them to break up very easily. But with bass it sounds perfect. It gets pretty gnarly, but it stays smooth. It's almost like naturally compressed sound. —CONTESSA ABONO



HEAR HIM ON

Alkaline Trio, *This Addiction* [Hearts and Skulls, 2010]

GEAR

Basses Custom GPC Signature Bass (by Giorgini Precision Craft), custom Fender '75 Reissue Jazz Bases, Fender '62 Reissue Precision Bases, Fender '57 Reissue Precision Bass

Rig Orange AD-200B with Orange 4x10 cabs; Ampeg SVT; '71 Marshal Major

Effects Fulltone Bass-Drive, custom chorus pedal

Strings Ernie Ball

