

rather than our record company wanting us to do this. So, basically what we did, we took some time, and got to a point where we wanted to see each other and make a record again, and that's why it took so long. We'd be cheating fans if we just went with the record company schedule. It doesn't seem like we should be a band doing that sort of thing."

Even by the Lollapalooza shows of a couple of years ago, it seemed like you were all pretty fed up with the whole touring thing.

"We were by then, but not really compared to later. We'd put a lot into that, and a lot was going on, but even on *Lolla* we weren't totally sick of it, because we kept going for a year after that! We were always getting into trouble though. We got arrested on that tour, Tim and I, in Louisiana, I think it was. What a nightmare."

So, what's the deal with the new album?

"We've definitely grown from the first album, but I think if you listen to any song on the LP you could tell it's a Rage Against the Machine song. There is a total growth though. It's a lot rawer sounding because we recorded the whole record in a room not much bigger than this office. Nothing was separated. I was set up here playing drums, Tom was two feet away from me. Tim was two feet away from me. Everything bled together, but we were just worried about getting good takes of each of us, rather than go in and do drums, then bass, then guitar. We wanted to get the vibe of playing together. That's where we rehearsed the record, so we talked to Brendan [O'Brien, the producer], and he was good with just bringing in a 24-track, setting it up next door, and going for it. It really sounds that way too, really raw. I like it a lot better than the first album."

It seems like a lot of bands are going with that low-key recording approach nowadays.

"Yeah, why go into a studio and spend all this money to try to catch something close to the live sound and energy of a band, when you can spend less money and do it for real? This just wasn't the sort of album that would benefit from the big money and a big studio and all that shit."

How does it feel to be coming back into the fray of being a band with a big new album out?

"I have a lot of anxiety now. I really want to be back out there. I don't mean to be dissing on bands, but a lot of new bands from the

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past few years have been really crappy, they just aren't good, except for a few obvious exceptions. I'm glad we waited as long as we did and took our time with the album, because it seems like a really good time for us to be out and touring. I'm excited by it all, I just want to get the hell out of here and get onto the road, as weird as that sounds."

With the political pressure that's coming down on rock acts at the moment, it would seem like a difficult time for a band like yourselves to be releasing an album.

"Sony has never hindered us in any way as far as our creativity, and what we want to do, and what we stand for. They've never told us we couldn't do anything. So, it seems like it's more important than ever for us to be back out there now, because of all this stuff that's going on, there needs to be a band like us out there."

What's the most important thing for the band to try and achieve nowadays?

"I guess the main thing for the band, or at least for me, would be to deliver music that we all felt strongly and passionately about, and that was music with content that meant something. It's important also that a regular kid who comes to see a show, or listens to an album gets that thing inside to click on and make them question their own surroundings and assumptions, and the diecast mould that society puts you in — just to start that process, to get those kids thinking for themselves, rather than being sedated by the media, and television, and all that crap. Even if they don't agree with us, even if it pisses them off, that's fine, but at least they've started thinking."

It seems like a lot of the more left field bands who find themselves in the mainstream start finding their audiences are largely these jarhead thug kids, catching the energy but not the motivation. Do you get that syndrome going on?

"Hell, yeah, I bum on some of our audiences probably as much as they bum out on the things we do a lot of the time. There's a lot of people that completely miss what we're all about. People go to shows to beat the fuck out of each other, and that's not what we're about. It's about a celebration of anger and frustration, it's not about beating up someone who you have something in common with. The mentality of that does bum me out."

You guys certainly have less oblique lyrics than most alternative bands. You're pretty confrontational in that sense.

"In doing that, we're going to piss people off, but we're going to make people think, and that's good. That's what Rage Against the Machine is all about."

KIRK GEE



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