

SEETHER - Isolate and Medicate BIOGRAPHY

On their sixth full-length album *Isolate and Medicate*, multi-platinum alternative rock trio Seether – Shaun Morgan [vocals, guitar], Dale Stewart [bass, backing vocals], and John Humphrey [drums] – strip their trademark melodic thrash to its core and deliver the most poignant, passionate, and powerful record of their illustrious career. With rigorous minimalism and maturity, chief songwriter Shaun Morgan – long one of rock’s most unheralded melodists, has become a composer of deep emotion and clear-eyed vulnerability. The band too has developed into one of rock’s most fearsome units, playing with precision, grit and authority, yet still light on their feet. After 15+ years of hardscrabble success, it’s evident that Seether felt like survival was not enough. They had something to prove with this new album – somewhere farther to go.

One reason for the new approach must surely be Seether’s close partnership with ace producer Brendan O’Brien (Springsteen, Pearl Jam). More like a member of the band than a hired gun, O’Brien repeatedly championed Morgan as one of music’s most gifted songwriters and vocalists and Seether as one of rock’s most extraordinary bands. His unrelenting faith in their talent and potential has been something of a North Star for Seether, helping them struggle through and outlast some very dark times.

Recognizing that he needed to limit distractions, in early 2013 Morgan went about constructing a refuge in his New Hampshire home – a space where these new songs could develop and take shape. “I actually built a room that I could write in,” he recalls. “I personally pulled out the carpet, put in wood flooring, decorated, and painted. After getting off the road, it was a process of preparation to get the environment just right. I made a place that I felt comfortable and creative in. I was able to be safe and isolated, concentrating on writing music instead of dealing with the distractions that come with daily life.”

Lyrically, Morgan has never been afraid to look his demons in the eye. The people in these songs confront the truth with simmering rage; it’s the fuel they need to make them feel alive. “The whole record is a collection of diary entries,” Morgan revealed. “It’s just where I’m at and what I’m going through. I’m writing songs about getting through whatever situations I’m in at the time. These songs deal with relationships and life situations.”

Morgan emerged with a collection of fleshed-out ideas that the musicians honed during rehearsals together in drummer John Humphrey’s native Oklahoma. By the time they assembled with O’Brien to record the album at Hollywood’s Henson Studios in January 2014, their vision had clearly come into focus.

“It felt so natural,” explains Humphrey. “When we get together, there’s an indescribable chemistry. That’s all over this album. The three of us can jam together and finish a song pretty quickly. We were really focused. These guys are my second family. We’re tight musically and otherwise.”

The band cut the entire album in sixteen days. The swift recording pace did not allow them to smother the tracks with overproduction, but rather gave the songs a chance to breathe. On working with O’Brien, bassist Dale Stewart enthused, “He’s like a fourth band member at this point. We understand each other. He likes to get in there and work quickly and he encourages us to be ourselves. We often followed our first instinct. That allowed us to capture the moment.”

The album opener, “See You At The Bottom,” quickly locks in with brutal force as Morgan’s Beatles-meets-Nirvana wail comes screaming out of the speakers. From there, the album never lets up.

Gnashing riffs underpin another infectious chorus on the virulent first single, “Words As Weapons.” Morgan’s remarkable ear for indelible melodies is truly the band’s secret weapon. It’s what makes *Isolate and Medicate* so damn listenable. Morgan makes unrelenting despair a fun listen.

“Same Damn Life” – a boiling rejection of suburban sprawl juxtaposed against Morgan’s surgery falsetto – is a pop metal surprise. “I always felt like there was something there,” Morgan said of the song. “It started from a riff and went into a vocal idea. I’m a big fan of The Beatles. It’s fun to do something with that pop element. Those are the songs that stick with you.”

The album’s centerpiece, “Crash,” is quite possibly the most beautiful song Seether has ever recorded. Gorgeous vocal lines and warm, fuzzed-out guitars cascading into pulsating wall-of-sound atmospherics mark an undeniable creative peak for the band. “It’s different from what we’ve done in the past and that excited all of us,” Stewart says. “It doesn’t follow the stereotypical formula. It’s pretty. It’s heavy. It’s emotional and deep.”

Another reason for the band’s fresh outlook is the strong support and enthusiasm they feel from new label partners The Bicycle Music Company/Concord Music Group. The brothers-in-arms feel was galvanized with their new team. “In one of our first meetings with the label, we played everybody five or six completed songs,” Morgan remembers. “This marked the first time anybody outside of the band and Brendan listened to it. Afterwards, everybody was really excited and happy. Seeing the level of enthusiasm was great. That felt like the moment everything came together. It was a rebirth, in a sense.”

Seether has worked tirelessly to reach this point. The hard rocking outfit originally from Pretoria, South Africa has now released eight albums in all, two of which have gone Platinum and two more that are certified Gold along with a live concert DVD that has sold over 500,000 units – for total worldwide sales in excess of 4.5 million. The consistent hit makers have quietly amassed eleven #1 singles and seventeen Top 5 multi-format hits resulting in singles sales that top seven million – a level of success few artists working today can match. Seether has averaged 120 performances a year, crisscrossing the globe, emerging into headlining mainstays and featured performers on many of the world’s biggest rock festivals.

Isolate and Medicate will undoubtedly resonate deeply with the group’s fiercely loyal fans. “I hope everybody can feel this,” concludes Humphrey. “It’s a special album for us, and we put everything we had into it.”

Morgan completes the sentiment, “I want them to walk away having enjoyed the music. I want them to get the same emotional sense and happiness we feel listening to it. It’s so important and tied to memories we’ve all had. When somebody listens, it’ll hopefully make them feel good. They will know they’re not alone. That’s the reason we do it.”