

AMBASSADOR

BELLY OF THE WHALE



Ambassador comes with their debut album called *Belly of the Whale*, an album that the Hallowed reviewer praised and therefore we asked some questions that were answered by Gabe, the vocalist. He is a guy who knows about whales and ambassadors; this is what we found out.



WRITTEN BY: DANIEL KÄLLMALM
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The story begins a long time ago in the town of Baton Rouge when drummer Ean and Gabe used to play together in bands during their high school years.

- His dad owned a small store in our hometown, and all of us would meet there and jam in a shed out back. It was just a bunch of metal kids being loud. We also

played together in a band called Mutehound for most of our college years. Jeremy (bass) and Jason (guitar) have played in bands together since high school as well. Over the years, we mingled occasionally attending local shows or through mutual musician friends.

Those connections is what eventually led to the quintet becoming this band called Ambassador.

- Jason called me up a couple of years ago and we talked at length about this new project that

he had been creating material for, and how we wanted to fuse our more recent influences with our roots. He asked me to join him in getting it off the ground and I agreed. Ean had just moved back into town after being in California for quite a few years. As soon as I heard that he was back, I was scheming to get him into a project with me. He is an excellent drummer and we have always been able to write very fluidly together. Lastly, Dustin

was brought in to complete the line-up on guitar. He and I have been close friends forever and have written lots of shoe-gazy music together over the years, so it made sense. He and Jason have really clicked, and have started to bring the best out of each other.

A name like Ambassador sounds pretty interesting, a multifaceted name that can have several interpretations that might be quite fitting for the style of music being offered by this band. But it

is not a name that came after an elaborate thought process; it just came to them when thinking of names.

- It is a really powerful and suggestive word. Not only does the word have a traditional meaning based on the representation or promotion of a group and/or goodwill, but in today's world it also elicits thoughts and ideas associated with assassinations and dirty politics. It just somehow works in the context of our band.

Inspirations and album The question of inspirations is always an interesting one, it is often revealed in the music but there may be a bit more to a story than what you hear there in the music. The guys of Ambassador grew up listening to the heavier southern bands like Crowbar and Acid Bath, but over time those inspirations grew to include a wider scope of music.

- Jason, Dustin, and myself have listened to a lot of post-rock



and even dream-pop bands over more recent years. You can pick up these elements at times in our songs, but you can also hear heavier and more drony influences. I think a lot of the dark and moody influences come from slow southern metal, progressive bands like Tool, and even sad 80's and 90's pop. Ean, our drummer, is really into blues and folk stuff now, but

he started off like all of us, playing metal in high school.

That diversity of inspirations then comes together to form what the band describes as dark post-punk or dark rock, the style we can hear on the band's debut album "Belly of the Whale". The band describes that album as a cavernous musical quest fusing heart rending doom, shoe-gazing

aesthetics, and a deep-set pop sensibility.

- It meanders through a variety of sonic landscapes, and explores lyrical themes such as infatuation, rebellion, solitude, and other elements of the human condition through a trinity of archetypes - the hero, the lover, and the ruler.

The band has written all the material on their own as well as

recorded and produced it at their own studio; the album was mixed by J.T. O'Neal, and mastered by Alan Douches. And it has an artwork that impressed our reviewer with its flying whale, and it is an artwork with a story.

- In the belly of the whale you are consumed by the ocean of nothingness and are free of the ship, blissfully devoured. The whale, a

symbol of rebellion, wisdom, enlightenment, and escape, is out of water. This represents the limitless freedom of a spirit unrestricted by the forces of the natural world.

In the belly of the whale

Do you have any favourite song of the album?

- Our favourites within the band

are often not consistent with the initial reactions of new listeners. I think over time, some of the slower songs that were not released as singles such as *Return/Castaway* and *Profiteer* will be among the favourites.

And while favourites is one thing, how about the album in general? Did it turn out as expected? According to Gabe it turned



out better than they had expected.

- You never know how live songs will translate to a recording. It is sometimes challenging to capture the energy of the song. We ended up reworking songs and adding new instrument parts throughout the process, as we didn't really demo the album, and left room for exploration in the studio. In this regard, many

songs ended up much better than they were when we started the process.

The band financed the album themselves and releases it on their own without a label, as they think of it as a good way to display themselves both to fans and to potential labels.

- That gave us the freedom to make our own decisions and work on our own time. Also, pit-

ching to labels could have caused a delay in release, so we felt that it was best in our particular situation to move forward independently. We are working with a marketing and PR team though, and have a grasp of our merchandise. A label at this point would be more about brand association, which we don't deny has tremendous value. The plan is to release the next one on a label.

Feedback and live

Hallowed wrote positive words about "Belly of the Whale" but what about the feedback in general?

- Most people are surprised and impressed by the range of flavours and depth once they listen to the entire album. Feedback from album listeners vs. singles has been different. "Belly of the Whale" is an album in the classi-

cal sense. It is intended to be one complete body of work where each song offers something new, and plays a unique role in the overall communication of what we represent. Some of the best songs in our opinion are the ones that take a few spins, rather than the ones that instantly hook you.

The feedback is one way to promote the album, positive mentions helps promote an album.

As does promotional touring and shows, so what about the touring for ambassador? Don't expect any international tours just yet but the band it planning to put up some shows for you.

- We are planning a tour of the southeastern US in the first half of 2019. We will be playing shows in various cities and towns throughout Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Ala-

bama for the first leg, though we hope to be playing a few national festivals outside of the south in the spring and summer.

And if you visit one of those shows in the early part of 2019 you will see a band that describe themselves as rather ominous on stage but also one that likes to interact with the audience more than most of the shoe-gazing bands out there.

- We don't pump the party, per

se, but we like to come across as real people. Our songs are emotional and we like to have lighting and sometimes video projections to lead the audience into the right headspace for our music. We are a somewhat serious band, but are also southern boys, so we like to have a good time. This comes across during our shows.

Do you prefer the studio or the stage?

- I don't think we have a preference.

They are two totally different realms that offer unique satisfaction. We wouldn't want to miss the experience of either.

And with that we thank Gabe and Ambassador for the time to answer our questions and hence making it possible to create this article, and then we leave the final words of the article to Gabe.

- We pride ourselves in offering something that cannot be found in abundance in any scene right

now. Our music slips from the template but is familiar enough to connect with. We take on the risk of not fitting in, so you don't have to risk listening to the same regurgitation of sounds and ideas. Allow us to be your mistress.

Ambassador are:

Dustin Borne - guitar

Jeremy Pourcy - bass

Jason Ourso - guitar, backing vocals

Gabe Vicknair - vocals

Ean Savoy - drums

Some links:

Band website

Youtube

bandcamp

The Hallowed review

