

## Kissinger

Kissinger have been a fixture of the indie/rock scene in Austin, TX, for over 10 years now – 10 years of touring, broken guitar strings, awards, chipped teeth, showcases and leapt amplifiers. *Underwater*, their third full-length record, following *Me & Otto*, *Charm* and a handful of EPs, is something special.

First of all it sounds great. *Underwater* was co-produced by **Phillip Broussard Jr.** and **Andy Sharp**. Phillip traveled from LA, where he works as an engineer for Rick Rubin, working with artists like Weezer, The Red Hot Chili Peppers and Neil Diamond. Austin-based producer Andy Sharp has recently worked on projects for The Toadies, Blue October and Sheryl Crow.

What the producers captured on this record is the kind of songs that take ten years to get to. *Underwater* explores the depths of a songwriter in full voice and of a band that has transcended it's years of white-van rock and roll tours to emerge with a sense of musical urgency and clarity.

"Most of the bands we've played with over the years are no longer together," lead singer and songwriter Chopper says. "And I can't say I blame them. This is a hard thing to do. I guess we keep at it because we want to do this more than anything else. Sometimes it seems like the longer we last, the harder it gets. That's part of why this album is called "*Underwater*". As a kid did you ever try to run on the bottom of the pool? Everything is harder, takes longer, and of course, you're running out of air. That's what it felt like when I started writing for this record."

Kissinger has a new album, a new bass player (the indomitable H. Luther White), a new sound, new songs, and a new ally in their search for sympathetic ears: the internet.

"Before we started this recording, we were spending all our time and energy touring. Gas cost two dollars a gallon, and we had a Midwestern tour route well established," Chopper says. "By the time we'd finished *Underwater*, gas was three dollars a gallon (and climbing), and touring suddenly seemed far less feasible. More and more we started looking to the web as the best way to reach our far-away friends, and to find new ones. "

"The internet allows us to spend our limited resources creating rather than fueling a van, and *Underwater* ties in particularly well to the web: there is a narrative that runs through all eleven songs. I'm excited to use the web to tell that story, and create new kinds of environments where people can experience the album. The reaction we've received from the "Sydney Stone" video leads us to believe we are on to something."

The seeds for the new album were planted in one of the most unlikely places possible, a Christmas tree farm in the Willamette Valley of Oregon:

"My wife made wreaths in exchange for a place for us to stay," says Chopper. "November in Oregon is wet and rainy, so while there, I fed firewood into a cast-iron stove and dug through years of notes and ideas. I wrote "The Valley", "Sydney Stone" and "The Closer" while we were there. When we got back to Texas I set up my Protools rig at the foot of the bed in our apartment and wrote a song a day for about two weeks. We picked the best of the bunch – and then spent the next two years rehearsing, recording and mixing them."

*Underwater* was funded through a competitive grant from the Austin Music Foundation's Incubator program: an intensive 18-month mentoring program that included a \$15,000 budget to record and release the album.

Anyone familiar with Kissinger from the past ten years will be in for a quite a surprise. Former lead-guitarist Steve Garvey is now playing keyboard exclusively, as well as controlling the light show through a series of primitive foot pedals; there's the aforementioned H. Luther White (the H. is for Hurricane); and both Steve Garvey and Hurricane lend their voices to the mix – in the case of Steve, prominently. Hear that high harmony that chases Chopper's voice around the entire album like a guilty conscience? That's Garvey's, and it's performed perfectly live.

"These songs don't invite us to leap over our amplifiers like the ones on *Charm* and *Me and Otto* did," Chopper says. "But the new set is more dynamic, more textured than anything we've done before. I hope that these songs fit into people's lives. Maybe just to pass the time on a long drive, or to keep them company while they clean their house. Maybe they will console them during a bad time. These songs have been a part of my life for awhile. Now that we are releasing this record, they're not mine anymore, or the band's. We hope they find good homes."