



STRYPER SOLDIERS ON

After a quarter century of unprecedented success coupled with some heartbreaking tribulations, the righteous rockers known as Stryper have found a way to keep their high-voltage sonic fire burning. No greater evidence exists than the band's latest studio project and 10th career disc, *Murder by Pride*, which releases July 21 on Big 3 Records.

Without question, *Murder by Pride* represents a resounding return to form for Stryper. The 12-track album is replete with smoldering dual guitars, euphoric harmonies and sing-along anthems worthy of playing full-volume with windows wide open.

"We definitely went back to our roots on this record," says frontman Michael Sweet. "At the same time, I believe we've produced something fresh and relevant for 2009 and beyond."

In conjunction with the latest release, Stryper will embark on a 50-city national tour this fall followed by an international junket in early 2010. A two-set show each night will feature greatest hits performed by all the original band members including: Michael Sweet (lead vocals, rhythm guitar); Robert Sweet (drums); Oz Fox (lead guitar); and Tim Gaines (bass) as well as newer selections with bassist Tracy Ferrie. Fresh-faced pop/punk indie outfit Flight Patterns, featuring co-lead vocalist/guitarist Michael Sweet Jr., will serve as the opening act for the tour.

When it comes to the current material, *Murder by Pride's* intriguing title track should certainly resonate with many fans. Sweet elaborates: "Speaking from experience, I feel like so many times I'm brought to my knees by pride. In essence, it's like certain aspects of my life are killed by it. But instead of succumbing to pride, we should be open to following God's will and making decisions that help us rise above that destructive mindset."

Beyond the premise of overcoming self-importance, the album embraces themes like the power of forgiveness ("Mercy Over Blame"), God's supremacy ("Everything") and unconditional love ("Love Is Why"). "Love is the foundation for everything important," Sweet insists. "God's love has the power to change hearts and make an eternal difference."

In addition to showcasing Stryper's well-honed, frenetic performances, the new tour will also provide Michael Sweet a much-needed cathartic outlet to recover from a recent personal tragedy. His wife of more than 22 years, Kyle, died earlier this year after a courageous two-year battle with ovarian cancer.

Sweet says staying involved in music and "keeping busy" has been crucial to his moving forward. "There are times when things come at you in life when you least expect them," he reveals. "Some of them are great, and some are tragic. It's been a painful time, but I take comfort in knowing that that Kyle is not suffering anymore and that she's in heaven. That's a reason for peace and joy, but it also causes me to want to live and love to the fullest every day."

One bright spot for Sweet amid the dark times involved a huge career break in which he was invited to share lead vocals and play guitar for a memorial fundraiser for the late Brad Delp with the legendary rock band BOSTON. Sweet was subsequently invited by BOSTON founder and chief songwriter Tom Scholz to join the band for their 2008 summer tour.

"Being a part of BOSTON is a new chapter in my life that I consider a blessing," Sweet says. "I've written some songs and hopefully will be involved in a new album that the band plans to release at some point. I've just been floored by this wonderful opportunity I've been given."

Ironically, prior to Sweet's affiliation with BOSTON, Stryper had planned to include one of the band's songs on *Murder by Pride*. "I asked Tom Scholz [who played all guitars and bass on the original recording] to perform on the track 'Peace of Mind' and he accepted," Sweet explains. "Nothing was forced. It just worked out really well."

Looking back over the last 25 years, Stryper is considered a groundbreaking act by all accounts. Since the band's label debut in 1984, the quartet has sold more than 8 million albums worldwide. The first Christian rock band to enjoy decided success in the mainstream market, Stryper's RIAA certified platinum 1986 magnum opus *To Hell with the Devil* is listed among the "100 Greatest Albums in Christian Music" as designated by *CCM Magazine*. The band's popular power ballad "Honestly" became a *Billboard* Top 40 hit, peaking at #23.

One of the most mesmerizing stage acts still today, Stryper received tremendous exposure on television's MTV and VH1, paving the way for more faith-fueled bands to be considered for airplay. The band also received high-profile coverage in *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, *Spin*, *Newsweek* and many other publications.

"We attribute so much of our success to God," Sweet says unashamedly. "He has orchestrated this band, and His hand has been on it from the beginning. We often ask Him, 'Why did You choose us?' We are just average guys who He has continued to use in amazing ways."

For more information about Stryper and the upcoming tour, visit

www.stryper.com.

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