

/PARKWAY DRIVE\

DATA

**STREETS
AHEAD**

WORDS
TOM HERSEY

LIVE PHOTOS
ROBIN ANDERSSON

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\PARKWAY DRIVE/

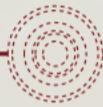


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WINNIE

INSTON MCCALL IS STOKED TO BE TALKING ABOUT IRE. IMAGINE A BIG OLD GRIN SPREADING OUT ACROSS THE JAW LINE THAT MAKES HIM LOOK LIKE AN ALL-AMERICAN ASTRONAUT DURING THE SPACE RACE, THAT'S WHAT WINNIE'S LIKE NOW. UNTIL NOW, HE HASN'T REALLY BEEN ABLE TO SAY PEEP ABOUT THE BAND'S FIFTH RECORD, MUCH LESS HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEBODY WHO'S ACTUALLY HEARD IT.

PARKWAY DRIVE, THE BAND OF BYRON BAY SURF RATS



who took Australia by storm in the mid-noughties by playing just about every shitty community hall, PCYC club and two-bit bar on the east coast, are now officially a Big Deal. And this album is their biggest to date. That means Parkway Drive need to be careful about what they say and who they say it to.

“When you do a record like this you have to have it ready like six months before its release date,” Winston says. “And every day when you wake up you’re like ‘please don’t have leaked’. The day before we released Vice Grip we started seeing announcements online about how the single was coming out tomorrow. And we called around to figure out what happened and it was a data intercept in Europe. There was someone waiting on the sidelines for information to come through, and when it did they snagged it. We were like ‘who the fuck is even doing that?’

“We also had someone with a fake email address pretending to be Jia writing to our manager saying, ‘Hey, the .wav files aren’t working on my iPod. Can you send me through the mp3s for the album?’ And this guy only fucked up in using the wrong nickname in the email address, which tipped off our manager.”

These kind of things are now a reality in the world of Parkway Drive. It’s not like our personable and charismatic front man is complaining though. “I’d rather people be excited about what we’re doing than not giving a fuck full stop ... Oh shit, did I just give you a massive blueprint on how to hack us?” the singer laughs.

But as much as their status as a kingpin in the global metalcore scene prevents them from being able to start a conversation about Ire—Winston likens the intense interest in tiny details to going into a fancy restaurant, ordering a meal, and then going into the kitchen and eating whatever ingredients you can get your hands on—this is the first album in a long time they have something new to talk about.

“I probably could have pre-recorded the answers I gave when we did the Killing with a Smile interviews and then played them back for every single record we did after that because all the steps we took were exactly the same,” Winston concedes.

Not now though. Not with Ire. Not with the album that sees Parkway Drive pushing to leave the metalcore world behind in favour of becoming a bona fide stadium headlining act. Winston’s got plenty to say, and he’s chomping at the bit to tell the album’s story.



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THANK RAMMSTEIN



Flashback to 2013. The Parkway Drive boys are at the Download festival in England and they're watching Till Lindemann and his crew of fire-breathing, treadmill-walking madmen absolutely destroy the crowd. "It was one of the most incredible live shows I've ever seen," Winston says.

"Like, none of us are Rammstein fans, but we walked up there and watched for about an hour and a half as a band put on a show in a foreign language to 100,000 English people and have them all in the palm of their hands. They absolutely destroyed it. The music was so fucking heavy, not the same kind of heavy we're used to where you just play it fast and make breakdowns, we were all banging our heads and just going 'this is ridiculous'. We all were watching from different points of the stage and when we met up afterwards we realised that their set is what's possible if you have a vision to create something more than a small, insular scene."

The seed for change was planted. But before Parkway would move ahead they would reflect on where they came from. Their ten year anniversary tour they scheduled for later in 2013 would give them the perfect opportunity to take stock of where they were coming from, and get a better idea of where they could go with Ire.

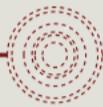
"That tour was fucking amazing. We got to play all of these songs that we hadn't played in ages, and it was so fun and so well received, but at the same time it made us look back and see that in the past when we were going to do the next album and we had these exciting new styles or concepts that we were bringing in, doing this tour made us realise that those were only baby steps. And we didn't just want to keep making baby steps.

"After doing Atlas and ten years as a band we were like, 'OK, what are we going to do next?' And we had no passion to try and do the same formula again. We finished Atlas and normally we're thinking next time we can do this or that, and we're excited to go faster or heavier, but this time we realised that we've gone as fast or heavy as we wanted to go. We'd made it as intense as we wanted to make it; we've written ... god knows how many breakdowns. We wouldn't be able to put out an album like that and put passion and integrity into it. That sound is as done as it could be for this band."

So, for the first time in their immensely successful career, Parkway Drive found themselves without clear direction of what was going to come next. They just knew they needed to take a step away from metalcore. It wasn't just a case of not wanting to repeat



EXISTENTIAL ENNUI IN THE METALCORE SET



“This was the first time ever in the band’s existence where we had to ask one another, ‘What do we actually want to do,’” Winston says, reflecting back on the writing process for *Ire*. Even with the unfailingly positive front man telling the story, you get a sense that this was a stressful moment for the band.

“We knew we could keep doing something that we didn’t really want to do and that it would be okay but we wouldn’t want to be doing it, or we could do ... question mark. It was weird because myself, Gaz and Jeff are the main ones that write and we hadn’t actually talked about any of this, but then there was this point where for some reason I was talking to Jeff about, ‘So what do you want to do for the next record?’ and he was like, ‘Uhhhhh. I dunno, what do you want to do?’ and I kind of hesitantly said, ‘Some ... thing diff ... er ... ent,’ and he immediately was like, ‘Oh my god thank you for saying that because I want to do that as well.’

“So that was scary, but at the same point in time it was quite exciting. It would have been a lot scarier if we’d started this evolution a record earlier when we weren’t at the stage we’re at now, because every album has gone better than the last and the shows have gotten bigger and better. If you consider what we’re doing having a career, this is by far the highest point in our career as we’re going in to launch this. And if somehow we managed to create a record that was just a turd, we would still have an entire set worth of songs that we know people love. So we know, career-wise, we won’t be putting a bullet in the head of the band. So that freed us up.”

As the band started to write the record, they drew on their decade of experience playing live shows. Where they were once playing small clubs that suited the cacophonous metallic hardcore that made *Killing with a Smile* a fan favourite, now Parkway Drive were finding themselves increasingly in front of crowds at massive festivals in Europe and North America, or playing in gigantic halls. In these venues, the dudes discovered that they needed more than a loud rhythm section to engage the crowd.

“You try playing a blast beat, an insanely fast noodly and have me screaming when you’re playing a 5,000-capped room, and the sound just becomes bouncy sludge in that room. It’s just noise ... It’s not like we’re going to play live and disregard the entire back catalogue, but we want to have a whole bunch of songs that would be able to widen that sound.



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SHIFTING UP A GEAR



Detractors will say that Parkway's new approach to their sound is a sell out. Especially in their native Australia, a land renowned for its desire to cut down tall poppies, hardcore kids who were attending those small shows in the early to mid-noughties seem to love heaping shit on Parkway. Hell, if the band continues to get any bigger, and they definitely will when Ire drops, the activity could become a national pastime as big as two-up or cane toad racing. But that hasn't diminished the band's adherence to their vision. The shit-talking doesn't bother them, which Winston says is why they released Vice Grip as the first single off the album.

"We knew, straight away, it was going to divide people. Straight down the middle. And watching the reaction to Vice Grip online, and hearing people talk about it, it's been really interesting. It's something we anticipated, but we didn't realise we would anticipate it as well as we did. Like every single reaction to it has been exactly what we predicted. A whole bunch of people who were saying, 'I never liked your music before and I would turn it down when it came on the radio, but now I actually like it.' And then a whole bunch of people saying, 'Where the fuck are the breakdowns?'"

Some of the negativity that Vice Grip bore, indeed questions of where the fuck the breakdowns are located, is mitigated over the course of Ire. Parkway have made an album designed for the stadium, but it's still definitely a Parkway album. At least that's how the singer sees it.

"It does vary a great deal to what people are used to, but at the same point in time I really don't think it sounds like a completely different band to Parkway. If people do go, 'Fuck this is so crazy I'm never going to listen to this again,' that's cool. But at the same time there could be a whole bunch of people who have never heard Parkway, or might not have liked what we've done before, who might start to like what we're doing.

"This record, we truly believe it's capable of reaching far further than anything we've ever done before. When we listen to the record, it makes us think about all the other things that this band is capable of, both live and on record."

Winston divulges some of the ideas about what Parkway Drive are capable of. He thinks they can be a band that adds some production value to their shows, so they're giving their fans something more than just a "band rocking out with caps and board shorts". He also thinks they can continue to push musical vision further. Because as much as Ire will be



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Winston



\ PARKWAY DRIVE /



IRE

RESIST RECORDS



So Parkway Drive are a big band. Like a big band. They're on the cover of this magazine right now, shit they must be massive. And with album number five, they've finally realised just how big they are. You read that and you probably think they're fucksticks and the album isn't worth a damn, but have another go at it and see it how it really is. Ire is the album where Parkway Drive, the former hardcore heroes who evolved into one of Australia's biggest stadium bands, are writing epic stadium-sized tunes.

It's not the blast-laden cacophony of Killing with a Smile, but it's not supposed to be. Now the guys are writing songs, not just breakdowns. Big, memorable songs that are at home in the contemporary hardcore milieu but also hark back to the glory days of stadium metal. The kind of songs where you can sing along to the guitar lines and the rhythm section seeps into your brain until you love it. Case in point, the hardcore old salts were throwing shade at Vice Grip when the video dropped, but if they listened to that song five times over they wouldn't be able to help but absolutely crush that chorus. That shit sticks in your head. Real "Co-stan-za" like.

PWD can still do a breakdown, the jam at the tail of Bottom Feeder will have the pitdogs