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PALAYE *Royale*



Palaye ROYALE

FOR A BAND AS BOISTEROUS AS PALAYE ROYALE, THEIR OVERTAKING OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY HAS BEEN QUIETLY PLAYING OUT FOR YEARS.

The release of Palaye Royale's new album, *Fever Dream*, will further cement the group's coup d'état. Fans of the band know how hard they work and fight for everything they have now, and it'll come as no surprise to learn that Palaye is doubling down on that ethos ahead of the record's release. Sebastian Danzig, lead guitarist and one of three brothers in the band, says that this level of animalistic dedication stems from the fact that they all realized a few years ago that nothing was going to be handed to them. If they wanted to produce and represent their art in a way that felt authentic to all three of them, they'd have to undertake everything themselves.

Emerson Barrett, Palaye Royale's drummer and Danzig's youngest brother, is the visual representation of the band in every sense of the word. Barrett created graphic novels that have inspired every aspect of Palaye's artistic pursuits. From the merchandise they sell, to the makeup palettes they create, to the ideas they use to draw up new worlds inside their music videos—everything Palaye touches is gilded in this gold. Remington Leith, lead singer and middle brother, is the human embodiment of the band's compassion. Ethereal and empathetic, he bares his soul on stage and online. And it's this level of honesty, authenticity, and vulnerability that has fans flocking to the group in droves. Being able to listen to a song that reflects exactly how you felt in a moment of darkest despair is catharsis in itself—but leaving that moment of listening with a feeling of hope for what comes next is a magic entirely its own.

PHOTOGRAPHY
SARAH PARDINI
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That's the underlying heartbeat of Palaye Royale: Face down the darkness but look for the light once you've left the moment behind. Each song on *Fever Dream* represents this ideology. Whether played chronologically or sporadically, the record serves as a pathway back to yourself when you feel like you don't know how to move forward. The creation and playing of music are what get Danzig, Leith, and Barrett through the day—their hope is that *Fever Dream* does the same for you.

left:
Emerson wearing blazer Helen
Anthony boots Jeffery-West
Remi wearing boots Dr. Martens
Sebastian wearing top + trousers
Fever Dream Collection by
Palaye Royale boots Jeffery-West

right:
Emerson wearing full
tuxedo look PHILIPP PLEIN

1883 Magazine's Sam Cohen sat down with Sebastian Danzig to discuss all things *Fever Dream*, including how the brothers blend their eclectic styles to create one cohesive aesthetic, what they've learned from one another during an extended period of renewed bonding, how they make magic at their live shows, and much more.

Your new album, *Fever Dream*, is the result of a real labor of love that's taken place over the last few years. When you guys set out to create the record, did you have a specific jumping-off point that influenced the direction of the completed body of work? So, when the pandemic hit, we were in Poland. We just finished a show in Poland, in Warsaw. It was the first time we were ever over there, and it felt like the band was really taking off for the first time on a bigger scale. We just did Shepherd's Bush in London. And, you know, we were doing some two, three-thousand caps across Europe. And we were heading out to Prague for our second show ever in Prague. And it was like, all of a sudden, "All right, go home." And so, when we got home, we were already in a really bad place as brothers and as business partners, I guess, in a sense. We just couldn't stand one another. I think that was the accumulation of...we left for tour in 2015 to 2020. So, you kind of lose a little sense of what is the general consensus and point of what you're doing because of that. We did about 800 or 700 shows from 2015 to 2020. And we were getting in fist fights all the time. We were not even wanting to speak to one another. On stage, it was like a "What's going to happen? Who's going to hit who?" kind of situation. So, when we came home, it was more or less a come-together situation of, "All right. Let's reconfigure." And we realized we've created something so beautiful within our family of a fan base. Everyone was saying this isn't going to work to be in this type of situation for a rock band, especially from 2015 to 2020. And now, luckily, guitars are becoming a more relevant sort of thing. It's making it a little bit easier. People are being more open to it.

So, when we got into making the album, we just got back to the basics of what we all loved about music, and creating a record, and we had the time to put everything together. When we were making *The Bastards* album, it was come home for a day and record a song, and then go back out on the road. We were all on the same wavelength. And this was the first time we were just like, "You know what? Let's take our time. We don't know when this is gonna end," in a sense of the pandemic, and we just rented a beach house in Malibu for two weeks. We were writing constantly, just becoming friends again. And we were experimenting with all the instruments that are really important to us as musicians that haven't really been captured on a record from, you know, Mellotrons and basic pianos.

We took that approach and really took a song a week or two weeks at a time, and just really worked on it. Some of them wrote really quick, but the production style of things, there was no rush to be like, "It has to be done, and it has to be out." We just put out an album—we had all the time in the world. And through the writing process, we all were in agreement on how special this album is to us. And there is literally a piece of us on every single song. And it's not just like, "Oh, someone brought this song to the table." Everyone was a part of it at the conception as well as the finishing of the product, which is great.

It seems like it's freeing to have that ability to say, "We know we want to make this, but there's no timeline." There's no rush to get it done as you maybe would have had to rush previously. One of the things that I love about your music, and that seems to be shining through already with the singles you've released for *Fever Dream*, is that there's a really tangible sense of vulnerability to the music. I know how important it is for you guys to connect with your fans and be open with them in a way that's really authentic, but I was wondering, what is the most rewarding aspect of bearing your soul to your fans in this way through your music? I think the honesty and the genuine side of it are, just because you don't have the expression of live music when you're recording. And so, to try to be able to understand what our audience, and what they will enjoy on stage, is a difficult thing when you're not in a room with one another in a sense of just setting up and jamming. And luckily, songs like "Off With the Head" and "King of the Damned", those songs definitely shine more as a live band aspect but with being able to take a step back. And I think, lyrically, we were telling the stories we actually truly go through or have gone through in our lives and were being incredibly straight to the point while still being a little bit poetic on it. I feel like *The Bastards*, on a lyrical front, was really direct and great. But there are songs on *Fever Dream* like "Oblivion" or "Line It Up" and, even "Fever Dream", that it's more of a hopeful dream state, but you can know exactly what we're going through if you know us as people or have even just watched one of our shows or watched an interview before. So, you're like, "Okay. Maybe the general listener will read it and think of it as a different approach." But, if you know who we are, you're going to be like, "Yeah. This is them." We're wearing it on an audio sleeve, basically. Me and Emerson, actually, had this weird thing last night. We were on a bus...that's the fourth bus on this tour! And after you record the album, you obsess with the mixing and the mastering, and you don't really listen to the record for a second time until a song comes out or you have to play it again. So, some of these songs, like "Lifeless Stars" that just came out, that was probably the second or third song we wrote. I think the first song we wrote for the record was, actually, surprisingly, "Broken". And then "Wasted Sorrow", so they were the first two that were written and recorded for this era. And "Wasted Sorrow" was recorded in *The Bastards* era still, so you can hear those heavier tones in it.

But "Lifeless Stars", we were on the beach, and we had this thing called sunset swim that whenever we didn't have an idea, everyone just goes and jumps in the ocean, and we would go boogie boarding, and come back. And there was this one time I was so fucked up and I was just sitting there, and we couldn't find a pre-chorus. And I've had this piano thing. And that's kind of what started "Lifeless Stars". And our producer comes in, and he just starts going off on me to finish these lyrics for the chorus. We're like, "Cool. We have it, but we don't have a pre-chorus." And then I'm like, "I got it!" And I just remember sitting there playing my acoustic, playing it over and over, and trying to scream exactly what the pre-chorus was from the balcony to the ocean. And obviously, they couldn't hear me. They're like, "Cool. Sounds great, dude!" [both laugh]. But then they came back, and we recorded it. It was one of those very dream situations.

All of the epic tracks embody that chaoticness of Palaye Royale but in a more condensed version. Yes, there are six-and-a-half-minute tracks like "Off With the Head", or "Oblivion", which is five-and-a-half-minutes, and only piano. And drums don't even come into that song. And "Fever Dream", of course, and "Line It Up", and "Eternal Life". Those were all five songs, the last five songs we wrote for the record. Without those songs, *Fever Dream* wouldn't be the *Fever Dream* album. It was an incredible experience. Me and Emerson were listening to it last night in the back lounge and were like, "Fuck. This record's so good." We're so proud of it. When you step away and then revisit your art, you can appreciate it or be upset with it. And we're really appreciative and very thankful—from us connecting as brothers and having a fourth brother in this project in Chris Greaft [music producer], who basically brought us back together as brothers and friends, and said, "I won't work with you guys unless you guys are nice to one another." That has stuck with us. We really have each other's backs. I really feel like the fans are connecting with the singles, and I'm so excited for the whole body of work to be out so people can listen to it as a journey and not just a three to five-minute track, you know?

"You must be said... of you wouldn't have come here." RECORDED: 82 INDEXED: 84

BLANK STATE

JULY 8, 2016
ROBERT JOHNSON

EVAN BAGGE
DJ MASDA
MAX
9551



Emerson wearing pajamas Sir Joe Exclusive Collection Remi wearing pajamas Palaye Royale Sebastian wearing pajamas Sir Joe Exclusive



Yeah. Absolutely. I was fortunate enough to listen to the album last night, your publicity team very kindly sent it to me, and it's really incredible when you're listening to it from start to finish. As you were saying all of that, you were touching on so many of the songs that I wanted to talk to you about.

Yeah! Go for it. [both laugh]

You mentioned "Wasted Sorrow", which I feel is a perfect classic rock song, but it also reminded me of "Cemetery Gates" by Pantera. Oh, cool!

I loved the guitar riff on "Wasted Sorrow" because it reminded me of that aspect of "Cemetery Gates" where the guitar sounds like it's singing. I feel like Oasis, and even Garbage, always had these singy guitar lines. And it's funny, my fiancé loves Garbage, they're one of her favorite bands. And I was playing the guitar for ["Wasted Sorrow"] in the studio, and that was one of the quickest sessions we've ever done. It was literally like, conception, write, done, mixed, mastered, done, in a day. And that was right when we were doing *The Bastards* album. We were trying to put it on *The Bastards* album, and people were like, "Oh, there's no space. You can't do it." And we were like, "Whatever." But that was when we did the "Mad World" cover, and we did "Wasted Sorrow" at the same time. And I felt like that is such an anthemic thing that I feel, especially at festivals, it's just going to be a singalong guitar part that people are going to be able to really gravitate to. It has that heaviness to it.

Sebastian wearing trench + blazer Vex Latex



I love that. The second I heard the song, I wrote a note in my notebook to ask you about it, because I am not musical at all. So, those types of details really intrigue me, because like...How do you even make the instrument make that noise? [both laugh] For my guitar, most guitar players don't use the setup I have in a sense. Not saying it's anything special, but I definitely take from the guitar tones of the verb, of having a lot of reverb with distortion on top of it. So, it's just this almost choir-like singing. A lot of guitar players are really punchy, and I'm more like, "Let me just fill the space and texturize and color everything around it." I think that's what makes Palaye unique is we all have our own different styles and come together. Emerson loves old classical music, and he loves old recordings and the weirdest kind of stuff. Remington's very much on the other side of things. He loves Nirvana; he loves rock music. But he has such an incredible ear and understanding of what pop music is. And I think that's what makes a great song. As much as rock bands don't like to say it, the best rock songs are just the best pop songs with guitars and some attitude on them. Being able to incorporate all three of us into is Palaye Royale. That's what makes it really special.

I'm so intrigued by how you guys cohesively blend all of your influences and your personal styles, both in terms of your musical influences and your visual sense as well. Because everything you guys do, from your merchandise to your music videos, it always feels like it's a perfect blend of all three of you. Was it complicated to master that—to make sure that everyone is equally represented in everything? It will always be the number one thing, but we thought music was the only importance at the beginning of our career. But the reality is, great songs will transcend an artist for decades to come, of course. And we understand that, and we're always on, we're always wanting to write a better song, we're always wanting to make a better sonic experience for our listeners and for ourselves. But without the world that Emerson's created with the graphic novels and the merchandising, and me taking command with running the business as much as I possibly can, and really just being able to translate what the visual and audio experience is, we all know our roles in the band.

Remington takes lead on most of the songwriting. We'll have an idea, and he'll just...I was listening to some of the demos, even for past versions of "Fever Dream", and I'm just like, "Fuck, dude, you're such a ridiculous songwriter." He's on top of it. But then you come to the show, and you're like, "All right, cool. This is a really artsy band with some rock songs, some pop songs, whatever." Everyone wants to put it in a box. But you watch the show, and you're like, "Okay, I'm watching a fucking punk band from the late 1970s, early '80s, just fucking destroying a stage." But then the songs still have life to them. We get kicked out of venues all the time because Remington's always climbing things or jumping into the crowd. But I feel like that's why people come back as a viewer in a physical environment because you're not going to get the same show twice. It's always going to be a spectacle. And that's what live entertainment should always be. It shouldn't be watching a band up there, bored as fuck, watching the crowd. I could go home and listen to the record if that was the case, you know? You want to see something. And if you're not a band that moves, then build a production that's an experience, a visual experience behind you.



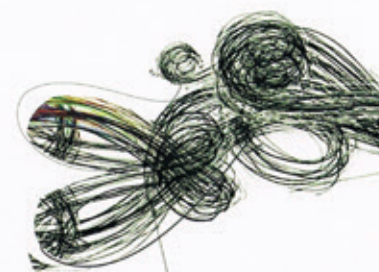
I have to say actually
that the first time I
heard you guys play
was in concert.

Really?!

Yeah! I saw you open for YUNGBLUD! I had not heard
your music, I don't know how, because it's so in my
atmosphere of what I typically listen to. But it was seeing
Palaye Royale play live that instantly made me a fan. The
second you guys came out onto the stage, I turned to my
best friend, and I was like, "What is *this*?"

I love that [both laugh]. Which show was that?

BR KEY



I went to the Boston show!

Oh, that was a great show! The Boston crowd is
so great, even looking back on the *Fever Dream*

show we just did there. I feel like you saw the
most bare minimum show you could ever see
[laughs]. Opening for YUNGBLUD, we don't get
a soundcheck. We don't get to put anything on
stage. We don't get to use our signs. We don't
get to do anything. But just us on stage, we are
animalistic. You know what I mean?



Oh, absolutely [laughs].
We always say we're going to war when we go on stage. You have to put
everything out there.

I feel like that's refreshing though.
When you go to a show, you want
that moment of freedom where
you're connecting to the music,
you're connecting to the people
around you. And it was like that
when I saw you guys play in
Boston. You could tell the entire
atmosphere in the building
changed; the energy changed. It
was incredible.
Thank you.

Oh my God! So, never mind about the break then! No rest for the wicked, I guess. Never! Next year's already all booked up and we're doing a few arenas. We just played our first arena in March, in Prague. And it was one of those experiences of being like, "Wow. *This is insane.*" And we made the decision at that point. We were just like, "*Let's make the landscape of the Fever Dream album Prague.*" All the photos for the promos and everything were taken in Prague. We filmed "Broken" in Prague. We filmed "Oblivion" in Prague. There's something about the essence of that city that really embodies what Palaye Royale is. It's a beautiful city, but there's a darkness to it.

Thank you. That was the biggest thing for us with *Fever Dream. The Bastards* album was dark, depressed, upset, angry. We still have those feelings on this, but we're very thankful and have such gratitude that we can wake up every day and do this even though it's a struggle. And we want to display for the first time that there is a light. As Remington always says, there's a light at the end of the tunnel, which hopefully opens up into this beautiful world. And that's our band. We're always grasping onto and holding onto as much as we can, but it is scary. You dedicate your whole entire existence and life to something because that's truly who we are. And we're more than happy to always do it. And we're thankful that the fans are there to support us, and to be able to allow this dream and idea to be created and continue to grow. It doesn't stop with an album. It doesn't stop with an idea. We're always dreaming about what's next, and we're hopeful for the future. We want to create something people can escape to, that our family of fans can escape to, and we're happy we can create that. We really see it in the fans. Every show, regardless of the size, could be 10,000 people or it could be 50 kids in a room. The energy is the same from us and the energy is the same from the fans. We're so happy to be there together and escape life for a second. But we want there to be an understanding that we can get through this life with a smile on our face even though there's some dark shit sometimes.

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Royale
Remi
wearing top +
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Royale boots
Dr. Martens
Sebastian
wearing
pajamas
Fever Dream
Collection
by Palaye
Royale

I think that's a good mentality to have, and I also think that inspires your fans a lot. I've seen tons of people on social media commenting about how you guys really instill that in others, that even if they're going through something really difficult, it's going to get better. They just have to hold onto the hope of that. And I think even something like looking forward to your next record or the next show helps them maintain that hope which is so important nowadays because I feel like some musicians are disconnected from that. Our favorite bands and favorite artists, they didn't have to deal with the shit that you have to deal with as a modern artist. Good art will always prevail, but it doesn't mean it's going to prevail in the situation that you're in, in the time you're in. Look at The Velvet Underground, for example. And that record didn't pop until Lou Reed was doing a solo project. They were a cool aesthetic band. And everyone liked The Velvet Underground that knew The Velvet Underground, but it wasn't pop culture. And it wasn't until Andy Warhol really brought it into this art space and really made it cool that they were then accepted by the pop culture of the world. We see that. And if we didn't have to deal with social media and stuff, which is a great way to connect with people around the world, but I feel like that is very much a distraction sometimes. You're focusing on "What's my next TikTok? I need to make a post today." We live in this weird age that really sucks sometimes. If we play a show, and we don't post a photo from that show in five minutes, the moment we get off stage or the next morning, that show's irrelevant, no one cares. And that's all that people think of.

We're trying to make some sort of timestamps in our life that can go past the average scroll on someone's phone. Because no one's finding out about music in any other sense besides, you know, some press outlets from TV and from social media. Radio's great and all, and it does its thing, but people aren't discovering you that way anymore. If you don't capture their attention in those 15 seconds on a phone, they're not going to be invested. So, how do you translate without trying to bend to where technology has taken us to? I think we really do have a good balance of it. We've always been decent at social media and being able to stay connected to our fans. But we're also very open. We share probably too much of our lives with the general public. And so, the mystique is hard to keep there. But I think because there's so much depth in who we are as people, it's always going to be there, which is nice. And it's not a manufactured thing that someone said, "Throw this outfit on. The album's gonna be about this. This is the song. Here's your video director." We direct the videos. We're helping edit the videos. We're finding our friends that we trust to do this stuff. It's always a DIY project like, "Let me just get down and do it."

And I've always thought,

"Oh, we're going to get to this point in our career and someone's just going to give us the key." And then four years ago, I was like, "That's not going to fuckin' happen."

Because no one's going to have the answer that is going to satisfy me of what I want in my art besides us.



Emerson wearing blazer + trousers AMIRI

who pays for I spoke



Emerson wearing full tuxedo look PHILIPP PLEIN

I completely understand where you're coming from, in terms of social media. It's such a weird balance to strike because it is nice to be able to connect to other people in that way, but it does add this weird sense of pressure. I think you guys manage it incredibly well. I see you always sharing pictures that people are taking and re-sharing things to your stories. And I think there's a level of engagement there that definitely is helpful, but it's tough for you to maintain on top of everything else. I think that's been the funniest thing of always running social media stuff myself. I'm not doing tour managing and all of the stuff Rem's doing, but at the end of the day, we're just happy to be doing what we're doing. So, whatever, wake up and do it. [both laugh]

As long as you're happy, that's all that matters. But I have been a social media manager in the past, and I know it can be a nightmare even on the best days. You mentioned how, during the pandemic, the three of you became closer than you had been previously. What do you think is the most important lesson you learned from your brothers during that period of renewed bonding? Was there something you observed in each of them that influenced the way you hold yourself now? It's funny, Emerson is a no-bullshit type of person. If you piss off Emerson in five seconds, you're done. It's a weird trait to have, but I am very much like... I'll give, give, give, and give. It's not to please people, but it's also about not wanting to leave disappointment. Do you know what I mean?

I definitely know what you mean. It's not a people-pleaser situation, I just don't want to leave anyone hanging with disappointment. And having Emerson's thing of no, I've learned that it's okay to say no. You're not going to please everyone, and that's alright. Remington's the complete opposite of that, and he's very empathetic, but also has a fire under his ass to just be like, "This is what I stand for, and this is what I believe in." I think that the biggest consensus is, whenever we see one of the tripod legs falling over, we've got to help one another out. And I think we've had this great understanding of where we sit down as a unit to address something. And luckily, we have some incredible human beings around us, some people on the road with us, some people that are behind the scenes that really have our backs. And I think that's what makes this a stronger unit. It's hard to find good, hardworking, trustworthy human beings, but people that can also keep you in check and not be your yes-men. That's exactly what you need in this life.

You need people that are going to encourage you and inspire you but that are also going to cut you off when you need that instead. Yeah, absolutely.

I'm glad though that you feel like you guys are on the better side of things now. That is definitely an important lesson to learn about saying no. I try to think that all the time, and it's tough. But it's nice to be able to learn and observe from your brothers. I have two older brothers, so I know it can be an interesting dynamic sometimes. [Both laugh] It is! It is. There's always a two-against-one theory. And luckily, at this point, we're all giving respect where the respect is due right now which is very nice.

That's especially helpful when you're in such a high-stress situation like you've been in the last couple of weeks with so many things happening on tour. Oh, absolutely. This would've fallen apart if we didn't step up. It's just like, "Fuck it, let's make it work."

Just roll with the punches. Do your best. I know. It's funny, you wake up and the day could be shit or starts off good, or whatever, but you have to finish this off no matter what. [laughs]

You have to go out there and just give it your all and do your best and hope for the best, and then try it all again tomorrow. Absolutely.

I like to end my interviews with one fun question, so, if Palaye Royale could create a soundtrack for any movie that has ever been made, which would you choose and why? Soundtrack for any movie that's been made? Hmmm. I feel like any Tim Burton film would really suit Palaye Royale. [both laugh]

I love Tim Burton! I think Tim Burton would definitely be the one. Even if it was *Edward Scissorhands* or something. I think the theatrical dark tone of things is where we thrive. But, at the end of those Tim Burton films, there's always some resolve of beauty through all the madness.

Especially in *Edward Scissorhands*. That's one of my favorite movies ever and I've rewatched it a thousand times [both laugh]. But it does have that hopeful quality, which is nice to come into after such chaos leading up to that. Which is exactly what you guys do! We do! It was so funny, Andrew Berkeley Martin, our guitar player who's out on the road with us; he was laughing and telling me, "I think you guys just thrive in the fucking chaos. Everything has to be going awry for you guys and that's when you strap in and get it done." He's like, "When things are chill, you guys freak out." And I was like, "Maybe that's something I need to go to therapy about..." [both laugh]

You're like, "I should probably talk to somebody about that. I don't want to live in chaos forever." I know! But maybe I'm strung that way. But I do try to stay healthy, at least for the most part.

I do hope you guys are feeling better. I was seeing your Instagram stories with the IV's and all of that. So, I'm glad you're getting some rest. We did that about five days ago, and then we get to the border for our Toronto show, and our bus driver, our lighting guy, our tech guy, they all tell me they don't have a fucking passport. So, I'm legit having to drive—at 5:30 in the morning—from Detroit or wherever we were coming from... I think we were coming from Columbus or something. And we had to drive over, right over the border, at 5:30am. I had to drive the Penske truck. We went, played the show, I set up the stage with the crew, did the lighting, did the fucking setup of everything, did the settling for the tour management stuff. Showered, saw our cousins for two minutes in Toronto, and then we got back on the road. I woke up at 4:30am, drove over the border, and then got to Detroit, slept for an hour, and then had to play that show.

Oh my God! That's not sustainable. No. Today, I think, was the first day I slept for more than four hours.

I'm going to try to speak some positive things into the universe for all of you so hopefully, you encounter smoother sailing from here! I love that. I need all of that. [laughs]

Palaye Royale's new album
Fever Dream out 28th October!

interview by Sam Cohen
photography Sarah Pardini
styling Oretta Corbelli
grooming Sonia Lee @ Exclusive Artists
using Oribe + M-A-C Cosmetics
production Angeliki Sofronas
styling assistant Allegra Gargiulo

Cover credits
Emerson wearing blazer + trousers Helen Anthony
shoes Fever Dream Collection by Palaye Royale
Sebastian wearing coat + trousers Helen Anthony
shoes Jeffery-West
Remi wearing belt + choker Vex Latex