

## Cold War Kids "loyalty" comes through for fans

BY NICK HALES

Reporter

As the dissonant notes of the first track "We're Against Privacy" begin to creep through the stereo, one immediately knows Cold War Kids' new album is not commercial pop. The SoCal indie rock quartet's sophomore album, "Loyalty to Loyalty", is filled with the spot-on drumming, rhythmic muted guitar, and singer Nathan Willett's wailing falsetto that set the musical blogging community ablaze when the band's first album debuted in 2006. "Loyalty to Loyalty" revels in the band's ability to make abrupt changes in style and pace, alternating from a driving indie-rock beat in "Mexican Dogs" to the ragtime-feel of "Every Valley Is Not A Lake" and then back again.

This quaint combination of songs is complimented greatly by their clever lyrics: "I tried to call you Collect/ You

said you would not accept/ Your friends are laughin' at me/ 'cause no one uses pay phones," as Willett screams in "Something Is Not Right With Me." Willett writes remarkably on the most morbid of subjects, singing: "Straddlin' the bar like it's a quarter a ride/ She's scared to jump but terrified to stay," in Golden Gate Jumpers, a song about an attempted suicide. Cold War Kids' lyrics are typically bleak, but "Loyalty to Loyalty" is downright depressing. More than four consecutive listens will likely incite a subsequent twelve hour mooping session.

Such does not hurt the quality of the music; on the contrary, it makes the songs more intimate, as they are an artist's work and a snapshot of what he was feeling at the time.

"Loyalty to Loyalty's" first six tracks are wonderful, with delightfully abstract guitar melodies and a tasteful exhibition of Willett's voice. Unfortu-

nately, the album diminishes slightly in quality in the latter half of the album, with the notable exceptions of "On The Night That My Love Broke Through," and the eerie (and unfortunately titled) "Every Man I Fall For." The seventh song in particular, "Avalanche in B," begins with a pleasing guitar and piano progression but grows unbearable as Willett's distorted voice enters with a grating falsetto. Fortunately, this screeching is the only noticeable misstep in the entire album and even becomes bearable after multiple listens.

In terms of musical execution, Cold War Kids performs exceptionally. Drummer Matt Aveiro lays down a steady, rumbling beat that mixes strangely well with Willett's unique voice. Guitarist Jonnie Russel shines, not in his ability to stand out in the band, but in his unobtrusiveness. He blends in perfectly with bassist Matt Maust, delicately dancing around the bass line

while allowing just enough space for Willett and Aveiro to interact.

"Loyalty to Loyalty" certainly will not satisfy everyone. Cold War Kids prefers creating its own sound to making a commercially successful album, shutting out almost anyone who is not already a fan in the process. None of the songs are radio-friendly enough to become viable singles, though the songs build on each other. This album is much better when one listens to it in its entirety, much like Radiohead's "Kid A," or Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon."

Clearly, the entire group immersed themselves in "Loyalty to Loyalty," creating a dark, minimalist album that exhibits the rawest of human emotions. While not perfect, the band's performance shows that Cold War Kids has developed its own unique voice and is certainly capable of creating a classic album in the coming years.

## Boy bands still bedazzle their followers with solo albums, promises of reunions

BY MOLLYBALL

Business Manager

Most teens can identify favorite boy bands and their songs, but do they know what happens to them following their fifteen minutes of fame? Many of these male performers attempt solo careers, but such is not the case for all of them.

While the youth of today may not be familiar with the band Menudo, they do recognize performer Ricky Martin, who released "Livin' La Vida Loca" in 1999. After Menudo, whose success in the 1970s and 80s greatly overshadowed its success in the late 1990s, Martin pursued a solo career. Since then, he has sold over 70 million copies around the world and boasts 21 Top-Ten hits on the U.S. Latin charts. Of those 21, ten reached the number one spot.

Martin also enjoyed a brief role on "General Hospital" in 1994. Two years later, he made his debut on Broadway in the leading role of Marius Pontmercy in "Les Miserables."

Popular boy band \*NSYNC announced a "temporary" hiatus in the spring of 2002 but has not released any new material since that time. Lead singer Justin Timberlake, the most well-known of the quintet, has enjoyed the most prosperous career since the group's hiatus.

In 2002, Timberlake released his first solo album, "Justified," which featured the Grammy-winning song "Cry Me A River." His second solo album, "FutureSex/LoveSounds," included three number-one hit singles: "My Love," "SexyBack," and "What Goes Around.../... Comes Around." Timberlake also acted in a handful of movies, although they were not very successful, one being released straight to video. His most notable roles were providing the voice of Prince Artie Pendragon in "Shrek the Third" and acting in Mike Myers' recent comedy "The Love Guru."

Yet another classic boy band, The Backstreet Boys, included five attractive teenage males who performed in high-pitched harmony. All but one fit the mold perfectly.

Lead singer Brian Littrell became a Born Again Christian at the age of eight and sang in his church choir as a child. He continued on his journey of faith throughout the tenure of the BSB, as well as after the group took a break from 2002-2004 when the band released "Never Gone."

In 2005, Littrell's first solo single entitled "In Christ Alone" reached number one on the Christian charts. During the following year, he won the Gospel Music Association's (GMA) Music Award for "Inspirational Recorded Song of the Year" for the same song.

He played in charity baseball games and founded his own charity, the Brian Littrell Healthy Heart Club for Kids, in which he is still extremely active. Littrell received an award from the Crystal Cathedral, a nation-wide ministry program, for being a positive role model, using his music to touch lives in the pop and Christian market and utilizing his foundation to help children on May 10, 2007.

Although Nick Lachey is easily the most recognizable member of 98 Degrees, he is not the most important. The founding member of the band, Jeff Timmons, launched his solo career by joining a tour with Jim Brickman after the band stopped recording new music in 2002. He both wrote and arranged his first solo album, "Whisper That Way," which was released in 2004. Timmons and Lachey have mentioned the possibility of another album from the band in the near future.

One-hit wonder band Hanson, wooed over pre-teen girls across the nation with their hit single "MMMBop." Eldest brother Isaac chose not to pursue a solo career after the band called it quits following a feud with producers that led to Hanson's own producing business. On Sept. 20, 2006, in Panama City, Florida, he married Nicole Dufresne, whom he met after seeing her in the fifth row at one of his concerts.

"Summer Girls" is the theme song of many teenage girls' summers. In 1999, boy band, LFO struck gold with this song and others including "Girl On TV" and "Every Other Time." Primary

**BackstreetBoys...BoyzIIMen...Monkeys...  
New Edition...New Kids on the Block...  
\*NSYNC...BackstreetBoys...BoyzIIMen...  
Monkeys...New Edition...New Kids on the  
Block...\*NSYNC...BackstreetBoys...BoyzII  
Men... Monkeys...New Edition...New Kids**

songwriter and lead singer Rich Cronin kept busy writing songs for other artists once the band took a hiatus in 2003 so that band members could work on individual projects.

Just as he was preparing to launch his solo career, Cronin was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia in 2005. He returned to his hometown of South Shore Boston and underwent treatment. Cronin enjoyed a year-long remission, but after relapsing, a stem cell transplant saved his life. He completed and released his first solo album, "Billion Dollar Sound," in May 2008.

In 2007, VH1 aired a reality TV show called "Mission: Man Band," which brought together four former boy band members to create their own group.

Chris Kirkpatrick of \*NSYNC, Jeff Timmons of 98 Degrees, Rich Cronin of LFO, and Bryan Abrams of Color Me Badd comprise the "man" band who were on the show. VH1 shadowed them for one month as they and record producer Brian Michael Cox pitched their new music to major record labels. The show consisted of eight episodes and still airs internationally.

Even though few of these stars have recreated the fame of their earlier boy band days, most have continued in the music industry in one way or another. While their fans will miss buying and listening to their new albums, hearing their old ones on their iPods is reason enough to celebrate and reflect upon the days of pop music and boy bands.

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