



RINKSIDER MUSIC UPDATE



Kings of Leon releases fourth album to critical acclaim

When Kings of Leon released their third album *Because of The Times* in April 2007, *Entertainment Weekly* called it their “crowning achievement,” while *Rolling Stone* wondered: “How good can the Kings of Leon get? They’ve already gone further than anybody could have guessed.”

Coming as it did on the heels of 2003’s rowdy *Youth and Young Man-*

The *Times* left off, continuing Kings of Leon’s shape-shifting evolution and cementing their status as a world-class rock band.

“After three records and touring for five years straight, we knew what we were capable of,” says the band’s drummer Nathan, “we just had to put our money where our mouths were. We had to take it to the next level. You always want your next record to be bet-

enjoying life and partly about the struggles of Native Americans. “Manhattan” is actually a Native American word that means “island of many hills,” says Caleb, who adds that his family has Native American blood. Finally there’s the driving, forceful “Notion,” which finds the singer pushing back against anyone who says anything against anyone in his band.

Caleb’s instinct for insularity is not surprising given that the band is made up of family members. The familial vibe extended to the recording process when Kings of Leon returned to Nashville’s Blackbird Studio in April 2008 with their producers Angelo Petraglia and Jacquire King, who also mixed *Aha Shake Heartbreak*. “Angelo keeps it fun and youthful,” Nathan says. “He and Jacquire were cool enough to tell us when we really needed to stop playing *Wall Ball* and get serious, rather than being stern and scaring us. It kind of took the pressure off.”

Petraglia and King also encouraged the experimental process the Followills first engaged in when making *Because of The Times*, giving the band the freedom to explore all of their ideas. “We had the opportunity to really get in there

and be more hands-on as far as the production goes,” Caleb says. “We wanted to prove ourselves a bit more. We got to kick our heels up, have drinks, and relax while recording.” Adds Nathan: “You can tell from the music that we’re definitely comfortable.”

“To me it sounds like the Kings of Leon are back not only as a band, but as friends,” Caleb says. “It was really a big family vibe. That’s where the title comes from. It’s also a reference to a poem by Edgar Allan Poe, and it has five syllables, like all of our album titles.”

Another influence could be their experiences playing arenas. “We definitely wanted the songs to sound good in a 15,000-seat venue, but we also wanted them to have the kind of intimacy that would get the point across at a club show for 300 kids,” Nathan says.

Overall, the Followills knew it was time to be honest about their ambitions and prove what they could really do. “Basically we got the point where we realized that we can be known as a band that hit it hard for three records and disappeared, or be a band that was smart enough to realize that not very many bands get to make four records, so let’s make the most of this,” Nathan says. “Because honestly, we were horrible housepainters and that’s what we’d be doing if we weren’t doing this!”



The Kings of Leon: Caleb Followill - lead vocals/rhythm guitar, Jared Followill - bass, Matthew Followill - lead guitar, Nathan Followill - drums.

hood and 2005’s brawny *Aha Shake Heartbreak*, the expansive *Because of The Times* was indeed a pivotal and game-changing album. It led the Followills - Tennessee-bred Caleb, Nathan, and Jared, and their cousin Matthew - to astonishing success around the world. In the U.S., the band has sold out New York City’s fabled Radio City Music Hall and The Greek Theatre in Hollywood. In the U.K., Kings of Leon headlined this summer’s legendary Glastonbury Festival, as well as the Oxygen Festival in Ireland, and sold out their upcoming December show at London’s 20,000-seat O2 Arena (where Led Zeppelin held its reunion concert) in less than an hour.

But if critics thought that *Because of The Times* was the work of a band “at the peak of its powers,” they may want to reconsider that assessment after hearing Kings of Leon’s new album *Only By The Night*, released from RCA Records on September 23rd. *Only By The Night* picks up where *Because of*

ter than your last.” Adds frontman and lyricist Caleb: “There’s never a time that we’ll make a record and won’t attempt to do something better than what came before.”

With its stunning melodies, ringing guitars, and razor-sharp grooves, *Only By The Night* delivers on the promise Kings of Leon have shown throughout their career. From the desolate atmospherics of the opening track “Closer” (about a lovesick vampire) to the emotional intensity of the closing ballad “Cold Desert” (“about a man at the end of his rope who picks himself back up”), *Only By The Night* is all heart from start to finish.

Album highlights include the first single “Sex on Fire,” the propulsive “Crawl” (about relationships and taking them for granted), and the sweeping “Use Somebody,” which Caleb wrote while feeling lonely on the road. “It’s about being far from home.” Then there’s the soaring uplift of “Manhattan,” which is partly about dancing and

Promo Only Top 20

for October, 2009

1 I Gotta Feeling	The Black Eyed Peas	Interscope
2 You Belong With Me	Taylor Swift	Big Machine
3 Use Somebody	Kings Of Leon	RCA
4 Down	Jay Sean f./Lil Wayne	Cash Money
5 Knock You Down	Keri Hilson	Zone 4
6 Party In The U.S.A.	Miley Cyrus	Hollywood
7 Good Girls Go Bad	Cobra Starship	Decaydance
8 No Surprise	Daughtry	19/RCA
9 Waking Up In Vegas	Katy Perry	Capitol
10 Obsessed	Mariah Carey	Island
11 Hotel Room Service	Pitbull	Polo Grounds
12 Love Drunk	Boys Like Girls	Columbia
13 She Wolf	Shakira	Epic
14 Never Say Never	The Fray	Epic
15 Sweet Dreams	Beyonce	Music World
16 LoveGame	Lady GaGa	Interscope
17 Be On You	Flo Rida f./Ne-Yo	Poe Boy
18 Fire Burning	Sean Kingston	Beluga Heights
19 Papparazzi	Lady GaGa	Streamline
20 Say Hey (I Love You)	Michael Franti	ANTI-/Epitaph

Chart compiled from national airplay charts and Promo Only feedback

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