

Hello Hurricane

Jon Foreman – vocals/guitar
Tim Foreman – bass
Chad Butler – drums
Jerome Fontamillas – keys/guitar
Drew Shirley – guitar

“*Hello Hurricane* acknowledges the storms that tear through our lives,” states Switchfoot singer and songwriter Jon Foreman. “This album is an attempt to respond to those storms with an element of hope, trying to understand what it means to be hopeful in a world that keeps on spinning.”

With *Hello Hurricane*, Switchfoot is set to thrive in 2009 with a newfound independence: a new home studio HQ, a new label, and a return-to-roots creativity and sense of purpose. After ten non-stop years of working as the world’s most humble multi-million selling rock band, the hard-charging North County San Diego-based quintet saw recording sessions for their aptly-titled seventh full-length album as a unique chance to reassess, reflect, and rededicate.

“We built our own studio so we wouldn’t be paying and playing by the hour,” says Foreman of their self-styled Studio of the Foot home. Beginning in 2007, the band tracked more than 80 songs and allowed themselves to get lost in the music again and get back to basics. “That’s why we see this album as a new beginning of sorts,” continues Foreman, citing the inspiration that likewise moved bandmate/brother Tim Foreman (bass), Chad Butler (drums), Jerome Fontamillas (keyboards), and Drew Shirley (guitar). “For us it was a feeling of true freedom.”

“The average work day would begin with us meeting on the beach to do some surfing,” recalls Butler with a smile. “Then we’d head to our studio to write and record. It’s the dream, really.”

Hello Hurricane was recorded by the band and produced by renowned hip hop bassist and producer Mike Elizondo, known for his work with the likes of Dr. Dre, Eminem, 50 Cent, Pink, Maroon 5, and Fiona Apple. “I first met Mike through Sean Watkins (of Nickel Creek) and we had a jam session together in LA,” remembers Foreman. “We felt like old friends right away.” The result is *Hello Hurricane*, which follows the band’s 2006 studio album *Oh! Gravity* and last year’s era-ending Columbia Records compilation, *The Best Yet*.

“It was exciting to work with someone from Mike’s background and to take some different approaches to rock music,” adds Butler. “He definitely helped us push the music in some new directions.”

“Absolutely,” nods Foreman in agreement. “We saw a chance to reinvent ourselves with Mike. Good songs can be played in many different ways and still add up. For me, that meant tearing things apart a little bit and, as a result, *Hello Hurricane* has some of the most aggressive tones we’ve ever had when it comes to guitar and drums.”

The album’s driving and urgent “Mess of Me” – with its personal declaration of independence, as Foreman passionately announces to the world that “I wanna spend the

rest of my life alive!” – powerfully demonstrates the edge behind the new tones. Not content to settle into a single groove, the band moves from the high flying album opener, “Needle and Haystack Life,” to songs like the stirring “Always Yours” and the sweetly soaring “Your Love is a Song,” which – by its very nature – cries out for many waving hands illuminated by a blue cell phone glow.

The anthemic, riff fueled “This is the Sound,” with its utterly timely generational themes, finds Foreman spitting, “This is the sound from the discontented mouths of a haunted nation!” The “Hello Hurricane” title track is even more poignant when it comes to the band’s perspective on themselves and the world around them. “I’m not talking about ‘Rock You Like a Hurricane,’” says Foreman with a wink before turning reflective. “There is a real despair that I see when we travel around the country... and it’s music that people turn to in a time like this. I wanted to reach out to those people with song.”

"For the last decade or so, we’ve been a rock band that really thrives off that interaction with the crowd,” states Butler. “Our motivation for playing music in the first place was a desire to connect with people in a deeper way.” Out of this connection the band’s renowned live show has developed an incredibly loyal following both here in the states and abroad.

Summer ‘09 also found the band proudly hosting the fifth annual Switchfoot Bro-Am, to benefit local chapters of StandUp For Kids, a national volunteer outreach nonprofit founded in San Diego. Dedicated to making a difference in the lives of at-risk and homeless kids, the Bro-Am is highlighted by a surf contest, charity auction, and festival concert featuring sets by Switchfoot and a host of other area artists. “We’re probably the five most fortunate people on the planet to be able to do what we do everyday,” adds drummer Chad Butler. “The Bro-Am really sums up our connection with San Diego, the surfing and music communities coming together to make a difference.”

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Switchfoot got their start in 1996 when the Foreman brothers and Butler came together around a mutual love of surfing and a passion for rock music spurred by such personal Southern California guitar heroes as Rocket from the Crypt, Drive like Jehu, Boilermaker, Three Mile Pilot, and Heavy Vegetable. “Growing up in San Diego, my heroes were the bands that had sold maybe 30,000 records,” says the elder Foreman. “I’d never seen U2, so those were the bands that gave me my perspective of what a big rock show was. There was a feeling of camaraderie in San Diego that afforded us the freedom in those early days to try anything – even if it meant failing. I don’t think we’d be the band that we are today if we’d started in LA.”

“The San Diego indie rock scene really spawned a lot of inspiration for us” adds Butler, who remembers – at age 17 – when he was so desperate to see FIREHOSE play an 18+ show at UCSD that he climbed onto a roof to watch the show through a skylight window. “As a kid I loved going to shows in San Diego. I could not get enough of rock music. The roof of the building was rattling during every song but the best moment was when Mike Watt looked up and pointed me out to the audience!”

The band released their debut album, *The Legend of Chin* in 1997, followed in 1999 by *New Way to be Human*, an album that marked the band’s debut on the *Billboard* “Heatseekers” chart (at #31). From the beginning, the band was a road-ready unit,

building up an increasingly larger fanbase with each subsequent tour. The year 2000 saw the addition of keyboardist Jerome Fontamillas to the fold and the release of *Learning to Breathe*, an album that saw Switchfoot taking creative steps forward while earning eventual RIAA gold in the process.

The album spawned a Grammy nod and a spot on the RIAA platinum soundtrack to 2000's *A Walk to Remember*, as Jon Foreman received the Les Paul Horizon Award for the Most Promising Up-and-Coming Guitarist. The next year found Switchfoot stepping out with their Columbia Records debut, *A Beautiful Letdown*, a Top 20 *Billboard 200* hit that scored double-platinum success on the strength of a pair of gold certified singles, "Meant to Live" and "Dare You to Move." "When we had success with *Beautiful Letdown*, it felt like we were thrust into waters we never dreamed we'd be in and we had to learn how to swim in," says a reflective Jon Foreman, shaking his head.

As they navigated these new waters, the band outdid themselves again with the 2005 arrival of their fifth studio album, *Nothing is Sound*, their first with longtime touring guitarist Drew Shirley. With "Stars," an RIAA gold certified hit single, the album debuted at #3 on the *Billboard 200* before rolling to RIAA gold itself. Meanwhile, *The Early Years: 1997-2000*, a 2004 compilation of the band's first three albums grabbed another RIAA gold award for Switchfoot.

The band's widely celebrated sixth studio album, *Oh! Gravity*, arrived in 2006 with production work from acclaimed producer/mixer Tim Palmer (the Cure, Pearl Jam) and executive engineer Steve Lillywhite, (U2, the Rolling Stones). Last year's 18-song *The Best Yet* collection included the newly released song, "This is Home" alongside the band's biggest and best loved tracks. (The song was also featured in Walt Disney Studios/Walden Media's #1 box office theatrical release, *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*.) The album's special *Deluxe Edition* included a bonus DVD with 14 videos, among them two never-before-seen clips.

In January of 2009, Foreman branched out as part of the side project entity, Fiction Family, with partner Sean Watkins of Nickel Creek. Their self-titled debut, on the Dave Matthews co-founded ATO Records, features a dozen songs written by Foreman and Watkins and recorded by the duo at home studios around San Diego. The duo performed in dramatic fashion earlier this year at the 2009 Bonnaroo festival in Tennessee.

As for *Hello Hurricane*, the members of Switchfoot could not be more motivated to bring the new music to their grass roots grown fanbase. "I think it is a landmark record for us," says Butler, turning serious. "It's a new chapter in so many aspects of our lives, personally and professionally. I think we're in the best possible place we've been in as a band."

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