

SPOTLIGHT



Isaac, Taylor and Zac Hanson

# HANSON

## Shouting out loud their love of classic R&B and rock 'n' roll

HANSON'S LAST ALBUM, 2007'S *THE Walk*, was comprised of weighty songs about facing conflicts and overcoming obstacles. For the new *Shout It Out*, the Tulsa, Okla.-based band was determined to rediscover its sense of joy. "We wanted to make a summer record," says drummer Zac Hanson, who co-founded the trio 18 years ago with brothers Taylor and Isaac. "Hopefully, the songs have an energy that makes you want to get in the car and drive."

Producing the album themselves on a 2,000-acre pecan farm in El Paso, Texas, the brothers looked back to the Motown hits and R&B classics they grew up listening to. "A lot of those records—late '50s and early '60s rock 'n' roll, Motown and early R&B—are really sparse," Hanson explains. "They're all about the song, about having a great melody and a memorable lyric. We've always viewed those types of songs as our benchmarks."

After completing the album—or believing they had completed it—the brothers found they weren't quite satisfied with the results. Deciding that a funkier vibe was in order, they contacted Jerry Hey, the horn arranger famous for his work with Earth, Wind & Fire, Quincy Jones and Michael Jackson. True to

his reputation, Hey came up with sizzling horn parts that sometimes took the form of a lead instrument. "We had a serious conversation about what the goal for the horns should be," Hanson says. "Jerry put it well when he said the goal should be something like 'All You Need Is Love,' where the horns add so much to the song, to the point where people actually sing those parts."

Also contributing was bassist Bob Babbitt of Motown house band the Funk Brothers, who upped the groove factor on several songs. "The way the drums are pushing forward while the bass is staying straight created a great feel," Hanson says. "In some instances, Bob played so far behind the beat, he was almost ahead of it. That kind of skill comes only from experience."

While Hanson has moved relentlessly forward over the years, it still deals with those who think of them as the bright-eyed teens who made their debut with the irresistibly bubblegummy 1997 chart-topper "MMMBop." "Some people know us for that, and some people know us as 'those kids from Oklahoma,'" Hanson says with a shrug. "But I think most people see us as what we are, which is a true rock 'n' roll band from heartland America."

—Russell Hall

AS SEEN IN: JUNE 2010  
MUSIC & MUSICIANS  
MAGAZINE

JEWEL | PUNCH BROTHERS | DEVO | TIFT MERRITT | 3OH13