

Q&A



James Shaffer, Reginald Arvizu, Jonathan Davis, Brian Welch, Ray Luzier

Stefano Micchia and Fiddewood Studios

KORN

Back from the brink with a new album and an old friend

FOR YEARS ALTERNATIVE METAL BAND Korn became synonymous with drugs. They wrote about them, were addicted to them, and were ultimately consumed by them. Meth forced Brian “Head” Welch to quit the band in 2005, while the remaining members—singer Jonathan Davis, guitarist James “Munky” Shaffer, bassist Reginald “Fieldy” Arvizu and drummer David Silveria (replaced by Ray Luzier in 2009)—soldiered on. Despite their demons, the band sold 35 million albums and snagged two Grammys. Now Welch has recorded with the band for the first time in 10 years on their album *The Paradigm Shift*, produced by Don Gilmore. Davis shared his thoughts on the new project.

Did you think Brian would return?

I always hoped he would. I was hoping he would come to his senses once he got clean and he realized he could do this, and it wasn't bad. He finally got to that point. He came out and played one song with us onstage last year. It had been eight years since he'd done that. People were crying, and it really was emotional. I think he realized at that point he would come back. We talked and everything was good—and here we are.

What does Brian bring to the band?

A style of playing that's really big on melody writing with the guitar. A perfect example is “Falling Away From Me” [*Issues*]. That's all Brian, and that kind of stuff was his specialty. It was awesome having him back because now Munky and Head can play off each other like call-and-answer and all kinds of crazy stuff. For so long we just had Munky playing guitar, and he was doing the job of two guys.

What sound were you going for?

We wanted to take those electronic influences and elements from the last record [*The Path of Totality*], but we didn't want to do the same record. It was like what we did on [1998's] *Follow the Leader* where we mixed hip-hop and rock. By doing that we made a groundbreaking record, and I think this one is too. This is a mixture with all the layering that makes Korn sound like something you never heard before.

How were the songs written?

The guys started writing around August, though I didn't see them until March. They had a whole bunch of songs they wrote together, and I started writing songs and working

with them, and we just mixed everything all up. Once that was recorded, we did the layering of the electronics. After that I started vocals. The thing basically wrote itself. Definitely the most fun record I ever made.

Did you look forward to recording?

I was in a bad place because I was detoxing off Xanax, and that was hell. I wasn't really thinking or feeling anything at that time. I did this whole record detoxing, so it was pretty crazy. I went through seven months of hell.

What was it like working with Don?

He was awesome. He's an amazing producer, and it was nice working with someone who was so talented who isn't an ass. I worked with him on a song back on [2003's] *Take a Look in the Mirror*.

Korn is celebrating its 20th year together—what does that feel like?

It's insane. I can't believe we've been playing for 20 years. We're excited that we're still making music and people are still listening. We all look at that as we're blessed—we've been given this gift and we need to keep doing it.

—Steven Rosen

‘We're excited that we're still making music and people are still listening.’ —Jonathan Davis

