

Q&A



Chester Bennington, Dean DeLeo, Robert DeLeo, Eric Kretz

Chapman Baehler

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS

A big lineup change brings renewed energy to the multiplatinum rockers

"WE'VE GOTTEN MORE DONE IN THE past few months than we have in years," says Stone Temple Pilots bassist Robert DeLeo. He's talking about the group's resurrection after booting singer Scott Weiland and replacing him with Linkin Park vocalist Chester Bennington. Weiland had been on a downward spiral of addiction for nearly 20 years, and the quartet—DeLeo, his brother Dean on guitar, drummer Eric Kretz and Bennington—finally pulled the plug. Newly inspired, they entered DeLeo's studio, emerging with the self-produced *High Rise*—an EP with the same intensity of STP classics like *Core* and *Purple*.

What happened with Scott?

Issues started a long time ago—well-documented addiction issues. I don't know if I can get into these questions right now for legal reasons. It was a gift to be able to make those records with Scott. But it was clear there wasn't going to be more STP music with those four people.

How did you work around his problem?

When there are drugs involved, there are all these extracurricular things you have to put into the equation when you're making music.

Those are the things people think enhance the record or put this vibe in there. It's really not the case when you're in the studio and the producer is saying, "Are we going to make it through this record?"

Tell us about working with Chester.

After being in a room together for the first time, it was evident we weren't going to have any issues writing songs together. All this was put together in a short amount of time—shaking hands, getting in a room, writing and recording "Out of Time" and putting it out as a single, and finishing the EP. It's not just a musical thing. But it's tough to get in a room and make music with people who don't like each other.

Where did you record the EP?

In my basement. I have a fully restored 1971 Neve 8014 16-channel console. On one of the first days we were there, we were plugged in and letting it rip, and it hit me. I said to Eric, Dean and Chester, "Do you guys realize where we're at right now?" What I meant was, "We're grown men making music in my basement." To me that brought out a certain energy you only get when you're a teenager in your basement learning to play to records.

You can feel that rebirth of spirit on *High Rise*?

I'm pretty proud of what we did, and I wish we had time to put an LP out. But with Chester getting back to Linkin Park, we had to use our time wisely. That really makes for a creative time when we're together. We were smiling and laughing, and those elements bring back the spark of why you got into this. I continue to be a fan, and that's what humbles me in the face of music.

Were there challenges recording?

No. I've collected vintage gear for more than 20 years, and the cool thing for me was pulling out stuff I haven't used yet. That was the biggest challenge technically—what mics to use and their placement.

Will you record a full-length album?

Absolutely. We're in a place now where we can make records and put them out on our own label. The energy of STP songs was lacking for a while. Chester has brought back that energy. The guy has added 10 years to my life! The people coming out to see STP are really getting what hasn't been there in a while.

—Steve Rosen

'I continue to be a fan, and that's what humbles me in the face of music.' —Robert DeLeo

