

30db

30db's *ONE MAN SHOW* IS A TWO-MAN REVELATION Yonder Mountain's Jeff Austin and Umphrey's McGee's Brendan Bayliss Join Forces

One Man Show, a visceral and personal new album due from SCI Fidelity Records on May 11, is an astonishing and unexpected collaboration by the duo known as 30db - guitarist Brendan Bayliss of the improvisational Chicago band Umphrey's McGee and mandolinist Jeff Austin of Boulder's top-flight Americana unit Yonder Mountain String Band.

The two long-time friends and tour mates, who share vocal duties on the album, co-wrote and co-produced the set. They are backed by a masterful band that includes Cody Dickinson of the North Mississippi All Stars on drums, percussion, and keyboards; Nick Forster, guitarist for the groundbreaking newgrass group Hot Rize and host of the syndicated radio show "E-Town"; and highly sought after player/producer and Open Road bassist and Eric Thorin.

By turns affectingly subdued and passionately hard-rocking, *One Man Show* is a moving account of busted relationships that bears legitimate comparison with such landmarks as Bob Dylan's *Blood On the Tracks* and Willie Nelson's *Phases and Stages*. The material, penned collaboratively by Bayliss and Austin, covers a sonic spectrum from acoustic-based, folk-inflected numbers like "Backfire" and "Return Item" and the instrumental flights "Instrumental in D" and "Wad-mala" to the bouncy pop of "Always Up" and storming electric tracks like "Grave" and "One More."

The formation of 30db culminates a friendship that developed during a decade of appearances with their own bands on stages around the country.

Bayliss - who like Austin is a Windy City native - says, "We've been playing the same circuit for several years - we'd crossed paths at festivals for several years in the same catering tents. After bumping into each other so many times, and discovering mutual interests like the Chicago Cubs, he and I hit it off. We ended up doing a tour together called the Big Summer Classic in 2005. That was the first tour we did together, and we ended up hanging out every night, talking about doing songs. We planted the seed that summer."

The two musicians bonded over a mutually shared experience: Within months of each other, they each witnessed the end of long-term relationships.

Austin recalls, "Sometimes emotionally and personally, there's a lot of stuff going on, and we both had that happen at the same time. We started talking pretty often at that point, just to help each other through it, because we were going through the same personal situation. We were both able to understand each other - partners in pain, almost. You go through this heavy stuff, and people say, 'Oh, I understand,' but when I reached out to Bayliss, he really understood."

He adds, "We were on the phone one day, and I said, 'Through all this, I'm actually writing.' And he said, 'It's funny, so am I.' You don't have to be a genius to figure it out. 'Well, let's see if we can write.'"

Working from their shared perspective, the two musicians wrote, edited, and shaped the 14 tracks that make up *One Man Show* together.

"For me, it was cathartic," says Bayliss. "I needed an outlet for this material. With Umphrey's, we had already done an album where the bulk of the lyrics were about the same kind of subject. I didn't want to keep writing the same songs for Umphrey's - that is my full-time job and I don't want to tap into that emotional well every single day of my life. Plus, I started Umphrey's when I was in college; I was 21 years old. I've never written a song for anything but the band. For me it was nice to have a new songwriting partner after 10 years of doing the same thing. It was a breath of fresh air for me."



Austin says, "To me, 30db sounds pretty unique. I don't think Yonder would ever delve into that kind of material, that kind of context. Also, you don't have a lot of these soaring moving parts, like you do on a lot of Umphrey's stuff."

Bayliss and Austin cut the entire collection in just two late-2008 sessions during breaks in the hectic touring schedules of their home bands. Several of the tracks heard on *One Man Show* are first takes. The album was mixed in Chicago during 2009.

Austin enthuses, "When we got the band together and they started playing, it sounded like nothing else. That was when Bayliss and I looked at each other and said, 'OK. This is good.' We met in this place: 'Let's just try to rock this out, and see where we can end up.' This is extremely personal, heart-wrenching, putting-it-out-there music. This is head-first, this is all-or-nothing. And those guys took such great care with the music."

He continues, "We weren't on a schedule. We were able to let it fully come into realization. We really cared about making these songs happen and sharing them with the audience, whoever that happens to be, whether it's a 12-year-old kid or a 60-year-old grandma. I'm really happy about how universal it sounds."

The release of *One Man Show* will be supported by 30db live dates in markets including Madison, Chicago, Minneapolis, Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, and Boulder.

Physical distribution of the album will be handled by RED Distribution, while IODA will distribute the collection digitally.

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