

SICK OF IT ALL

“Last Act of Defiance”

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Living legends are revered for good reason. They are proof of an ideal. They are roots from which future generations grow. When New York City leading lights SICK OF IT ALL formed in 1986, they had no idea they'd be here today, continuing to release spirited, revolution-calling hardcore. Almost three decades in the making, the New Yorkers show no signs of slowing down, getting soft, or toning down their stand-proud mentality on new album, “Last Act of Defiance”. Marked by 14 anthems of heartfelt, no-holds-barred hardcore, the group's 10th full-length is an album only SICK OF IT ALL could make.

“We try to vary the songs we write,” drummer Armand Majidi says. “And therefore our albums are also varied. It's still us writing the music and we want to play to the strengths of the genre. Every artist goes through dry spells, but this wasn't one. I remember having much harder times with songwriting back in the '90s. We write about frustrations a lot, and the world seems to always throw plenty of those at us. Maybe it's because we're older and have a keener sense of the matrix, but the blatant alliance between world government and media has given us a wealth of issues to draw from.”

But age hasn't affected SICK OF IT ALL. As with classic album, “Just Look Around”, so too with “Last Act of Defiance”. The New Yorkers are in perpetual ‘prove yourself’ mode. They're never a band to shy away from what they believe in or have trouble speaking their minds. Not in the '80s, not in the '90s, and certainly not now in 2014. SICK OF IT ALL has fed fervently off of the five U.S. presidents they've had to endure, the countless wars waged, endless political, social, and environmental controversies, and continued efforts by power-hungry despots to restrict humanity's basic rights. Previous album, “Based on a True Story”, was founded on the real-world tribulations and observations of SICK OF IT ALL members. “Death to Tyrants” is about power-hungry, money-grubbing world leaders. And pivotal album, “Scratch the Surface”, begs everyone to question the face value of things. “Last Act of Defiance” is yet another bullhorn to educate the oppressed and the misinformed.

“There have always been bands that deliberately write shallow, meaningless lyrics, which appeal to shallow people, or funny lyrics that appeal to the willfully ignorant,” says Majidi defiantly. “If it seems like we're one of the only bands left indignant and discontented with the big picture, then music around us has stopped being revolutionary.”

For a band with origins in the glory days of New York City hardcore and the inventors of the ‘Wall of Death’—a brutal event that lines up fans Revolutionary War-style on either side of the mosh pit to charge one another—“Last Act of Defiance” is a “full circle” album according Majidi. Tried and true “aggressive folk music” as he calls hardcore. From the unforgiving pound of openers “Sound the Alarm” and “2061” to the rousing romp of “Losing War” and punk hooks of “Outgunned”, SICK OF IT ALL's tenth

full-length is genuinely hardscrabble and steadfastly honest. "Last Act of Defiance" also features Mad Joe Black from rising hardcore heroes Wisdom in Chains on the track "Facing the Abyss".

"I want fans to feel that they just heard a hardcore record that has everything. From blistering speed to bouncing groove, to heavy and pounding to bright and melodic. I want them to see that there's nothing stale about our energy."

Recorded with Tue Madsen (Heaven Shall Burn, The Haunted) at Nova Studios in Staten Island, New York and mixed at Madsen's Antfarm Studios in Aarhus, Denmark, "Last Act of Defiance" marks the third time SICK OF IT ALL have recorded with the Dane. What they get in return is a heavy, thick sound that recalls the hardness of the Big Apple and aligns perfectly with the wicked rhythms of guitarist Pete Koller, the deep grooves of bassist Craig Setari, Majidi's cement-cracking drums, and Lou Koller's fist-raising shouts and screams. "Not only do we get along famously," reveals the skinsman about Madsen. "But he has always understood how to capture the band's intensity in the quietly controlled, less-than-intense studio setting. It was always difficult for us to find an engineer who could capture our live sound before meeting Tue. So, now that we've found him, he's our guy."

As for SICK OF IT ALL supporting "Last Act of Defiance" fans from around the world can expect to see New York City hardcore live and in the flesh in 2014 and beyond. As a set-up for the new album the group are already playing the Dour festival in Belgium, Deichbrand in Germany, and Punk Rock Holiday in Slovenia this summer. Get ready world! SICK OF IT ALL returns!

(by Chris Dick / Decibel Magazine)

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"Last Act of Defiance" (30:50) track listing

1. Sound the Alarm (1:47)
2. 2061 (2:19)
3. Road Less Traveled (2:29)
4. Get Bronx (2:13)
5. Part of History (1:41)
6. Losing War (2:26)
7. Never Back Down (2:06)
8. Facing the Abyss (2:24)
9. Act Your Rage (1:27)
10. Disconnect Your Flesh (2:30)
11. Beltway Getaway (1:58)
12. Sidelined (2:34)
13. Outgunned (2:07)
14. DNC (2:42)

Line-Up:

Lou Koller - vocals
Pete Koller - guitars
Craig Setari - bass
Armand Majidi - drums

Selected Discography:

Blood, Sweat and No Tears (1989)
Just Look Around (1992)
Scratch the Surface (1994)
Built to Last (1997)
Call to Arms (1999)
Yours Truly (2000)
Life on the Ropes (2003)
Death to Tyrants (2006)
Based on a True Story (2010)
Last Act of Defiance (2014)

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