

The first solo album, SCHIZOPHONIC, by Nuno Bettencourt marks a new beginning in his career. SCHIZOPHONIC is a dynamic display of musical styles. From track to track, tape loops and samples segue into stomping riffs, hook-filled rhythms and melancholy acoustic passages. It's a head-spinning array, but one which yields admiration instead of confusion. "Everybody has different moods," says Nuno, explaining why his songs are so eclectic.

Despite the album's contemporary sound, many of the songs on SCHIZOPHONIC were written and recorded as long as five years ago. Nuno would often hole up inside his hotel room and record songs on four or eight track tape machines. He became a one man band, handling guitar, vocals, drums and keyboards on his own. "I played all the instruments on SCHIZOPHONIC out of necessity. I was demoing and I always demo on my own. This time it became my record."

SCHIZOPHONIC is a personal expression of emotion and creativity that allows Nuno to enter a new era with dignity and grace. The first single "Gravity" combines a surging blues riff with diverging bass lines, industrial percussion and a contagious refrain, while "Fine by Me" is a jangling tune reminiscent of the Byrds and Lemonheads and "Crave" is a lush, soaring love song.

Such heartfelt sentiment flows through SCHIZOPHONIC. Nuno's powerful songwriting is matched by poignant lyrics that examine a number of sobering subjects including dysfunctional relationships, childhood confusion, disease, old age and death. "I just said what I needed to say," he says. "I think it's not me to be vague or heavily metaphorical with lyrics. I don't want people to have to interpret my songs, I want everybody to know the reality of the songs and what they're about."

The most aggressive song on the record, "2 Weeks in Dizkneelande," features contemptuously thrashing guitars and a frantic beat. Of this dark track Nuno confides "Music in a lot of ways for me is about exercising demons."

Of course, not all of SCHIZOPHONIC's sides are dark. "You" is about making the most of whatever time we have and "What you Want" is about searching for something most of your life, then realizing it's always been in your own backyard. Something Nuno's recently discovered with the birth of his daughter Bebe. "And it put everything in perspective," he says. "It was like getting a new pair of glasses on life."

Nuno was born in Portugal, the youngest of 10 children. He moved to Hudson, Massachusetts when he was four and grew up in a small community surrounded by music. "Growing up around a big family had such an effect on me," says Nuno. "You would walk into one room you've got Queen playing, then you'd go into the next room and there's Van Halen. Then in the third bedroom the Beatles would be on and then Aerosmith. I was exposed to everything, and I think that had a really big effect on me."

At age 10, Nuno started playing drums, then at 14 he picked up the guitar, a freedom that rings through SCHIZOPHONIC, from the middle eastern ambient dub-groove of "Fallen Angels" to the jubilant, power-chord assault of "Swollen Princess," SCHIZOPHONIC should clear the slate for anyone who thought Nuno would just bounce from one Extreme to another. "With the exception of having a new baby, sleeping at night is really important to me. Being honest to myself and everyone else is the only way to do so. To this end, SCHIZOPHONIC is musically and lyrically an eclectic diary."

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