



The volume's high in Illinois with Mudvayne, the latest entry in new millennium metal.

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In the past five years, heavy metal has been replaced by the overblown rap-rock of bands like Korn, Rage Against the Machine and Limp Bizkit. A few other bands have reincarnated the sounds and phrases of these top acts, but they still don't measure up on the charts.

Mudvayne, the latest inclination in metal, erases this common stereotype. With its debut disc *L.D. 50* (Epic), Mudvayne rips apart metal's confines and scratches its way to the top. The band's currently touring America with Slipknot and Hatebreed, but Student.Com grabbed them for a conversation about metal, Illinois and recording a debut album.

Student.Com: What boundaries are you trying to break down in metal?

Spag (drummer): Musically, we are just trying to break the rock-n-roll format. That's definitely a boundary we want to breakdown — being just a rock band — and taking it to a new realm. Specifically trying to move beyond the whole ADIDAS rock thing. I mean we're all early 90's Korn fans of course, and that was great... but we're trying to move beyond that. Move beyond the rap-rock sort of thing. Let metal be metal. We are trying to breath more dimensionality to being a heavy band instead of just being an angry heavy band.

Student.Com But *L.D. 50* is full of angry lyrics and heavy licks...

Spag: On an initial listen, yeah a lot of the album tends to be very angry, even brutal. We wanted to shock people with our first album...we wanted to really grab people's attention and then draw people in.

Student.Com: On the track "Cradle" (a song about Mudvayne's lead singer's battle with an abusive father), it's obvious where the aggression comes from. But where does the rest of Mudvayne's aggression originate?

Spag A lot of the aggression comes from (lead singer) Chad's past experiences in his home

life. Specific themes for songs like that come from his life, and we kind of all fall in behind him like soldiers [and] identify with the pain that he felt as a child growing up in a broken family. Songs like that are captured moments and play into the overall themes of that the band has so there relevant. Other songs like 'Pharmaecopia' or '(K)now F(orever)' are more vision of a global concept that we're trying to capture with the band — some of those things he and I would collaborate more on to keep those ideas consistent.

Student.Com: So will you have the same "shock factor" on your next album?

Spag: I hope we can gain a deeper level of subtlety as we evolve and still be able to play to the kids [and] maintain that level of energy level that our younger market wants, but also be able to entertain and hold the attention of a more mature audience.

Student.Com : Less than a year ago you were still an unknown band in Peoria, Illinois. How are you dealing with the success of signing with a major label?

Spag: I don't ever want to be at a point as an artist were I say I've succeeded. Headlining our first tour with an album that just came out is pretty unprecedented for a band like us. I think the label is just sitting back watching going, 'OK lets see what happens.' I think that there is a bit of a trial here and a task to see just how well we'll pull things off . I think we're doing well.

Student.Com: So why did you guys start wearing face make-up?

Spag: We've been doing that for a few years and with pushing the boundaries, we wanted to bring a visual aspect in what we were about. The whole idea was to just dramatically show our presence of being something radically different than anything anyone was doing at the time. I would caution anybody that is getting into our band because we had never planned on staying identifiable through just the make up. The make up is not an identity; it's just one tool that we use. Initially, it was what our budget supported, so that's what happened.

Student.Com: How did the band get around to meeting Slipknot?

Spag: We met Shawn (Crahan) at our showcase for Epic when we got signed. He came with the A&R rep that signed us and checked us out. We immediately hit it off and from there and built up a great close relationship that led to him executive-producing the album.

Student.Com: How was the experience of recording your first album?

Spag: Working with Garth (producer Garth Richardson, of Rage Against the Machine and L7 fame) was just phenomenal. He's got mad strengths, he knows what's going on and he really took us through and showed us the ropes, comforted us when we needed it and pushed us when we needed it. I've told people before that it was the most horribly beautiful experience I've ever had. To be able to realize a dream and your art on that level with those kind of tools, but with under that kind of pressure and with the level of expectations from the label. It was horrifying and beautiful.

Student.Com: So what does *L.D. 50* refer to?

Spag: The album title speaks about the danger of chemicals and utilizing chemicals that could be mind expanding, but also have a toxic charge and could be life threatening. As we were working on themes for the album, we were very drawn into 2001 and we all shared a common space with it. Basically the monolith in 2001 became the symbol of L.D. 50. It became our symbol of that strange indefinable alien catalyst that you would come in contact with that when encountering it, it brought a brand new vision of yourself in the world, but also carried an indescribable charge that was potentially life-threatening.

We've said it once, and we'll say it again: Dan Marek interviews rock stars for Student.Com.