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Foo Fighters

by Daniel Q. Marek
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**Foo Fighters
w/ The Transplants**

**Dodge Theatre
400 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, 602.379.2888
Monday, April 14, 7 p.m.
\$30**

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Last year the Foo Fighters tackled the mainstream market once again after tediously recording their most demanding studio effort *One By One*. Riddled with problems from the beginning of the sessions, the Foo's took time off after four months in the studio to branch into other projects to recollect their energy and rekindle their love of the art.

Recollected two months later, the rejuvenated band hit the studio once again to rerecord the earlier material with a vigor and vitality they missed earlier last year. The result was the best collection of power-pop-rock songs since their critically acclaimed sophomore effort *The Colour and the Shape* in 1997. One Grammy, three side-projects and a host of European dates later, the band is at the top of their game once again and ready to take on America in support of the album.

College Times talked to guitarist Chris Shiflett while on break to clear up some of the recording details, hospitalizations and side-projects of one of rock's most prolific acts.

College Times: So you're the newest member of the band. Tell me a little about how you met up with the Fooks?

Chris Shiflett: Well, that was in August of 1999. I was actually out in New York on vacation and I got a call from Gus, our tour manager, saying, "hey, this is Gus from the Foo Fighters, we're having auditions next week in L.A. and you're on the list to try out." So I was surprised to get the phone call, I guess they had gotten my name from someone who knew someone, who knew someone else. So I went down to L.A. to try out, came back a week later and then started on the tour.

Had you met any of the guys in the band before auditioning for them?

No, I never had.

What were your first impressions?

Initially, at the very first audition, I showed up and could hear them auditioning someone else. I was waiting outside the studio with my guitar and I heard them playing with somebody. Then the playing stopped and 15 or 20 minutes went by and I was just sitting there hating it and chewing my fingernails thinking they were bonding with some guy and I didn't have a chance. Finally, the door opened and the guy came out and I headed in there. The first thing Dave said was, 'Thank God you saved us from that guy. He wouldn't shut up.' So immediately, on that note, I felt relaxed. Actually, during most of the auditions we just kind of sat around visiting, talking and shooting the shit.



So what was it like when you initially went in to record One by One.

Well, the initial sessions lasted months and months, they were really precise, and those weren't very fun and they kind of teetered out and ended on a bad note. But the second time around, when we tried it again, was a lot more fun – a lot looser, a lot quicker and I guess a lot less attention to detail.

So when you went back into the studio, did you kind of reformat the songs or...

I mean some of the songs changed and there were a bunch of new songs and I think that everybody just had a better attitude. I think that came out on tape, it just sounds happier.

So how does the recording work? Does Dave (Grohl) always have veto power because of home-court advantage?

He writes everything. He is really super prolific – he always has a million ideas to put down. The way things usually work out is: he'll usually demo stuff that he has or he'll get together with Taylor (Hawkins) and they'll demo stuff; when it comes to the recording process, Dave and Taylor lay down the basic stuff to work out the arrangements; then Nate comes in and does the bass lines and I'll come in and put in what little guitar things are needed. So everybody sort of just fills it up.

Let me get this straight once and for all, because there have been so many conflicting reports. Was Taylor hospitalized for an OD after you decided to take a break or before it?

Yeah, that was way before. People have always kind of misunderstood this whole thing. That happened, and while he was sort of recuperating from that, Dave went and made the new Queens of the Stone Age record. Then a month or two went by and then we started working on the Foo Fighters record. We worked on that from November till February or March or something, then Queens of the Stone Age still didn't have a drummer and had a tour lined up and Dave decided to do that. He was only gone for a month and a half or something, but when he got back, then we rerecorded the record. So that had happened way before we even started recording the record.



So did Dave start out with the Queens of the Stone Age before you and Nate started

your projects?

Well, Dave got everybody together and said, "You know, we really shouldn't put this record out. Let's take a break. I'm gonna go play with Queens of the Stone Age," So initially, we thought the break was going to be a lot longer. I had planned on doing something on the side for a while, but we had a break and some time, so that was just like a kick in the ass to get my own thing moving a little bit.

I've seen some stuff written on your side-project, but nobody seems to have the name written out. Do you have a name yet?

Yeah, it's called Jackson. That's one of the things I've been doing on our little break here is that I'm putting out an EP. We recorded a bunch of music, far more than an album's worth of music. I want to put out an EP first and put it out myself. They will be for sale at the Foo Fighter shows and online, but I'm not pushing it really hard. It's just sort of a sample of what we will eventually put out.

You've probably recorded with your brother (bassist Scott Shiflett of Face to Face) before, but did it go as expected?

Yeah, my brother and Pete (Parada, drummer of Face to Face) are phenomenal. They're just so easy to play with. They did their stuff first, the bass and drums. We did that in like three days and since then, I've been working in little increments here and there – I'll come home from tour to go in the studio and lay down some vocals, then I'll go out on tour again and come home again and work on it again. But it's almost done being tracked right now. Next week we're supposed to get in there and finish up some of the vocals.

Have any of the other guys in the Foos heard it?

Yeah, I gave them some of the rough cuts.

Are you guys pretty open to criticism on all of your side projects?

Everything that I've heard from everybody's side projects was really good. I didn't really critique anything; I just told them it was cool. Nate's stuff with Fire Theft was really great, Taylor has been working with the old bassist from Jane's Addiction, although I'm not even sure if they are still doing that now, but that was really cool and obviously Dave's stuff has been pretty well documented. I would think that if they didn't like something that they would tell me – (laughing) I mean I can't imagine Taylor being anything but truthful.

So with everybody going out on their own side-projects during One by One, do you think that benefited the band more than anything?

Definitely, especially after recording an entire record that we weren't going to use – that's a pretty frustrating thing for a band to deal with. I think going out and playing with other people just recharged everybody's batteries. Playing with other people not only makes you feel good about other music outside of the band you are normally in, but it also makes you appreciate your band more - it makes you miss how good it is.



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