


C O L L E C T I V E

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Collective Soul “Afterwords”

Afterwords (El Music Group) is the new studio album from Collective Soul. It is the seventh studio album by the hard-rocking band from the tiny town of Stockbridge, GA that's gone on to become multi-platinum hit-makers playing all over the world.

Bright as California sunshine, the first single “Hollywood” features an undeniable melody with tinges of '80s pop. Singer/ songwriter Ed Roland puts a bouncy energy to his sly lyrics that compare Tinsel Town to a naughty girl (or is it the other way around?): “Yeah, Hollywood/ You know I love you more than one man should/ Yeah, Hollywood/ kiss me, kiss me good.”

While “Hollywood” may strike listeners as the perfect top-down summer song, much of the rest of *Afterwords* captures Collective Soul at a time when Roland is writing from a hard-won, much more mature perspective, and his band mates are contributing from equally strong musical directions.

“The theme of this one is love.” Roland says of *Afterwords*. “It sounds corny saying that but we've been blessed with success and with that comes the confidence to do things. I always liked writing positive songs and although a whole love record is different for me it's an important step.”

Another first for Roland is the evocative, mid-tempo story song, “Georgia Girl” — it's the only tune he's ever written where the lyrics came before the melody. “I just sat down one day and wrote it. It's basically a true story about a wonderful girl who helped me through a hard time. That may be the hardest kind of song for me to write — a story that people can follow. That's the greatness of someone like Springsteen. He can write you a story. I really wanted to challenge myself to do something like that.”

Afterwords was recorded at several different studios but mixing was mainly done at Roland's home studio in Atlanta. Besides Roland on vocals, guitars and keyboards, the album features “I Don't Need Any More Friends” written and performed by Joel Kosche. The album's only “non love song” was written “for anyone who doesn't do so well at parties” says Kosche. “Singing one of my songs on this album it can't help but be a little different sound for Collective Soul. I would say the sound of this record is very intimate and I think the production reflects that. There's definitely those classic rock riffs but we also venture into other musical territories, for instance with the song “All That I Know”. Kosche grew up in nearby Jonesboro, GA and has been the band's lead guitarist for 6 years. Joining original band members Dean Roland (guitar) and Will Turpin (bass) is Ryan Hoyle on drums. “The recording process was really interesting for us this time.” says Dean. “Ryan did all the drum tracks in Boston, we worked at Tree House Studios in Atlanta and Joel and I spent a lot of time doing guitars at his home studio. We then came together as a band to lay down vocals and add finishing touches. I think the process gave this record a different creative perspective.”

Youth, released in 2004, was the debut album on the band's own El Music Group label. “Better Now”, the debut single from this release was the band's first Gold single. It was followed in 2006 by the release of the DVD *Home*. “We're enjoying being an independent band.” Roland says. “That was our choice and I believe it's the way of the future. I think more and more bands are going to start doing it. I don't understand why more aren't doing it now. I'm not saying the major labels are bad, I just don't think they're necessary for every artist. It used to be that was the only way you had to get your music presented, which is the ultimate dream of any artist or songwriter, but now with the internet everything is different.”

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Roland admits that being on the legendary Atlantic Records label for seven years and five albums developed many of the business relationships that later helped Collective Soul go independent. Of course, in some ways that move took the band back to its earliest days.

Originally released in 1993 on Atlanta indie label Rising Storm, Collective Soul's debut, *Hints Allegations and Things Left Unsaid* was picked up by Atlantic in 1994. The single "Shine" became a breakthrough hit, pushing the album to platinum, and putting the band on tour with Aerosmith and onstage at Woodstock 1994. With 21 tracks debuting on the Billboard chart and 7 number 1 singles, "Shine," "December," "The World I Know," "When The River Flows," "Precious Declaration," "Listen," and "Heavy".

Ed and Dean Roland grew up as preacher's kids in a Southern Baptist household. Like so many soulful vocalists Ed got his start singing in church. "My dad was a minister until the day he passed. I was brought up in very strict house. I was sort of the rebel without a cause. I watched my father change and mature, as he watched me change and mature. I think we helped each other. That was our bond. He helped bring out the spirituality in me. And I think I helped broaden his views," says Roland. Some of that is reflected on *Afterwords* — especially on a couple of poignant songs that deal with the recent death of the Roland's father and the strength of their mother in dealing with the loss.

"That kind of wakes you up to go, 'Wow, this is the one life I have, as far as I know,' " says Roland. "So I want to be positive. I want everyone around me to be positive. I have my wife, my son and good friends. I've got a good life."

As for where Collective Soul is now, Roland understands that many longtime fans will always want to hear the older songs and sound. But he's more confident than ever in the music he's making and the reason he's making it.

"We're still a guitar-oriented band. There are fans that no matter what we put out are going to say it doesn't sound like the '90s and that's a fair assessment — because it doesn't. I don't wear the same clothes I did in the '90s. We don't want to be that kind of band" says Roland.

"We always loved the Beatles. To me, they were the full spectrum of rock and roll with both sound and emotion. They set the rule that there are no rules in rock. You hope you mature as a songwriter and as a band and in all other aspects of your life too."

Here's more of what Ed Roland has to say about Collective Soul and the band's new album, *Afterwords*:

- ✍ On the art of the three minute pop song: "I don't ever time my songs and it's a joke among the band because I'll say, 'I wonder how long that is?' And they'll all go, 'Three, three-and-a-half minutes.' Maybe it's attention deficit disorder. There's nothing wrong with a long song. I just can't write them."
- ✍ On the song, "You're All That I Know": "That's basically about my wife. We've been married a little over a year. She's a wonderful woman. She changed my outlook on life and it's my way of telling her she's the one. 'You're all that I know when the sun goes down/ You're all that I know when the sun comes rising like that devil in me.' "
- ✍ On the song, "Good Morning After All": "That one I wrote for my Mom. The strength she showed us during the time when we lost our father. You keep going. What keeps her going is her faith. 'You wake just to crawl/You stand just to fall/ But you say good morning after all.' "