

HOWIE DAY

Sound the Alarm

Several years after releasing his commercial breakthrough album ***Stop All The World Now***, singer and songwriter Howie Day breaks his silence with his long-awaited third studio album ***Sound the Alarm***. The album is a stunning collection of the kind of emotionally resonant, melody-minded pop-rock gems that have earned Day a legion of devoted fans over the past 10 years. ***Sound the Alarm*** comes after more than a decade of touring, during which the Bangor, Maine, native self-released his 2000 debut *Australia* and became a full-time traveling musician. He became known for his powerful one-man shows, connecting with audiences through his charm, humor, the strength of his songwriting, and a warm tenor voice that “soars into fluttering, high registers, but also grates with real, pleading grit,” as one critic put it.

After selling nearly 50,000 copies of *Australia* on his own, Day, then 21, signed to Epic Records. Epic re-issued the album, which went on to sell 300,000 copies. In 2003, Day released his major-label debut, ***Stop All The World Now***, and hit the road to support it. The constant touring paid off big-time: ***Stop*** was certified gold in the U.S. and spawned two Top 10 radio hits: “She Says” and the platinum smash hit “**Collide**.” “**Collide**” became inescapable; it was featured in scores of TV shows, including *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Scrubs*, as well as in a variety of films. The track became Epic Records’ first platinum single, eventually selling 1.5 million downloads. But despite all of this success, Day’s demanding touring and promotional schedule took a heavy toll.

“I was just physically and mentally burnt out,” Day says. “I toured for five years straight before ***Stop All The World Now*** came out, then for three years non-stop after it was released. Around the same time the album was becoming successful, my family was struck with tragedy. It was a period of clearly defined extremes, which plays with your head a bit.” Day decided to take some time off, during which he sorted through his emotions by writing songs, many of which have made their way onto ***Sound the Alarm***.

“The new album very obviously echoes my own life, in all of its highs and lows, but not all of it is explicitly autobiographical,” Day says. “Some of the songs draw inspiration from people and places I’ve observed, and then bits of my own experiences find their way in. People often ask me what certain songs are about, and it’s like, Well, I don’t know, it’s a story that just happened subconsciously. I didn’t resist it or fight it. In a simple way, the album is a post-coming-of-age story about that dream-like period of your early 20s, when you’re trying to figure out how grown up you actually want to be. But in the process of all of that moving around during the recording, the album became a diary of those experiences as well.”

The sound of the album beautifully underscores its emotionally complex spirit. Bold, textured arrangements — flush with acoustic and electric guitars, keyboards, strings, and samples — capture a range of moods from upbeat and playful (first single “**Be There**,” “**Undressed**”) to introspective (“**40 Hours**,” “**Everyone Loves To Love a Lie**”) to atmospheric (“**So Stung**,” “**Counting On Me**”) to downright heartbreaking (“**Sound the Alarm**,” “**No Longer What You Require**”). “Initially, I wrote a bunch of pretty sad songs about loss and relationships gone wrong, and then realized I didn’t want to put out an entirely depressing album because that’s no longer where I’m at,” Day says. “So I deliberately threw a few in the mix that were a bit more light and up-tempo, like ‘**Weightless**’ and ‘**Undressed**.’ I think if there are too many similar songs on an album all in a row, they lose their identity because there’s no contrast.”

But even **Sound the Alarm**’s heaviest songs build lyrically and musically toward uplifting conclusions. “Be There,” which addresses the struggle to remain in a relationship, ends with the optimistic urge to give it a go, while the title track, a song about deep loss, concludes with the hopeful refrain: “I know we’ll make it right / We’ll be all right...”

To get the range of sounds and moods he was looking for, Day recorded in a variety of locations, including Los Angeles, New York, London, Minneapolis, and Bloomington, Indiana, between the spring of 2006 and fall of 2008. “I wanted to bring a sense of different places thematically and emotionally from one track to the next, and physically moving everyone around during the tracking process accomplished that,” Day explains. He also collaborated with several musicians and producers, including Martin Terefe (Jason Mraz, KT Tunstall), Mike Denneen (Aimee Mann, Fountains of Wayne), Mike Flynn (The Fray, Augustana), and Better Than Ezra frontman Kevin Griffin — each one of them an expert in pulling superlative performances out of the artists they work with.

Sound the Alarm retains and builds on the appeal of its predecessor, showcasing an artist who has dealt with a lot in his past and is focused on moving forward. “This new album represents the end of one era and the start of another,” Day says. “It’s about tipping your hat to the past, living in the here and now, and looking optimistically toward the future.”

Epic Records will release **Sound the Alarm** on August 25th, 2009.

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