



# The Vanished

THE VANISHED captivate with endearing melodies and inherent dark themes on their debut album, *Favorite Scar*. The sound beckons the ear and tantalizes the soul.

THE VANISHED formed when front man, Kevin Kirkwood and guitarist Dallas Perry joined up with longtime childhood friends Justin Young (bass) and Phil Helms (drums.) We had always talked about always all playing in a band together for awhile and wanted THE VANISHED to create an atmosphere and feeling in our live show that reflects the mood of when the songs were written. Justin brings a lot of indie influences to the band, which has benefited the textures of the band's sound. We are intrigued by dark, haunting images. Tim Burton has been a direct influence on the band. Burton has the ability to combine two very different types of emotions in his films. He has a unique way of melding a storybook ending and gothic twist. The whole 'tongue-in-cheek' approach really interests me. Most of the songs on *Favorite Scar* have a similar theme."

Prior to being signed by Kirtland Records, THE VANISHED found a huge supporter with KDGE radio in Dallas. "Having our first single 'Favorite Scar' to not only be spun, but go to number one on our hometown station was very surreal and so amazing," states Kirkwood. The single, by the fall of 2004, had received well-over 1000 spins on the Dallas station, generating top spins with top requests. The title track is gaining momentum at numerous radio stations across the nation.

The hook-laden "Favorite Scar" strikes a chord as it tears at the heartstrings of a relationship gone array ("Remember when we said we'd never part? No purple tears and break each other's heart.") THE VANISHED wanted to bring other instruments into the production of the album and with "Favorite Scar" used a sitar, harpsichord, piano and alternate tuned guitars. "I remember sitting in the studio with Skidd Mills [the album's producer]. We had changed the chorus several times into the wee hours of the night. I wanted it to have a different sound to it. Skidd suggested that we use the sitar and harpsichord, and not be afraid to try to something that we had not originally visualized with the bridge. There was a lot of trust in the studio. He was almost like a fifth member in the recording process. We were able to push the sound beyond our initial imagination which was extremely satisfying." Another breakthrough with the band in the studio was with the track, "SOAP." "We were able to have a live seven-piece orchestra, which was something we've always wanted to do," says Kirkwood. "On the song "Gospel Machine Gun" we used some cowbell...and more cowbell," he smiles.

The songs lyrically deal with the dark side of human nature through troubled relationships ("Wake Up," "Anesthesia Winter) to tormented characters ("LatchKey Princess," "Anna's Leach") and hopeful resolution ("The Only Thing," "The Anatomy of Desperation"). "While I am proud of all the songs on the album, I am particularly partial to 'Kerosene', which is about self-realization, mainly because of how

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lyrically it appears to be one of our darker themed tunes, but it is actually a fairly whimsical song” (“My house is on fire again. So bring me kerosene”). “Gospel Machine Gun” thematically is somewhat a departure for the band. “This is an entertaining look at pop culture playing with metaphors,” says Kirkwood. “Many look at the celebrity media as gospel. To me, pop culture is like a really bad car accident, you know you shouldn’t slow down and gawk, but you just can’t help yourself” (“We all hate its sweet addiction”).

There are many influential icons including The Cure and Motley Crüe to Led Zeppelin and David Bowie that have had an affect on the members of THE VANISHED. “At the end of the day it is all about the song,” states Kirkwood. “We try and write the best and most honest tunes we can. Saying that, our live shows are just as important. We make it a point to communicate the same type of emotion. We view the shows like a three-act-play. Just playing the songs live, isn’t enough for us. Be it through certain types of lighting, staging and song arrangements, we want the shows to be an experience.”

The singer/songwriter’s creative energy can also be applied to his carpenter skills, which he regularly uses to construct sets and lighting rigs for the band’s concerts that allows the band to have arena-like staging on its club tours. “The staging, clothing and eyeliner are examples of theatrics really,” says Kirkwood. “I grew up listening to David Bowie and mostly albums made before I was even born. When I was a kid the first concert I went to, Motley Crüe, just blew my mind. My dad was a minister and did not want me listening to rock music. I took a cassette by some Christian artist and recorded the ‘Dr. Feelgood’ album over it, so I could listen to it whenever I wanted,” he laughs. “A lot of our fans have been reacting to us in the same way. We have started to notice people coming to our shows with homemade t-shirts to self-designed ‘The Vanished’ tattoos. It is amazing to see the growing enthusiasm.”

The band pushes the live experience on stage to the point where band members have been at risk of life and limb. “Justin broke his hand at a show. Dallas has lost several ounces of blood from splitting his thumb open, on his guitar during shows, a wound that will not heal. I’ve chipped my front tooth in a collision with my microphone and a fans head in the front row,” admits the intense singer. “Our drummer is the only member who has been able to avoid bodily injury during a show,” he grins, adding, “We are all waiting for him to spontaneously combust.”

THE VANISHED will soon be bringing *Favorite Scar* to a venue near you, and they are already working on the staging and lights, but not the set list. “The challenge is to never do the same show twice, especially when we return to the same place,” says Kirkwood. “You are gonna to hear the songs, but we want every show to be a new experience for fans as well as ourselves. We strive for spontaneity to our set – just don’t expect me to pull a rabbit out of my ass,” he laughs.

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