

Three's

a Crowd,

Four's

a Party

And

Five's a

Morning Parade

by *Thrust Magazine*
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Every once in awhile, you'll come across an album that convinces you that true recording artists do still exist in this age of instant gratification; in this new age where originality is suffocated under pressure to sell, and the concept of patience, once a virtue, has been all but eradicated from the common musician's psyche.

We live in an age where people speed to red-lights. "Accomplishing what?" I ask myself everyday as I coast to a stop. It is the rare album that envelopes you like a ghostly morning fog, surrounding the listener with the cruel beauty of human experience, compelling you into a temporal time loop that you do not desire to be rescued from. Meet Morning Parade: Steve Sparrow (vocals/guitar); Chad Thomas (guitar); Ben Giddings (keyboards); Phil Titus (bass); and Andy Hayes (drums). Hailing from Harlow, Essex, U.K., their patient approach has given birth to their first, self titled album that will dare you to unglue your finger from the repeat button. Track after high-quality track, you'll find yourself resonating with the raw emotions and abundance of textures and modulations possessing your senses throughout the entire album. If you're into pop try out "Carousel" or "Under The Stars," if you're into Indie try out "Us and Ourselves," "Speechless," or "Close To Your Heart". If rock is more your flavor than how about "Head-lights?" It's the music you can dance to or simply unwind to on the drive home from work. These are the type of songs that liberate the soul as you play them over and over—just to keep experiencing that four minutes and thirty seconds of intangible, indescribable bliss and holistic understanding that comes and goes all too fleetingly. You won't find anything contrived or cheesy here; just music full of beauty and meaning with a bottom end that knocks you off your feet like a riptide. I caught up with Steve Sparrow earlier this week: what ensues is an inside look behind the music, and into the band that is Morning Parade.

THRUST: How long after you and Phil got together did it take for Chad, Ben, and Andy to be discovered and adopted into the band; are they also from Harlow? How did you all meet and what inspired you to make music together?

SPARROW: Phil, Chad, and I have been friends since our teens. Our hometown has always had a busy music scene and so it's normal to be in two or three projects at the same time. Andy was in another band while playing live drums for an electro side-project I was singing in with a mutual friend. I'd had a few rehearsals with him and knew he was a machine so when the time came we knew we had to have him. Ben is the youngest and I first met him when he was performing in his 6th Form-School where he was covering a song by The Verve. I recognized him from the audience at our local venue and we quickly became friends. Then we all just started jam-

THRUST MAGAZINE: Every song has a story behind its lyrics; is your new album an anthology of personal experiences or a storybook of hypothetical anecdotes?

STEVE SPARROW: Throughout

the course of writing this album, we wrote about events occurring in each of our lives and how these events made us feel individually, and as a collective. We don't believe in fiction for Morning Parade, and with that having been said, we tend to let our songs write themselves as much as possible: we never premeditate our lyrics.

THRUST: What is the origin of the name Morning Parade? Before Andy Hayes, Chad Thomas, and Ben Giddings joined, did you and Phil play under a different name?

SPARROW: Growing up, Phil and I played in numerous bands together. We met Chad when we were 17 years old when he joined the band Phil and I belonged to at the time. When that project disbanded, I stopped writing songs for a while because I needed a break from the music industry. After a short hiatus, we three got together for a new project. When it came down to naming our new band, we were all very open and honest about how we felt about the business. Morning Parade was founded on the notion that we needed to find a fresh approach to making music. 'Morning' is always a good time to reflect on new projects and 'Parade' was inspired by the parade-like queues of traffic we endured every morning during our commute to our day jobs.

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THRUST: What can you tell me about your instruments? What made you choose to play the instruments you play and how long have you been playing them?

SPARROW: Fifteen years ago, Phil said he'd play bass for just one gig, and he's still playing bass after all

ming together on Saturday afternoons, at first in our friend's house, and eventually in a rehearsal room. The room was 40 quid for four hours so the odd one out had to get the beers and that's how we begun.

THRUST: Could you briefly describe your music-making process? Are instrumentals written at the same time as the lyrics or are they written separately and combined later?

SPARROW: It changes song by song, we've never had a set formula. Often, the first line and melody come hand in hand and we go from there. If we get stuck on a lyric or instrumental, we don't force it; we normally just move onto something else until we feel excited about working on it again. The song is king in our world, we do our best to leave our pride and egos at the door and serve the song's needs rather than our own.

THRUST: How do you handle writer's block?

SPARROW: ... by never working on one song at a time, there is always an option to move onto something else, we don't like to dwell. We record all of our rehearsals; so we always have a wealth of new ideas to get excited about.

THRUST: Tell me about your best and worst experiences playing at The Square in Harlow. What are your favorite and least favorite venues you've played on your latest tour?

SPARROW: Our hometown is always the most testing place to go and play: harder than packed arenas or festivals. It's home and it's where we grew up; it's where lots of the bands we grew up with hangout and still play. I think our worst experience was a few years ago when we had a bunch of technical f***-ups on stage and a fight broke out during the show. Conversely, our best experience was when we did the unthinkable and sold out two nights! It was like a two-fingers up to our doubters and the best welcome home from our fans.

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this time. Chad's inspiration has been primarily fueled by an ongoing sibling rivalry between his brother [who is a drummer] and him. Ben took piano lessons as a child and Andy's been drumming since the womb. Phil taught me a bit of guitar in school before we got removed from our regular music classes for being disruptive. It wasn't really a choice: they separated us along with two other kids and placed us with a tutor an hour a week to independently study guitar.

THRUST: What genre of music do you consider your work to be? Who are your major influences? How would you describe your music to prospective audiences?

SPARROW: I think we're somewhere between rock, indie and pop. We're not afraid of melody or a strong hook, and we're not shy of a big chorus either. The songs were always arranged to sound big in a rehearsal room; because that was always our stage. I think a lot of our power comes from bands like Biffy Clyro, Muse, and even a Danish band we all love called Mew. As there are five of us, everybody has different tastes, and they range as far and as wide as Radiohead, Qotsa, Air, M83, Elbow, Jeff Buckley, Sigur Ros, Faithless, and Oasis. I think

what ties us all together is our mutual love for songwriting and our fairly traditional and classic approach to it. We always try to make sure that the songs we compose sound just as strong stripped down as they do built up in the recording studio.

THRUST: Before becoming full-time musicians, what were your career goals and do you still want to pursue them at a later time in your life?

SPARROW: For me, I don't think I ever really decided. I got the music bug when I was fourteen and my mind was made up: I wanted to be a songwriter. I think it's extremely hard to know what you want to do when you are so young, and so I think I was pretty lucky to make this discovery at such a young age and to have had the time to hone and develop my craft. Before Morning Parade, our job titles ranged from construction, office, and factory work to window-cleaning and sales. Ben was training to be an actor but left his school when we were offered a record deal.

THRUST: Any advice for bands looking to take it to the next level?

SPARROW: It's so much harder than you think it's going to be. You're not only going to need to be confi-

dent, but you must whole-heartedly live, breathe, and believe in what you do. Doing so comes with a surprising amount of baggage, so hang in there. This is not a job, it's a way of life, so grow a thick skin, stick to your guns, and don't be arrogant enough to assume you know it all. Watch and learn from other peoples' successes and failures.

THRUST: Good advice Steve, thank you so much for the insights!

SPARROW: Thanks Alisha for such an in-depth and forensic approach to this interview. It's great to know there are still journalists out there who take the time to listen and understand an artist and their motivations properly.

THRUST: What can I say, like many of your fans and fans-to-be, I just want to understand the stories behind the lyrics and the men behind the music: and the music is great. I haven't stopped singing your songs [especially "Us" and "Ourselves" since I started reviewing them earlier this month.

Morning Parade's breakout album drops June 19, 2012. Visit the group's official website at www.morningparade.com.

