

# Stone Temple Pilots

When guitarist Dean DeLeo reflects on the time surrounding the release of Stone Temple Pilots mega-selling 1992 debut, *Core*, the thing that strikes him is a constant flow of creativity and the sense of togetherness he felt with his bandmates at the time. “We were all really shoulder to shoulder prior to making that record,” he says. “The four of us were in the rehearsal room at least five days a week. There was such a newness in the air, and with newness comes excitement.”

That enthusiasm spilled into the 12 tracks the group recorded with producer Brendan O’Brien over a period of three weeks for the LP and it fueled six singles, including the jazzy, mammoth rocker “Plush” and sensitive acoustic number “Creep,” which became staples of MTV’s Buzz Bin, as well as hard-rock and alternative radio. Stone Temple Pilots weathered comparisons to fellow grunge titans Pearl Jam and controversy that came from people misunderstanding frontman Scott Weiland’s first-person lyrics in “Sex Type Thing” to become one of the biggest bands of the era. The album made it up to Number Two on the Billboard chart and the RIAA has subsequently certified it eight-times platinum, making it the most popular record of STP’s career.

Since then, the band – whose lineup on *Core* featured DeLeo, his bassist brother Robert, drummer Eric Kretz and Weiland, who died of an accidental overdose in 2015 – subsequently put out a succession of Top 10 albums (including *Core*’s 1994 follow-up, *Purple*, which hit Number One) amid breakups, re-formations and a short stint where the late Linkin Park

singer Chester Bennington fronted the group. The group has since launched an open audition for a new singer and hopes to announce the results of the search in the next month or so.

“We’ve been working with someone – I don’t want to name names yet – and we’re making music,” Robert says. “I don’t know if he’s well-known or unknown; I don’t look at him as ‘well-known.’ But we’re writing music and we’re hopefully looking at finishing a record and putting it out soon.”

In the meantime, the band is celebrating *Core*’s legacy by issuing a deluxe, filled-to-the-brim box set edition of the record on Friday, its 25th anniversary to the day. The collection features four CDs, containing a remastered version of the original release, plus demos, rare tracks and live recordings (including the band’s session for MTV

Unplugged), a copy of the album on vinyl, and a DVD containing music videos, a surround-sound mix of the album and high-res audio of all the tracks, as well as a book with new liner notes by Rolling Stone’s David Fricke. The set is also coming out in more pared-down and affordable configurations.

“Scott not being here to celebrate this is a little melancholy,” Robert says. “He had so much to do with contributing to this and he’s not here to enjoy this moment. That’s a little bittersweet for all of us. We’re in the throes of that and going through all this stuff and having so many memories of something that was a huge part of my life, while at the same time what we want to do is move on and continue to make music as Stone Temple Pilots.”

In anticipation of the *Core* reissue, Robert, Dean and Kretz spoke with Rolling Stone to share stories behind each of the album’s songs and reflect on Weiland’s influence on the quartet’s earliest days.

Robert DeLeo: I was working at a guitar shop [LAB Sound] on the corner of Sunset and Gardner, and Scott was actually working catty-cornered across the street, driving models to their photo shoots. When either one of us had a musical idea, we’d call each other. He would usually have more time to run over and work it out. It was perfect because, since I was in a guitar shop, I could pick up a guitar right there. Scott didn’t really play an instrument. When he had an idea, he would hum it to me. And “Dead and Bloated,” was one of those things; he hummed that verse riff to me.

*“There was such a newness in the air, and with newness comes excitement.”*

Eric Kretz: I remember Scott and I were at this Mexican restaurant on Beverly, and they had dollar margaritas. We had a plate of enchiladas, and he’s like, “Hey, man. I came up with this idea.” And he started singing, “I am smellin’ like a rose ...” and veins were popping out of his neck. He was just so excited. So we just started pounding the table to the rhythm of what he had going on, and, man, we were working on something good here.