

THE MUSICIAN'S RESOURCE MAGAZINE // NORTHEAST // OCTOBER 2009

# PERFORMER

performermag.com

# DEAR HUNTER

EPIC EPIC EPIC

RISE // CRUNK FOLK

THE MUMLERS // BACK IN TIME

**SITES TO POST  
YOUR MUSIC:**  
a definitive list

INSIDE

ALEC K. REDFEARN AND THE SEIZURES // BLACK MOLD // CABLE CAR // DESTROY  
BABYLON // THE EMPTIES // GROOMS // HENRY GALE // JAH DAN BLAKKAMOORE  
JAVELIN // META VARI // MOUNT EERIE // MR RUSSIA // NELS CLINE // THE OLD  
STOIC // THE REX COMPLEX // RUSSIAN CIRCLES // SLUSHCO // THE SUNSETS  
QUICK // THESE UNITED STATES // THUNDERLIP // UUVVWWZ // WESTERN CIV



By Meredith Turits  
Photos by Dan Gillan



# CREATIVE CONTROL AND A MULTI-CONCEPT RECORD SAGA

# THE DEAR HUNTER

**C**asey Crescenzo isn't a control freak for the sake of it. That isn't it. For Crescenzo, the creative process is about seeing something and knowing exactly how you want it to materialize. And if that means exercising control – over everything – then so be it. Crescenzo, the 25-year-old songwriter/vocalist/multi-instrumentalist/producer/engineer of Providence's The Dear Hunter, isn't exactly concerned with too many opinions outside of the circle of his band. In ways, his ultimate jurisdiction over The Dear Hunter has been an alienating factor – through his first couple of records, he's lost members and knowingly sliced his commercial appeal – but simultaneously, if Crescenzo hadn't made the choices he's made, The Dear Hunter simply wouldn't exist with the potency they do. Maybe, there'd be no reason to write about them.

With their new release, *Act III: Life and Death*, Crescenzo's The Dear Hunter has unleashed the third chapter of the six-act story that is at the foundation of the band's music. The concept, which Crescenzo describes as "the story of a fictional character's life from beginning to end," is all his own. He's taken hold of every aspect of the project from penning the story to dictating what the soundtrack conjures. It all comes together to create the theatrical rock concept records that The Dear Hunter has made so markedly theirs. Having presented the character's childhood and adolescence in the first two records, The Dear Hunter uses lyrics and an accompanying aural/visual soundtrack to narrate the character going into war in *Life and Death*.

"When we're making the music, we know exactly what we want it to feel like," Crescenzo says of his process. "Not exactly what we want it to sound like, but you're trying to portray an emotion so it's just about getting into that headspace and getting hold of an instrument to make that happen. You know the way chords and melodies move to make you feel a certain way."

Emotion is at the heart of Crescenzo's compositions – though rock at their core, each closely parallels the feeling of the story's happenings, each musical peak and valley reflecting the action of the narrative. "When the story and the music are as intertwined as they are in this band, the music is just as important as the story," Crescenzo says. "The difference is the way that you lay out a story ... the music doesn't have to be so linear."

While sprawling genres, the music is colored by an overarching vaudeville aesthetic. "It's concept music, so it requires a sort of attention span that a lot of people don't have or we might be

a bigger band than we are right now," Crescenzo says. "I don't imagine it's just so easy to jump in and know exactly what's going on right away. You have to listen close and pay some sort of attention and read the lyrics and care. If you don't care about listening you're not going to be able to understand much of anything, I suppose."

Crescenzo recognizes that his insistence to honor the music's story line – and concurrently strip away some of his potential mass-market appeal – may estrange some from being his fans. But the reality is merely another result of his decisions, and he frames it as an intentional part of his plan. "For the regular kind of music fan I wouldn't imagine that they would care or have the attention span to know what's going on," he says. "I don't take them into account when I am creating because I don't feel like they're really fans of creativity...It's a different idea behind creating what we're trying to create – what we're trying to do versus what a lot of other bands are trying to do."

What Crescenzo and the rest of The Dear Hunter – guitarist Andy Wildrick, guitarist Erick Serna, drummer Nick Crescenzo and bassist Nate Patterson – are "trying to do" is directly contingent on Crescenzo's vision that everything turn out exactly as planned. After experiencing conflicts with former members who didn't understand his expectations of the band, Crescenzo now has a permanent lineup to support him. He says he's found the formula to enable the control he needs to see the project through.

"It's really hard to find people who are creative and share your intrigue and passion and are also willing to devote themselves to what you're doing ... to expect them to assist me in all of those areas is asking a little much. For someone like me who really wants to see things done the way I want to see them done, it does help that people are willing to let me make these decisions and steer things the way I steer them."

While Crescenzo still pens the majority of the music, he says the band has been a sounding board in the creative process to help him discover "what translates" in the complex compositions. "Having that honesty around is something that wasn't really there before," he says. Though in ways he relinquished some control to his band members during the process of creating the aural aesthetic of *Life and Death*, Crescenzo still feels that having his hands on every facet of the project is vital to its success. Now halfway through their six-part canon, The Dear Hunter have covered plenty of ground, but

**"We know exactly what we want it to feel like. Not exactly what we want it to sound like, but you're trying to portray an emotion so it's just about getting into that headspace and getting hold of an instrument to make that happen."**

**-Casey Crescenzo**

there's still quite a road to travel. Crescenzo will definitively stay at the helm.

"When you don't have much money to do anything and you have to get by on your talents or your work, it's hard to think of handing it over to somebody," he says. "I don't think it's the destiny of a project like this to be handed over to anybody. That isn't to say that outside opinion isn't crucial and that outside opinion doesn't have a large part in what we do, but I would never just hand this over or let one aspect of this fall entirely into someone's lap. I don't think I could feel secure in that."



[www.myspace.com//thedearhunter](http://www.myspace.com//thedearhunter)



## Evolution

*noun*  
ev·o·lu·tion

a process in which something passes by degrees to a more advanced or mature stage



 **discrevolt.com**  
music distribution. evolved.

use promo code "performer"  
for 20% more download  
cards FREE