



PHOTO BY MARTIN HAUSLER

**IN THE STUDIO...  
HANGING COOL WITH  
MEAT LOAF**

**I**n the center of a West Los Angeles recording studio a burly figure explains the new CD we are about to listen to. Based on a short story by screenwriter Kilian Kerwin, it strings together a mortally wounded soldier's daydreams of possible future scenarios he won't live to see. The title *Hang Cool Teddy Bear* comes from a line in the classic Russ Meyer film *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. The songs are big, dramatic rock 'n' roll epics featuring a who's who of guests, including guitar gods Steve Vai and Brian May, *American Idol* judge Kara DioGuardi and actors Jack Black and Hugh Laurie (*House*).

As the speaker's enthusiasm reaches a fever pitch that borders on hysteria, we realize the guy isn't just some over-the-top record company pitchman. He's music legend Meat Loaf, the voice behind the best-selling catalog album of all time (*Bat Out of Hell*, more than 40 million sold worldwide), who's bolstered his run of solid records and heart-stopping concerts with stints in more than 60 films and TV shows. Afterward we sat down with Meat Loaf to discuss *Hang Cool Teddy Bear*, his stellar career and why he's rock 'n' roll's Frank Sinatra.

**HUSTLER:** You seem really excited about your new CD.

**MEAT LOAF:** It's the most important record I've ever done. If you want to know who I am as an artist, then listen to this record because it really reflects me. In anything you do artistically, there is always a piece of you inside of it. This record is who I am as an artist more than any other record because it rocks harder than any other record.

**THE DIRTY DOZEN**  
12 NEW DISCS YOU NEED

**ASIA Omega**  
The '80s supergroup that features members of Yes (guitarist Steve Howe), King Crimson (bassist/vocalist John Wetton), Emerson, Lake & Palmer (drummer Carl Palmer) and the Buggles (Geoff Downes) returns with yet another disc of epic arena rock. Highlights: "Holy War" and "Finger on the Trigger."



**BLACKBERRY SMOKE Little Piece of Dixie**  
How can you not love a CD whose first song starts with: "Two six-packs of Shiner. Ninety-nine-cent butane lighter. Lucky Strikes and a fifth of Patron"? This disc is loaded with classic good-ol'-boy country songs played by stellar musicians. Toss in guest vocalists George Jones and Jamey Johnson, and you have your favorite new CD.



**CROWDED HOUSE Intriguer**  
In 2007, dream pop masters Crowded House reemerged sounding refreshed and revived after an 11-year hiatus. This, their second CD on the comeback trail, sees them releasing their most perfect record since the group's magnum opus, *Woodface*. *Intriguer* is full of perfect, Beatles-esque pop.



**JOANNA NEWSOM Have One on Me**  
At worst the music of Joanna Newsom can be called "kooky." At best she's a musical innovator. This set pushes the boundaries by breaking itself down into three separate CDs of broad songs. Think Kate Bush meets NWA.



**OASIS Time Flies... 1994-2009**  
Like the Kinks before them, Oasis proved that having two brothers in a band can lead to an unsteady (and often-volatile) balance of friction and brilliance. This two-CD and one-DVD set mines the best of the Gallagher brothers' genius. Highlights: "Live Forever" and "Champagne Supernova."



**DOT ALLISON Room 7 1/2**  
The Scottish singer has the voice of an angel—a heartbroken, deeply troubled angel—but an angel nonetheless. Allison's latest disc is packed with hooks and gems, including duets with bad boy Pete Doherty ("I Wanna Break Your Heart") and the Modfather, Paul Weller ("Love's Got Me Crazy").



It's more organic than any other record. There isn't all those stacked background vocals or the Phil Spector "wall of sound."

It's a big record, but you can hear every instrument in it all the time no matter what is going on. In the past my records have been this big whitewash of sound with me in front of it. You really don't hear every little nuance like you can on this record. That's the beauty of this record. Every time I listen to it, I hear things I've never heard before. And I've listened to this record a hundred times now. This album explains me as an artist more than any other record.

**But you are singing it through a character?**

Right. I'm singing it through the eyes of Patrick, who is a dying 24-year-old soldier. That really required a lot of work. I can't explain the process. All the songs got thrown at me at the last minute. Things were being written right on top of each other, so I didn't have time to do my homework ahead of time. I researched this character. I was then sitting in a studio doing all this research.

The song that I really had to guard against being myself was "Los Angel-oser." It has a speech that says, "I want to thank all you ladies out there. Especially the ones that have showed me a little love." It was so hard to pull me out of that speech and let that be the voice of Patrick. He's this young soldier who, in my mind, is this really good-looking, built guy. I could never be that. So I have to dream that guy. I had to make him. The reason Patrick goes

into these scenarios when he flashes forward is because he's full of doubt about who he is and why he's where he's at. How did he get there?

**How do you find the balance between the character and putting yourself into the song?**

You don't. There are pieces of you inside that character. It's like any film that you do. It's always driven me nuts. Normally an actor doesn't write the script. What he has to do is find the truth. Any actor that knows anything will tell you that acting is nothing but about the truth. Singing and delivering a song should be, but is not always, about the truth. A lot of singers tell you the story about why they wrote the song and the truth about that moment they lived in their life.

What is more difficult is to take a fictional human being and make him real and make him tell you the truth. That is much more difficult than writing a song about how your truck ran over your cat, and after that your girlfriend ran off with that Frank fellow and how you had to write a song about it. It's much more difficult to find the truth in a character than find the truth in yourself.

**When you perform live, it's an epic theatrical event. In the studio do you think ahead as to how you're going to translate and present the songs live?**



PHOTO BY MARIVI VALCOURT



No, because it's always different. Any director I've ever worked with as an actor—from the very beginning with Jim Sharman on *Rocky Horror [Picture Show]* to Alan Rudolph when I was doing *Roadie* to David Fincher and Dario Argento—they always ask, "Do you ever do the same thing twice?" I don't. Because I don't know what just happened. Because everything I do is a different moment. If we left this interview and tomorrow came back, and you asked me the same questions, my answers are always going to be different.

#### What do you think about Lady Gaga and Adam Lambert, two performers who emphasize rock theatrics?

I love Lady Gaga! I also love Adam Lambert. The only time I ever watched *American Idol* every week was when he was on it. Adam is really talented. Extraordinary! The only problem I had is the *American Idol* folks did the same thing to him that they do with other kids. They sent five songs off to four different producers, and he wasn't there when they cut the tracks. In fact, there is a song that is cut in the wrong key.

If you listen to Adam's album, you can tell it should have been in a higher key. The record feels like he wasn't really part of the whole process of developing his sound and who he is as an artist. I'm hoping that that thing is gone, and on his next record he sits in and becomes part of the whole process because he's really talented. Whereas with Lady Gaga, you can tell she is part of the process constantly.

Did you have more control on *Hang*

because I brought three great songs, and it wasn't my fault that the other 19 didn't live up to it.

Rob said, "Listen to the tracks we've already finished. We can't cut tracks with the same kind of intensity with the other songs. It's not that these songs aren't good. We just can't deliver them musically on the same level as what we've already done."

It was perfectly logical at the time. He really set the bar high. If I didn't have the control I have, there would be no way I could release a CD called *Hang Cool Teddy Bear*. Two weeks before we turned it in, the U.K. record company came to me and said, "We would like to call this *Bat Out of Hell 4*." I said, "No. But I will call it *Hang Cool Teddy Bear 4*."

Every record I release they want to call *Hell* something. I understand [why] marketingwise, but at this point calling something 4 is a negative. You gotta move forward, and *Hang Cool Teddy Bear* is about as forward as you can go right now because it's so odd.

Explain why you've said you don't consider yourself a singer but rather an actor who sings.

Rob Cavallo said it best. He said that I'm an actor who acts like he can sing.

Despite all your successes, you don't think you're a great singer?

Oh, yeah. I have no clue. I really don't. I don't know how in the hell I do what I do. I don't understand it. It's emotion and not

#### Cool Teddy Bear than ever before?

Yes, I do feel like I had more control. Maybe I didn't, and it was an illusion set up by producer Rob Cavallo [Green Day, My Chemical Romance]. He's a great illusionist because he made me feel like this was my record, and I could do whatever I wanted. Even though that was totally contradicted when I came in on the first day with 22 songs, and he threw out 19 of them. (Laughs.) He still made me feel it was okay

technique. I have no technical skills.

Then are you in a sense an interpreter of songs, much like Frank Sinatra? A rock 'n' roll Frank Sinatra, if you will?

Yeah! If I ever patterned my career after anyone, it's Sinatra. That's interesting because nobody else has said that. Sinatra was the one person who I wanted to meet more than everyone else, and I was all ready for him too. I was ready for the conversation, but I never got the chance. I have a real hard time around celebrities and being able to talk to them. I'm a nervous wreck. I don't know what to say.

But you're a celebrity, and there's a ton of them on your new CD.

But they're my friends. I don't think of any of them as celebrities. I watch *House* and see Hugh [Laurie] there. He's one of the biggest TV stars today, and he's just Hugh. Celebrities are either my friends, or I'm scared to death of them.

Why do all of your records feature a strong female voice?

That was my first instinct: to play off a female voice. It goes back to my first records, which always featured duets. On *Bat Out of Hell I* was dating Ellen Foley, and I said to Jim [Steinman], "We have to do a duet. I have to sing with Ellen." Then I broke up with Ellen and started dating another actress named Marcia McClain, who is the voice on the record. It's always been the beauty and the beast thing. You need that female voice, that beauty to balance me.

Will you and Jim Steinman (composer of the *Bat Out of Hell* CDs) ever collaborate again?

Yeah. Jimmy was ill and just went through a rough time, but there's no animosity there. There have been arguments and fights, but we're like an old married couple without being gay. We fight and send each other e-mails. Somebody called up the other day and said, "Meat and Jim should do another record." I think that's great. As long as Rob produces, I'm fine.

Who did the cover art for *Hang Cool Teddy Bear*?

An artist by the name of Julie Bell, who did my *Bat Out of Hell 3* album cover. I like that she blends three different styles of art: realism, fantasy and impressionist art. I saw this painting she did called *The Rose*, which is an impressionist setting with a photorealistic woman sitting on

## MORE DIRTY DOZEN DISCS

### DIXIE CHICKS

**Playlist: *The Very Best Of*** Country music's top-selling female group of all time finally gets a "best of." This single disc trims the fat, featuring only the very best (or at least most-well-known) of the Texas trio's efforts from their four albums. Highlights include "Not Ready to Make Nice" and "Wide Open Spaces."



### ESPERANZA SPALDING

#### *Chamber Music Society*

Sexy, smoky and just plain good, the new record from jazz goddess Esperanza Spalding is the perfect soundtrack to a lazy Sunday morning or a down-and-dirty Saturday night. This record will seduce you.

### HEART

#### *Red Velvet Car*

Ann and Nancy Wilson are back and ready to go "crazy on you" all over again. The first real studio effort from Heart in years is a revelation and a serious reminder that this is one sister act you need to get back into.



### LAMB OF GOD

#### *Hourglass*

Some might say that a three-CD "best of" is a bit too much for a band that's only been around for a decade and a half. We say not true if that band is Lamb of God. The hard rock unit's collection is the ultimate metal retrospective, with pulsating tracks from their Underground and Epic years.

### STANLEY CLARKE

#### *The Stanley Clarke Band*

The second-greatest electric bass player in the history of jazz (Jaco Pastorius remains #1) returns with a rocking new record. That's right, jazz can rock. Joining Clarke are virtuosos Hiromi and Ronald Bruner Jr.



### THE BOOKS

#### *The Way Out*

Hipsters already know about the Books' pastoral rock. But since you're a little behind the times, think of them as the new Arcade Fire. Or maybe the new Vampire Weekend. Or, if you're really unhip, the new Wham! No, they're much more well thought out and talented than Wham!

some fantasy-looking thing. I told her I wanted the same thing with old-school Hollywood as the backdrop and all the elements from *Bat Out of Hell* albums scattered about with this woman, based on [movie exec] Sherry Lansing, as the

symbol of woman as God.

You said in describing the album that music is keeping the character alive. Does music keep you alive?

No, not at all. Film keeps me alive. I'd be okay with never singing again. ■

## Books That Rock!



### OZZY OSBOURNE

#### *I AM OZZY*

Ozzy speaks! And you can actually understand him. That is, of course, because this is the written word. For the first time ever the "Prince of Darkness" tells his own story in this fascinating autobiography. Two of the must-read chapters recount Ozzy's Black Sabbath days and the horrifying plane crash that killed guitarist Randy Rhoads.



### MICKY LEIGH

#### (WITH LEGS MCNEIL)

#### *I SLEPT WITH JOEY*

#### *RAMONE: A FAMILY*

#### *MEMOIR*

Of the many Ramones books published since the deaths of three of the four original band members, this one is the most personal. Written by Joey's brother, it takes us behind the scenes into the dysfunctional lives of the greatest American punk band ever!



### NEIL ZLOZOWER

#### *SIX-STRING HEROES*

As one of rock 'n' roll's premier photographers, Neil Zlozower has had access to the greatest guitar players in the business. This book contains 150 photos capturing everyone from Jimmy Page and Keith Richards to Slash and Les Paul.



### PHIL SUTCLIFFE

#### *QUEEN: THE ULTIMATE*

#### *ILLUSTRATED HISTORY*

#### *OF THE CROWN KINGS*

#### *OF ROCK*

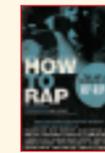
You can't really call yourself a Queen fan until this tome graces your coffee table. It is the ultimate scrapbook of all things Queen, collecting up hundreds of photos and tidbits about Freddie Mercury, Brian May, Roger Taylor and the crazy, agoraphobic bassist John Deacon.



### MARY FORSBERG WEILAND

#### *FALL TO PIECES*

Being married to a rock star ain't all it's cracked up to be. At least that's what the ex-wife of Stone Temple Pilots vocalist Scott Weiland thinks. In this captivating and intimate book, Mary Forsberg Weiland chronicles a disturbing world of sex, drugs, more drugs and rock 'n' roll.



### PAUL EDWARDS

#### *HOW TO RAP: THE ART AND*

#### *SCIENCE OF THE HIP-HOP*

#### *MC*

Think you got skills? Word? Fer realz? Then you may not need this comprehensive guide to grabbing the mic and busting a rhyme. *How to Rap* boasts a who's who of hip-hop luminaries discussing everything from style to flow in detail.



### GLENN POVEY

#### *ECHOES: THE COMPLETE*

#### *HISTORY OF PINK FLOYD*

With the death of Richard Wright we will never get to see a full-on Pink Floyd reunion, but we've found the next best thing. Glenn Povey traces the band from its experimental roots with Syd Barrett to its international success. a perfect read after you're coming down from the high you'll get when the Roger Waters *The Wall* tour hits town.



### JON BEAM

#### *NEIL DIAMOND IS*

#### *FOREVER: THE*

#### *ILLUSTRATED STORY OF*

#### *THE MAN AND HIS MUSIC*

Neil Diamond is so much cooler than you. The "Jewish Elvis" has bedded a bevy of Hollywood A-listers, appeared in several films and recorded some of rock's greatest hits. This in depth book looks at the man, ther myth, the legend.