

Michael Barnes - Vocals

Anthony Armstrong - Guitar

Randy Armstrong - Bass

Over the last decade, RED has emerged as a career artist. Their honesty and transparency about who they are as human beings, what motivates and inspires them, and what they aim to accomplish with each step forward has established an army of loyal fans.

The band's success emerged through a pure emotional connection with their audience, the power of their live performances, and most importantly the passionate, honest dedication of band members Michael Barnes, Anthony Armstrong, and Randy Armstrong. Michael offers, "There is a certain ache in the melody and passion of our music. I feel it can reach emotionally into the soul of the listener and open up places in their heart that they didn't know existed. We wear our emotions on our sleeves, and are OK with who we are and telling others about the struggles we are facing." Anthony adds, "We deliver our music and message aggressively using themes of theatricality and delving into the darkest parts of our lives in order to bring out the good. We are relentless and will stop at nothing to deliver great music that will inspire and bring the best we've got in our performances.”

The band's new album ***of Beauty and Rage*** is "about suffering and finding the beauty in that,” says vocalist Michael. “No one in this world likes to suffer, myself included, but we only become the strong individuals we are today from the trials and hardships we faced in the past. I remember meeting a teenager on Winter Jam 2013 who had terminal cancer. He wanted to meet us because we were his favorite band. In a sense, you might consider this a tragedy since his life was going to be taken away from him at such an early age. What I saw was beauty in the way that he handled his illness. The teen was full of hope and spirit, and even in his last days he was encouraging others and wanting to give of himself to make a difference in this world. To me, that is a testament of the Beauty that can be found in the Rage of life."

To Randy, "RED has always tried to challenge listeners to be real with themselves and confront their struggles head on. Even in the darkest parts of our soul there is room for hope and it's up to us to fill those parts so that we can continue to push forward in dark times and be thankful in brighter days." Anthony adds, "Our struggles as humans are the catalyst for us to experience both the beauty of life and the difficult times that bring rage and confusion. One can't exist without the other. It's okay for us to descend into the darkest parts of our souls to recognize and learn how to draw the beauty out of difficulty and character flaw."

The band's new repertoire captures this theme with intensity. The track "Part That's Holding On" represents the pain in losing a loved one or a relationship abandoned, exploring the feelings of grief alongside the beauty of memories that were shared, and holding on to that ideal utopia that was "Darkest Part" dives into the emotions driven by a person needing salvation from the suffering of a deep seeded struggle within and the feelings of shame, guilt and rejection one might face when opening up to another individual. For Michael, "RED explores that the only thing that saves is God, but we also need to rely on each other and encourage one another in our struggles." Anthony offers, "It’s simply about being vulnerable. When you trust someone and show the demons you have hidden away in your life, there is a fear and likelihood of scaring someone away."

The song “Yours Again” exudes with emotion as Michael sings of reconciling again with what he once loved but lost, “Open up my eyes… I’m yours again.” In the song "Gravity Lies" Michael offers, "This is a song of self discovery in the 'truth' that you always believed about yourself due to the opinions voiced by others, yet that ‘truth’ does not really speak into who you are in God."

For Randy, "Darkest Part,” “Shadow and Soul” and “Part that's Holding On” most represent the realization of these recordings. “They are the most truthful dives into the human spirit we have ever attempted. As a band we have never been about pulling punches and these three songs are a punch in the throat. In the end we all have to find a way to hold on to what is right and what delivers the best version of ourselves.”

The new album offers a transparency RED has always worn on their sleeves in articulating inspiration. For Barnes, "Yours Again" is a song that carries deep personal meaning lyrically. He offers, "I've been down the road of living in sin and thinking it was ok, and lying to myself of how it was affecting the people I loved around me.  This song is about reconciling with the person you love or with God. It's a song of redemption." With "Fight to Forget," he offers, "This song is about not conforming to this world and the lies that it brings. It's so easy to be consumed with what other people think, but we are called to separate ourselves from the darkness and from that darkness within. That love is a lie we will fight to forget." Randy reveals, "The songs that have the deepest spiritual meaning for me are 'Yours Again' and 'Part That's Holding On.' I find it a daily struggle to withstand the temptation to think horrible things about other people. We all have people we would prefer were never around. But what's hard is that God made us all, and he wants us to see each other the way he sees us. It's a testament to how merciful God really is. Despite our abilities to do and think and see evil, he never stops loving us. I've done some horrible things in my life that I'm not proud of, and from some of those things I have learned life lessons. Nobody is perfect. If we were, then what would we need a savior for?" And for Anthony, he offers, "'Yours Again' is powerful for me. It's a song that recognizes a love that has always existed, but we either run from it, or we haven't even discovered that it's been there all along. That's an amazing feeling, knowing that there is, and always has been, a love that was designed for each of us."

Amongst the personal favorites for the band members, Michael points to "Shadow and Soul" which he offers was "the most challenging and satisfying song on the record. The ache and yearning in this song wrecks me every time." For Randy, "'Part That's Holding On' is a song that moves me just a little more than the others because it reminds me to hold on to that strength inside that is what keeps me from falling into darkness." As for his brother Anthony, "There isn't a single track on this record that isn't my favorite. They are all sacred to me in what they stand for."

There is a brotherhood – literally and figuratively – that has kept the band together for the past decade. Each individual contributes to the collective, broader vision of RED. Randy reflects, "We have been friends for 27 years and this is what we have always wanted to do. When we were kids we shared the same favorite bands. They moved us, they challenged us, and ultimately encouraged us to make change. That is our goal as a band. Music is for everyone." For Anthony, "We've been together for so long. Of course, sharing this experience in music with your twin brother is pretty incredible. We push each other and it's a juggernaut when it comes to being passionate about every aspect of our career as artists."

Michael offers a reveal of the greater concept at play thematically for ***of Beauty and Rage*** sharing, "This record is very introspective. More than the last two albums. It dives back into the days of our second album ***Innocence & Instinct***. The concept for ***of Beauty and Rage*** is the dichotomy of good and evil and finding Beauty out of things that we suffer within our lives. The visuals in the graphic novel and music video have these plague-masked creatures which represent the darkest evil that is inside of us trying to take us over." Randy elaborates, "When you are trying to reach people you don't do it with a match, you do it with the FIRE. With the visuals we came up with early this past year, we wanted to find a creative way to put the listener in a maze. The maze is this forest we found in Poland called ‘The Crimson Forest.’ The trees are black and the leaves turn red in the fall and drop to the ground leaving a blanket of red. It's such a beautiful, serene world that anyone could see the appeal. We draw in the listeners with these beautiful moments all over the album in the midst of the rage that represents the things that can and always go wrong in life, then we throw in some monsters (whom actually are ourselves) and they are chasing us constantly. The chase is the battle we all fight against ourselves."

When assessing direct inspiration, Michael has a keen sense of passages that play into the lyrical content of the album. He offers, "I love the verse in Romans 5:10 for the song 'Yours Again.' 'For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!'" For 'Darkest Part,' a great verse for the only one who can save us would be Romans 7:24 - 'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-through Jesus Christ our Lord!' And for "Falling Sky" perhaps Galatians 6:7-8 - '.....A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction, the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life'." For Randy, he looks towards Psalm 119:10, and the connection to "I have tried hard to find you - don't let me wander from your commands." He shares, "Another verse that is standing out for me and has helped me through this record and my life is Ephesians 4:31-32 and the passage, 'Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you'."

As RED looks forward, Michael shares, "2015 will be a building year for us. I am feeling very confident in the music and hope the emotions in the songs will be realized and connect well with our audience and new listeners. My hopes for beyond would be that we would be able to show this record, in live set design, to its full capacity. We would love to maximize the world that we have created between the music and graphic novel, and bring it to the live stage. We want to put on a show that is unexpected and people will be talking about for years to come." Randy offers, "My hopes for 2015 and beyond are just to continue to make music that people will appreciate their whole life – music we can always be proud of because we were real."

RED Discography: ***End of Silence*** (2006), ***Innocence & Instinct*** (2009), ***Until We Have Faces*** (2011), ***Release The Panic*** (2013), ***of Beauty and Rage*** (2015)

The band has won six Dove Awards, while being nominated a total of seventeen times. RED's first two albums received a Grammy nomination in the Best Rock Gospel Album category.