



**THE WHISTLES & THE BELLS TO RELEASE *MODERN PLAGUES*
APRIL 28, 2017 VIA NEW WEST RECORDS**

**UNVEILS RETRO-POP MUSIC VIDEO FOR "HARRY POTTER"
AT [AMERICAN SONGWRITER](#)**

APPEARING AT SXSW ON MARCH 17

**ANNOUNCING EAST COAST TOUR TO KICK-OFF IN NASHVILLE ON APRIL 30;
MORE DATES COMING SOON**

The Whistles & the Bells, alt-rock moniker of acclaimed singer, songwriter, producer, and multi-instrumentalist Bryan Simpson, will release his sophomore LP *Modern Plagues* via New West Records on April 28, 2017. Co-produced by Simpson and engineer Eddie Spear (Judah & the Lion, Lake Street Dive, Rival Sons), *Modern Plagues*' 11 expansive tracks find Simpson delivering eye-opening lyrical insights and audacious verbal imagery, while displaying a freewheeling sonic sensibility that draws inspiration from a bottomless well of genres and textures. Collaborations on the album include co-writes with The Raconteurs' Brendan Benson that resulted in such out-of-the-box tunes as the album's first track "Harry Potter," which is premiered yesterday at *American Songwriter*. Of the song, *American Songwriter* comments, "A retro pop tune with strong '80s influences, the video for this track feels like something you would see a teenage Molly Ringwald starring in. Sung from the perspective of a teenage girl, 'Harry Potter' highlights what many young adults long for but unfortunately cannot find as they grow older: childhood innocence and simplicity." View/share the Joshua Shoemaker-produced video [HERE](#) and pre-order *Modern Plagues* exclusively at [Pledge Music](#).

Throughout *Modern Plagues*, Simpson's revealing lyrics and richly compelling soundscapes mix to create a singular, personally-charged vision of organized chaos. His thought provoking social commentary bleeds through the additional Benson co-writes "Small Time Criminals" and "Zombie Hertz." It continues in remarkably candid tracks like "Year of the Freakout" and "Playing God" when Simpson's satirical observations call into question how we all cope with the turbulent times in which we live; and, more introspectively, in songs such as "Good Drugs" and "Highlight Reel" that sonically grasp, and for that matter, celebrate the fragility and ferocity of man. As the album culminates with the funky, almost playful, apocalyptic closer "40 Years," *Modern Plagues* leaves no deadly sin untouched, no false idol unexposed.

"I wanted to make a record that sounded like some great cosmic dinner party," Simpson reveals. "Not a gross, homogenized one where people bludgeon their intellect with one-sided conversation but more of a 'if you could invite four people from history over for dinner who would it be?' kind of shindig. Where some strange collection of human heavyweights sit around discussing the odd pilgrimage that is life. I wanted to sonically interpret what a cosmic

intersection of such varied DNA might sound like. Except fast forward the evening past the pretense and the niceties of the appetizer course and push record as the party polishes off the last drop of an encore bottle of wine.”

Modern Plagues follows The Whistles & the Bells’ 2014 self-titled debut, which gained an impressive amount of acclaim as an indie release and led to a larger re-release and record deal with New West Records. Prior to launching The Whistles & the Bells, Simpson had already won substantial success as a bluegrass mandolinist, serving a seven-year, three-album stint with the acclaimed progressive-bluegrass quartet Cadillac Sky. The band’s broad-minded collaborations with both bluegrass legend Ricky Skaggs and the Black Keys’ Dan Auerbach eventually led to an in-demand spot on Mumford and Sons’ 2010 North American Tour. Meanwhile, Simpson also carved out a lucrative sideline as a mainstream country songwriter, composing hit tracks for icons such as Tim McGraw, Blake Shelton and George Strait.

For The Whistles & the Bells’ next chapter, Simpson enlisted a crew of like-minded players that include his longtime cohort and former Cadillac Sky member Matt Menefee. In addition to co-writing the album’s seventh track “Year of the Freakout,” Menefee plays banjo, electric guitar, synthesizer, piano and mandocello on the album. Also contributing to the sessions are rising singer/songwriters Brooke Waggoner and Phoebe Cryar, who trade co-lead vocals with Simpson on “Supadope.” Many of the album’s players will join Simpson when he takes *Modern Plagues* on the road for The Whistles & the Bells’ upcoming East Coast tour, which will kick-off on April 30 with a hometown show at 3rd & Lindsley for WRLT’s Nashville Sunday Night and also includes stops in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, New York City, and Philadelphia. The Whistles & the Bells will also make an appearance at SXSW on March 17 before playing Simpson’s native city, Fort Worth, TX, on March 18. Please see full tour details below with more dates to be announced soon.

Modern Plagues Track Listing:

1. Harry Potter
2. Small Time Criminals
3. Playing God
4. Zombie Heartz
5. Highlight Reel
6. Spiral Staircase
7. Year of the Freak Out
8. Good Drugs
9. Head in the Sand
10. Supadope
11. 40 Years

The Whistles & the Bells On Tour:

March 17 – Austin, TX @ SXSW

March 18 – Fort Worth, TX @ Shipping & Receiving

April 30 – Nashville, TN @ 3rd & Lindsley
May 2 – Cleveland, OH @ Beachland Tavern
May 3 – Pittsburgh, PA @ Club Cafe
May 4 – East Aurora, NY @ 189 Public House
May 9 – New York, NY @ Mercury Lounge
May 11 – Philadelphia, PA @ World Cafe Upstairs

www.TheWhistlesAndTheBells.com

www.NewWestRecords.com

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