**Masked Intruder**

***Masked Intruder III***

**(PURE NOISE)**

By now you know the colorful backstory behind the ski-mask clad, punk rock felons in Masked Intruder. They met in prison, are constantly being thwarted by their court-appointed chaperone Officer Bradford and got really, really hot playing in those masks on last year's Warped Tour. What you may not realize is the scope of their musical tastes and abilities, facts that are undeniable when it comes to their third full-length, *Masked Intruder III.* While the Ramones remain to be a touchstone for the band, this album sees them implementing elements of classic American pop, Doo-wop and rock with sonic hooks so sharp it's a wonder that Officer Bradford hasn't confiscated them as lethal weapons.

For *Masked Intruder III*, the band – Intruder Blue, Intruder Green, Intruder Red and Intruder Yellow – recruited lead producer/engineer Roger Lima (who also plays bass in Less Than Jake) as well as co-producer Mike Kennerty (who plays guitar in some band called The All-American Rejects) and recorded the album at Lima's studio, The Moat House in Gainesville, Florida. “We became a big fan of Mike through the work he did with Direct Hit and he's such a great person to work with and such a workhorse,” Blue explains (adding that whoever stole Kennerty's MTV Video Music Award was definitely unaffiliated with Masked Intruder). “Obviously Roger is also such a natural, music is running through his veins, so recording and doing pre-production with those guys was really cool. When we got to the studio a lot of guitar parts and harmonies started pouring out and it was really about capturing the best moments for this record and making them as polished as possible.”

Correspondingly, like the eighties VHS movies that inspired *Masked Intruder III*'s album art, there's something both nostalgic and action-packed about this collection of songs, from the fuzzed-out pop perfection of “Mine All Mine” to the arena-rock riffing on “Please Come Back To Me” and Thin Lizzy-meets-Weezer grandiosity of “Stay With Me Tonight.” “A lot of these songs sound like they come from some other era of pop rock to me, which is what I like about writing music,” Blue explains. “I enjoy trying to come up with stuff that sounds like a classic.” While he admits that the level of musical diversity on the album is more evident than on 2014's *M.I.*, it's a welcomed shift that shows the musical depth the four of them have developed as they've criss-crossed the country and honed the skills they needed in order to craft these timeless tunes.

Lyrically, *Masked Intruder III* is mainly about love or robbing banks – and in the case of “Just So You Know” it's about both. However at their core, these songs are about are the universal need for human connection as experienced through love, heartbreak and an uncomfortable level of creepiness when it comes to personal boundaries (which is also a hallmark of many traditional love songs). The album kicks off with the band trying to beat rap on the upbeat, down-picked opener “No Case” and like the aforementioned movies that it was inspired by, *Masked Intruder III* ends on cliffhanger as the band are once again being taken back into custody. Will they escape? Will they ever find love? Do they ever wash those ski masks? The album leaves us with more questions than answers.

What is clear is the fact that the band's debut on Pure Noise Records is their most infectious and fully realized album to date. With a list of musical inspirations than ranges from the Mr. T Experience and the Misfits to Boston and Journey, *Masked Intruder III* is the kind of album that would sound as apt in a basement as it would a packed arena. Speaking of which, the band are most excited to take these songs out on the road and perform them in all of their harmony-driven power for their fans this year. “Obviously we played these songs a lot in the studio, but there's a whole other life that these songs get when we perform them live that makes them evolve in a totally different way,” Blue explains. “We are trying to get around the world as much as we can in 2019 to support this record because it's fun and we are just really excited to see what happens to these songs when we have our crowd interacting with us.”

When it comes to Masked Intruder, it's easy to let their unique backstory overshadow the music but *Masked Intruder III* proves that their songwriting chops are the real talking point when it comes to the band. “Our songs aren't just about the feelings and situations that they describe but they're supposed to hopefully help other people think about and reflect about their own situations,” Blue summarizes. Whether it comes to stealing hearts or wallets, Masked Intruder have upped their game on *Masked Intruder III* and it seems as if even Officer Bradford can't hold them back, although we're sure he'll try.

**TO BE CONTINUED...**