**RED CITY RADIO – PARADISE BIO**

There is – obviously – a great irony in naming any album released in 2020 *Paradise*. It’s a year that’s been anything but on so many levels that it doesn’t even bear getting into. Yet that’s exactly what Red City Radio decided to title its fourth full-length record. It also might seem an odd thing for a band that has always kind of been the underdog to do, but, in fact, it’s very much in keeping with their unstoppable, unfuckwithable disposition, and the resilience that has flowed through music since the band started life in Oklahoma City, OK in 2007.
“We took the album title from the song of the same name,” explains vocalist/guitarist Garrett Dale, “which is about finding your own paradise – even if that’s just a hard journey you’re going to take. That’s what paradise means to me – a paradise of the mind, finding truth and peace and love through your honest, horrible realities. It’s all how you look at it, all perception. Paradise can even be a prison if you look at it that way.”
“It’s this internal state that you find within yourself,” agrees guitarist Ryan Donovan, “within your own journey, within your own reconciliations with your own demons, or even just finding peace inside in whatever it is that you love in whatever capacity. People find paradise in just sitting at home on the couch with their dog or cat, people find paradise writing music, people find paradise painting or reading – it’s all kind of conceptual and internalized.”

To that extent, the 12 songs that make up *Paradise* can, if you want them to, act as a kind of mirror of the soul – one that you can look into to analyze who and where you are and, more, importantly, what you can do, even if things seem overwhelmingly bad, to push through. This isn’t some kind of cheesy self-help record, though. It’s full of the same trials and tribulations that have always plagued Red City Radio. It’s just that this time, more than ever before, the defiance was pushing back against the bad stuff has been replaced by a very palpable sense of hope. It’s not just in Dale’s lyrics, either – even when they discuss the darker elements of life – but also in the upbeat crunch of “Baby Of The Year”, the almost carefree romanticism of “Young, Beautiful & Broke”, the title track’s sunny guitar licks and riffs, the joyous, rollicking, Thin Lizzy-esque swagger of “Doin’ It For Love”, the soul-quenching attitude of “Fremont Casino”.
“I’d say this is our most positive record,” says Dale. “Maybe that’s because at the time when we were recording these songs was a really good time. We finished the album right before Covid happened.”

Recorded at The Cereal Box in Edmond, OK with the All American Rejects’ Mike Kennerty – who also produced and recorded the band’s 2018 *SkyTigers* EP – and mastered at the Blasting Room by Jason Livermore, *Paradise* is the first Red City Radio release to feature bassist Derik Envy, who joined in 2019.
“He’s one talented motherfucker!” laughs Donovan. “And I’m so happy he’s the new addition in this project, because he’s just a really positive human full of love and energy and he fit in right away.”
Rounded out by founding drummer Dallas Tidwell, the chemistry of this incarnation of Red City Radio is both obvious and infectious. Yet while there is positivity within these songs, the bare-bones emotional charge that has always defined Red City Radio is still very present. Musically, too, the band continues to expand and evolve – while the Fest-style punk of their early years is still audible in the framework of their songs, this is a band that has vastly expanded its horizons. Listen to the heavy hearted opener “Where Does The Time Go?”, the desperation of the apocalyptic “100,000 Candles”, the yearning chorus of which asks *‘Why is the world on fire?’* – written *before* this year had even begun – or the sample of spiritual teacher Ram Dass talking about the nature of decay, and how it’s both beautiful and horrible at the same time, at the start of “Love A Liar”, which encapsulates the philosophy and attitude that, now more than ever, continues to drive Red City Radio.
“We’re aging beings,” says Donovan, “and that’s incredibly terrifying for some people, because most everyone fears death in some capacity when they think about it. Life is so beautiful and you don’t want to lose these experiences – but at the same time, I enjoy getting older. I feel like I’m developing more in my patience, in my understanding, in empathy for others, in my knowledge. It’s beautiful and horrible at the same time, because as much as you’re growing, you’re also dying.”
“I joined Red City Radio a week before my 19th birthday,” adds Dale, “so I’ve been in the band my entire adult life. In my youth, it was easier to see things negatively, and I wrote from the perspective of wanting to see things more positively. Now I feel, with so many negative things happening in the world, it’s important to find the things that make you happy and fill your glass and share with others. The most important thing in the world is sharing love and happiness – and you have to be happy yourself to be able to share that with other people.”

That Red City Radio has had its fair share of setbacks over the years makes that outlook – and the outlook of this record – all the more impressive. In 2015, the band released its self-titled third record on Staple, an imprint of Vagrant Records. But within six months of Red City Radio signing the deal, Vagrant was bought by major label BMG Chrysalis US, and Staple was no more.
“We have constantly been what I would consider underdogs in the music scene,” admits Donovan, “but every step of the way we’re still winning – and I think that speaks volumes about the music itself. We were really vibing everything about that record, and then just got dropped through no fault of our own. As a result, we all felt like that record fell on deaf ears, and that could really send a lot of bands down a negative spiral. But our lifeline was on the road, so we didn’t let it stop us. We kept grinding forwards and here we are. And we’re still winning.”
Perhaps no song on this album encapsulates that more than the fiery closing burst of “Gutterland” and its gloriously optimistic chorus: *‘If the sun don’t shine, it ain’t no bother, I don’t mind’*. That, ultimately, is the truth glowing at the heart if this record, this band.  *“*What seems to have always been the underlying nature of the spirit of Red City Radio,” says Dale, “is to be intoxicatingly yourself. *Paradise* is a true expression of who we are as people and as a band. It’s a new beginning for the band, but also a continuance on spreading love and rock’n’roll through music. I believe that this album has the best performances we’ve ever done, and is the best quality sounding album we’ve ever recorded. It was also just the funnest record to make. So really, this is the best Red City Radio album, and if you don’t agree with that, then fuck you!”