**BEN QUAD – *EPHEMERA* BIO**

Although the old adage of ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’ is something that Oklahoma four-piece Ben Quad knew before they began making their new EP, *Ephemera,* they decided to wholeheartedly ignore it. Since forming in 2018, the band—Sam Wegrzynski (lead vocals/rhythm guitar), Henry Shields (backing vocals/bass), Edgar Viveros (lead guitar) and Isaac Young (drums)—have released three split EPs and their 2022 debut album, *I’m Scared That’s All There Is*. Those records, alongside tours with Hot Mulligan, Arm’s Length and Forests have helped establish Ben Quad as one of *the* emo/indie/punk bands around—a hybrid all those scenes and sounds that works incredibly well, both live and on record.

With *Ephemera*, the band’s new EP—their first since signing with Pure Noise—the four-piece have blown all expectations out of the water. Opener “I Did Not Create The Rules” begins with a brief electronic flourish before bursting into a blisteringly intense screamo anthem. Its first line (‘*It’ll be like this forever/Always lost, confused’*)pointedly lays out the constant struggle of living under capitalism as the music itself violently introduces the band’s new musical direction. While there was a hint this change might have been coming in 2022’s single “You’re Part Of It”, this EP’s five songs double down hard on that sound. It’s a decision the band made because—surprisingly, given listeners’ usual disdain for bands experimenting—they’d actually received a host of messages from fans expressing how much they liked that sound. Encouraged, the band leaned into it fully.
“We did that original screamo track as a flex,” admits Wegrzynski, “and it then becoming our most popular song gave us the courage to go all out.”
“At the end of the day, we’re making this music because we like it,” adds Viveros. “Bands like Alexisonfire and Underoath were really formative for me, so being able to put those influences into our music is super gratifying as an artist. The fact people dig it is just a plus. We’d be making it even if people thought it sucked.”

It certainly doesn’t suck, but neither is there any capitulating to those fans. Ben Quad aren’t turning this corner because it’s what other people want them to do, but because it’s what *they* want to do. Those who like the glimpse they’ve heard should like this even more. The passionate intensity of “I Did Not Create The Rules” is followed by the equally ferocious “You’ll Get Nothing And Like It”, an emotionally pulverizing one minute and 52 seconds of pure catharsis, before “Your Face As An Effigy”—combining hyperactive drums, math-rock noodling and some killer hooks—ups the ante. It’s one long crescendo from beginning to end, and just when you think it can’t get any faster or more furious, it does. “Exit Wounds” picks up where that leaves off, dominated by overwrought screams and heart-torn vocal melodies, and while there’s a brief lull during the beginning of the closing title track, emotions and sanity soon start to fray throughout the song as the refrain *‘We were made to throw away’* is sung and screamed as if the band’s life depends on it.

Of course, anyone can interpret these songs how they want and apply them to their own life, but most of these lyrics are astute indictments of modern society and political establishments. Yet for all the sharp political undertones and insight that form the baseline of these songs, most importantly , they also reveal the devastating effects that capitalism and other oppressive systems have on people on a more personal level.
“Lyrically, this EP has a lot to do with the current political climate,” says Viveros. “whether that's stuff overseas in the Middle East or the cost of living, which is going up like crazy. That's where the existentialism comes in—how am I supposed to survive in this world that doesn't care for me? You have these people in power that are meant to provide for you, but they're not really providing for you--it's all literally just for capital gain. This record is really questioning those current structures and exploring themes of feeling helpless. Because even though we can burn this all down and do something about it, it seems like the world is stuck in complacency.”

*Ephemera*, then, is a call to arms against that complacency. Produced by longtime collaborator CJ Cochran from Outline In Color, the recording process was broken up by the band going on tour. That break allowed for extra contemplation and consideration about what they were making, and the result is a set of songs that combines the personal and the political to devastating effect. There are still hints of their old songs contained within these ones, so while they don’t sound entirely like a new band, they definitely present new iteration of it with added chemistry and confidence.
“The current view of us,” says Wegrzynski, “is that we are just a bunch of teddy bear emo whiny boys, but I’m hoping this EP changes that. I hope it makes people who feel like they otherwise wouldn’t have a voice feel like they can actually one. I hope it gives them a little bit of empowerment.”