



311's Chad Sexton

Evolving On Drums

Way before rap-metal infiltrated rock's mainstream, the LA-by-way-of-Nebraska quintet 311 laid the groundwork for that hybrid genre. In fact, their fusion of hip-hop, funk, reggae, and hard rock has been very influential since the band formed in 1990. Through innumerable musical fads, 311 has stayed true to a signature sound, while members continue to push themselves creatively. Nowhere is 311's staying power and commitment to innovation more evident than on its seventh release, appropriately titled *Evolver*.

"People sometimes get into bands for reasons *other* than the love of music, whether it's to make money, get women, or because they want to be on TV," says drummer Chad Sexton. "We put 311 together because we're music fans and musicians at heart. We see the trends that go on, but we like to think they don't affect us. Our band just tries to stay true to music we have fun playing, while also keeping our audience in mind. We want to write songs that will be exciting for our fans and affect people in a positive way. So far, that's worked for us."

With the band's heavy Beatles influence apparent on tracks like "Seems Uncertain,"

Evolver has a warmth largely missing from albums recorded since the '70s. Sexton says that's due to 311's "natural" approach to recording. "The warm sound you hear is very much an analog byproduct," he says. "We've always recorded our albums to tape instead of digitally, and we'll continue to do so as long as they *make* tape. Pro Tooled tracks don't even compare to analog."

Chad is happy with his performance on *Evolver*, but admits he doesn't find the recording process all that enjoyable. "The whole experience is very challenging for me," he admits. "But that's a good thing. I never want to go into recording an album and have it be so easy that I feel like I didn't challenge myself."

"Sometimes Jacks Rule The Realm" is a track that Chad is especially proud of. "When I was in the middle of recording, I wondered, 'Can I even *play* this?' Now that the record's done and I'm playing the song on the road, I'll sometimes think, 'Oh my God, why did I write that?'" he laughs. "These parts are *killing* me!"

Gail Worley