

Q&A: Alt-Rock Trio DREAMERS Talks Festivals, Manifestos, & New 'LAUNCH' EP



If you've paid any attention to the alt-rock scene in the last two years, chances are you've heard of DREAMERS, and for good reason. The LA-by-way-of-Brooklyn trio, with members Nick Wold, Marc Nelson, and Jacob Wick, has made quite the splash since the release of debut record *This Album Does Not Exist* in 2016. Touting singles like anthemic "Wolves (You Got Me)" and veritable earworm "Sweet Disaster," DREAMERS came out swinging. Mixing blistering 90s-inspired guitar riffs and punchy 80s synth with irresistible thumping beats, DREAMERS have made a name for themselves with a distinct sense of swagger and an unmistakable sound.

In addition to racking up millions of online streams, the band has been on the move nonstop for nearly two years, boasting a slot on national tours with The Maine, New Politics, and All Time Low – not too shabby of a resume for a relatively new band. In the two years since their debut album, DREAMERS has dropped several acoustic singles, as well as an entrancing cover of "Zombie," fans have been eager for a new release. Lucky for us, DREAMERS just dropped the first of a trio of EPs, which will ultimately culminate in their full sophomore album.

The first EP of the collection, *LAUNCH*, graced our headphones on July 13. The four track release already has us drooling over what DREAMERS has planned for the full album. Lead single "Screws," is a searing, industrial track that applies DREAMERS' signature style: scooping up elements of musical eras past and expertly twisting them into a striking sound that is simultaneously modern and reminiscent.

Take a listen to the full EP below:



We chatted with DREAMERS' frontman Nick Wold to get the inside look at the year ahead for the band, talking new songs, Bonnaroo, and (of course) Jeff Goldblum.

OTW: Tell me a little bit about DREAMERS. How did you guys all meet?

Nick: We met in New York where we started the band. I had been in another band that kind of ended up going by the wayside. I was writing a whole bunch of music on my own, just living in my practice space, because I realized I could work only one day a week at the bar if I didn't have an apartment and live in the practice space. I did that for a while, writing a ton of songs. That was how I met Nelson, and kind of everything went from there.

OTW: It's working out so far! You recently released "Screws," a new single. Can you tell me a little bit about writing the song?

Nick: Yeah. So this album that we're coming out with kind of ended up being a breakup album sort of unintentionally. We wrote about all these topics, but whenever we kind of hit on that topic it seemed to resonate and so it became a thing. Not so much the 'devastation of heartbreak' kind of album, but more like how going through something like that can actually be empowering in the end. How what feels like an end can actually be a new beginning. So we thought "Screws" was the perfect song to start telling that story. It's about your brain falling apart at the screws in love and romance, and the conflict in that.

OTW: So the new EP is going to be one of three. Did that choice to break them up into separate releases come organically?

Nick: Yeah, we felt like it told a story and that it has these kind of through-threads. So we thought it would be more fun to put them out in bite-sized chapters, and each one has a distinct vibe. We're calling [the first EP] Launch. And then at the end it's going to be the whole album, and it's about journeys.

OTW: You've teased that the new album is going to be more autumnal than what we've heard from you guys before. I'm very curious, what makes you say that?

Nick: Yeah, we felt like the first record is very summer-y and fun, kind of the summer love album to us. This album definitely feels like it goes into a slightly darker space, but still the same band. We've just been through so much in the last two years. We've been touring nonstop basically, and having crazy adventures and going through breakups and just living a lot of life. So we feel like this record reflects that and has a little bit more darkness or depth, or just something in there that feels a little different.

OTW: So you mentioned touring nonstop. You toured with some really incredible bands like The Maine, New Politics, All Time Low. What has it been like to get to share tours with really seasoned and tight-knit bands?

Nick: It's amazing. It's such an adventure to get to see these great bands work every night, learn tricks of the trade, and just make a lot of really great friends. Tour life is the most fun adventure and the most exhausting thing ever. It's not for everyone, but we really love it and I think we kind of thrive off of always moving. As long as you feel like you're moving in a direction you want to go, it's just totally worth it. So yeah, it's been amazing. And we're excited to do our first headline tour this fall. We've been opening up for all these great bands which has been amazing, but now we're excited we get a chance to headline and play a little longer set and do our thing.

OTW: What's one of your favorite tour memories?

Nick: Well, we played Bumbershoot Fest in Seattle and that was my hometown, and I had my first crowd surfing experience there when I was 12 in Memorial Stadium. Kind of an unforgettable, informative, awesome moment for me like 'wow, rock is cool.' So we got to play that same stadium, and I crowd surfed from the stage, and it was a kind of full circle moment for me.

OTW: You recently played Bonnaroo for the first time. How did that compare to your other festival experiences?

Nick: It was amazing. Like, we'd always wanted to go to Bonnaroo and had never been. It has a really cool festival culture there. It's out in the woods, everybody's camping out. Festivals have unique vibes, and this one has a definitely really cool vibe and I would love to go back more. We were just there for the one day, it was kind of a whirlwind. It was amazing. We played a small stage and had a huge turnout. Tons of people came, it was super fun. It's a great show. So 10 out of 10, would recommend.

OTW: What artists or specific musical eras do you think are the biggest influences on you guys?

Nick: We're really obsessed with 90s grunge. I grew up in Seattle, was really into Nirvana, so that's a big part of it. But we really love rock music from all the decades that it's existed. The 60s, we all grew up on the Beatles. We love punk rock in the 70s, like Iggy Pop, and a lot of 80s, you know, electronic and arpeggiators and all that kind of stuff. We see this band as us taking our favorite elements from all those and trying to see a through-thread of righteous stuff that we just want to carry on into the future, but make it with computers and make it sound like a futuristic version.

OTW: On your website you have a manifesto about what it means to be a dreamer. What was the motivation behind writing that?

Nick: Yeah, we felt like with the name like DREAMERS, we have to kind of explain what we mean and why we have such a lofty name. It kind of relates to when I was a younger man and pacing around, deciding what I wanted to do with my life. Part of the decision came from feeling that art and music can be really important parts of the culture and of the world. The role of the artist to us is to be the dreamers, to be the ones who think and imagine and philosophize and kind of look ahead and can inspire and make things. So it's about that, our philosophy is as artists.

OTW: Speaking of your website, I couldn't help but notice that you have a really distinct early 90s, beginning of the Internet vibe to it. I'm very curious, what was behind that design choice?

Nick: We wanted our website to be like Windows 95 retro. Like it was some kind of lost corner of the Internet that you had never found that you were stumbling into. That was our universe that we wanted to create.

OTW: I have a bit of a random question, so bear with me. Let's just imagine a scenario where Jeff Goldblum is going to do a dramatic reading of any DREAMERS song. Which song do you pick?

Nick: Wow. Are you asking this because you're going to actually make this happen? That would be my dream come true.

OTW: Oh, how I wish.

Nick: I could hear Jeff Goldblum reading a number of our songs...and I'm actually going through our discography in my mind with his voice. Off the top, I would just give him "Sweet Disaster," I think there's a lot of words in there and verses that he could do a lot with.

OTW: What artists are you really digging right now? Who are your *Ones to Watch*?

Nick: I'm really into Rad Horror, one of the bands that's going to be opening for us. I'm really into the other bands that are opening for us too, morgxn and Weathers. It was rad to get to handpick some bands of our own and build our own tour. So I'm super pumped on them. We're all big fans of Sir Sly and Cage the Elephant. There's a lot of great stuff going on in the alternative world right now.