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An Interview With American Speedway's Vocalist, Michael Thursby Speedwayposted Jul 15, 2008 at 2:05 PM by **roya**http://www.alistapart.com/about_us/staff/index.cfm?userid=roya .

American Speedway is a high-energy, heavy rock and roll band out of Philadelphia, conceived in February 2007. The band has since earned their mark as live, powerhouse rock and roll band that reminds listeners why they fell in love with music in the first place. The energy brought by the band during their live show cannot be compared to the sounds on their album - they must be seen live in concert. The band "brings it" loud, heavy and fast, something that seems to be missing in today's modern rock music.

American Speedway has enjoyed much success already in less than a year together. For one, the band has quickly established a growing, loyal fan base by traveling feverishly and performing in various cities on the east coast (Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Winston-Salem, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cleveland, etc.) and constantly winning over not only new fans, but also club owners.

In late-summer 2007, the band caught the eye of Prophase Music, an independent record label based on the outskirts of Philadelphia, who offered them a pressing and distribution arrangement to release the band's debut album, "Ship of Fools." Prophase is exclusively distributed by MVD Entertainment Group (MVD), and will be releasing their debut record, "Ship of Fools," on vinyl (limited edition). In October 2007, American Speedway was picked up by the music marketing powerhouse, The Syndicate, who will be pushing the band's debut release to radio and press, while using its street teams for added band awareness.

The main philosophy of the band is real simple and that's to play what they like, and that's "real" rock and roll. American Speedway is not here to reinvent the wheel. They are not here to earn scene points, win musician competitions, nor be the next biggest thing. The band is here to write and record songs they like, and have a great time playing live on stage.

I had the chance to talk to Michael Thursby Speedway, lead vocalist of American Speedway.

Roya Butler: Tell us about The Welfareline.

Speedway: Well, The Welfareline is a recording studio that I started about ten years ago. It's located in a 19th century church in a quaint little suburb of Philadelphia. I basically started it to fill the void of professional recording facilities that were also affordable to younger bands.

Roya: Tell us about the metamorphosis from studio engineer to lead singer of American Speedway.

Speedway: I was always in bands from early high school on through my mid 20s. In every band there was usually one guy who had to take the duty of recording the demos and such, so in reality being in a band morphed me into being a studio owner. When my other band broke up in about 2001 the studio was busy as hell and I pretty much thought I wasn't gonna join another band again, and I was fine with that...but then this situation arose to play with these guys so I decided to come out or early retirement.

Roya: Tell us how you conceived the name of your band, American Speedway. (any underlying

meanings, or special meanings to you?)

Speedway: I was the last person to join the band so I actually had nothing to do with the band name, which was probably a good thing. I do dig the name though, it's simple, sounds bad ass and fast, which is pretty much what we're all about.

Roya: Who's in the band?

Speedway: Johnny Griswold- Lead Guitar, Backing Vocals, Billy Angry- Bass, Backing Vocals, Chris Callahan- Drums, and me (Michael Thursby Speedway) - Lead Vocals, Rhythm Guitar.

Roya: How did you find your band mates?

Speedway: I knew John and Bill since I was about 15, they used to come into the bar that I cooked in. Later when I was about 18, I was in a band (the Griswolds) with both of them. After that band ended John moved out to southern California for a couple years. That's when Billy started hanging out and playing with Callihan. After a bit, Bill and John would communicate via email and phone and trade song ideas. Eventually John moved back, him and Bill and Callihan started writing and playing. When Bill told me that John was back and what they have been working on I asked if I could join in the fun, and basically that's how it went.

Roya: Tell us about your new album, "Ship of Fools."

Speedway: It was recorded in about 2 weeks at The Welfareline. It's loud; it's fast and its rock and roll. All killer no filler, grind em' till ya find 'em, ya know--anything that you can think of that is completely bad ass, which pretty much describes the album.

Roya: Tell us about your tour.

Speedway: We've been doing a ridiculous amount of shows in support of the album--from New Jersey to California--just pretty much playing at any place that will have us and blowing the doors off of every one.

Roya: Tell us about your #1 song on Sirrus, "One Foot In, One Foot Out."

Speedway: I think we could all agree that we never imagined we would have any song on the radio alone a number one song on a radio station. I really have to thank all the PR people and guys over at Pro Phase. They work their asses off so we basically have to just show up and do our thing. But anyway, yeah its shocking/cool thing that none of us expected.

Roya: Who are your musical influences?

Speedway: It's kinda different for all of us, and not wanting to speak for the other guys, I'll just run the general ones down. I think we all can agree with Motorhead, Speeddealer, Peterpan Speedrock and such. There's also a hefty dose of The Stooges and Murder City Devils.

Roya: Do you feel you have an edge over other local bands, seeing as you have been on the production side of the music industry (with Welfareline)?

Speedway: I wouldn't call it an edge, but being that we all have been through this thing before there's not really any surprises thrown at us. It does come in handy to have use of the studio at anytime to demo things and it makes it really easy when people's schedules are tight and we need to get some recording done.

Roya: Your music seems pure rock and roll, with a little metal and punk edge. Tell us about that.

Speedway: That's basically most of our backgrounds, we were all in punk bands, and we all like rock and roll, and shit, Iron Maiden rules.

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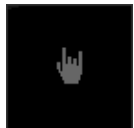
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