



Underoath

Define The Great Line
Tooth and Nail Records
www.underoath777.com

JOHN KMECH
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If you're like the majority of metal fans, anything dubbed "Christian rock" is generally held in disfavor. Underoath's third full-length record, *Define the Great Line*, destroys that notion, as the band offers an epic and spiritual metal journey without sounding preachy or holier-than-thou.

Notably heavier than the band's more pop-directed, emo-like 2004 album *They're Only Chasing Safety*, the band clearly showcases its influences here. The breakdown in "Casting Such a Thin Shadow" evokes atmospheric metal band Isis, while both "A Moment Suspended in Time" and "Moving for the Sake of Motion" have moments that seem like a throwback to emo-punk godfathers At The Drive In. Clearly more complex than its ancestor, the band makes use of some beautifully structured soundscapes and intricate polyrhythms.

If screamo really isn't your thing, there's still a high likelihood that you won't like Underoath. However, for those who can look past it, there's a lot here to like and Underoath has proved with *Define the Great Line* that they have something unique to offer.



Underoath: metal's littlest angels

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With Silverstein, Moneen and He Is Legend
Saturday, 16 September at 7pm
The Venue (formerly Red's)

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Labels stick—especially in the music world, where increasingly clever monikers are being employed to describe the ever-changing sounds of modern music. But for Florida-based metalheads, Underoath, being labelled as a Christian metal act—and the stereotypes that follow—haven't held them back.

"We play heavy music and we all happen to be Christians," said Chris Dudley, the band's keyboardist, speaking over the phone from his home in Florida. "We're not a 'praise and

worship' type band. As far as being called Christians, that's one label we readily put on ourselves. Other than that, we don't really care if we're called Christian death metal or screamo or whatever. You can call us country if you like, as long as you enjoy the music."

The band's latest release, *Define the Great Line*, debuted at number two on the Billboard Hot 200 in June, the highest debut for a "Christian" album since 1997. Produced by Matt Goldman of the Blue Man Group and Adam Dutkiewicz of Killswitch Engage, it's Underoath's most polished and heaviest record yet.

"Adam knows what we're going for as far as the energy level goes, and Matt knows how we work in the studio," Dudley says. "We started writing it a week after [2004's] *They're Only Tasting Safety* came out, and we knew we wanted it to be more intelligent as

far as the musicianship goes."

The group stirred some controversy this summer when they abruptly left the Warped Tour due to reports that NOFX's Fat Mike had mocked them because of their religious beliefs. There were also questions about whether the band would break up due to internal strife, but Dudley put these notions to rest.

"That tour was probably my favorite tour we've ever done," he asserts. "[Fat Mike] kind of gave us a hard time for being Christians, but that didn't influence anything. He didn't have anything to do with it. There were a lot of problems internally. We weren't friends first and a band second anymore and we agreed that if that happened, we would stop and re-evaluate where we needed to be. There was a lot of healing and talks that happened. We're more on the same page now, so I see

us getting out there and being stronger than ever."

Despite their strong religious beliefs, though, the group is not—and will never be—a stranger to getting revenge for tour jokes.

"One time, a band called Darkest Hour covered our van in glue and pornography since they knew we weren't into that stuff," Dudley laughs. "We got them back, though: we got a jug and filled it with mayonnaise, ketchup, pee, Tabasco sauce, jelly and other gross stuff, and let it ferment. Then we took the tires off their trailer during their set and put the trailer on blocks, then chained the tires to the roof. We put the keys for the chains and the lug nuts into the jar along with some duplicates so they really had to work to get the right one."

"It was my idea," Dudley adds with a hint of pride.



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