

Thirty Seconds to Mars

Thirty Seconds to Mars' newest album title – *This Is War* – is more than a just a reference to the band's personal battles, a commentary on global crises and economic turmoil and homage to their now infamous \$30,000,000 lawsuit with Virgin Records. *This Is War* also represents the result of an 18-month creative battle, fought ferociously, but privately, inside a studio built into the side of a house tucked away in the Hollywood Hills. The result: a triumphant, sonically epic game-changer that builds on the vision laid out in their 2002 self-titled debut and 2005's multi-platinum *A Beautiful Lie*.

This Is War is a major leap forward for Thirty Seconds to Mars, one that cements the trio (lead singer and guitarist Jared Leto, drummer Shannon Leto and guitarist Tomo Milicevic) as a world-class arena-crushing rock band. The L.A. Times calls *This Is War* “combative...sinister...the most confident-sounding thing the band has done.” Alternative Press echoes the sentiment, giving it four stars and hailing the album as “an artistic triumph for Thirty Seconds To Mars” and Kerrang! Magazine agrees, calling it the band's “strongest and most accomplished work to date.”



Jared Leto comments: “It took two years, we went to hell and back. At one point, I thought it was going to be the death of us, but it became a transformative experience. It's not so much an evolution as it is a revolution. It's a coming of age.”

To guide their journey, Thirty Seconds to Mars enlisted two of the most influential producers in the world: Flood (U2, Nine Inch Nails, Depeche Mode, Smashing Pumpkins) and Steve Lillywhite (U2, The Rolling Stones, Peter Gabriel).

“Flood has a karmic ability to work with bands in these intense transformational periods of their creative lives,” Jared says. “We knew we were ready for something new, something different, something unexpected. Flood was the perfect person to help guide us down this path.”

“Sonically it’s a new beginning, a rebirth,” Tomo says. “And as a songwriter, Jared was relentless. He went to a place that I’d never seen before.”

Flood and Lillywhite gave the band the freedom and confidence to explore different sounds, textures and ideas. “It’s a process that requires truth, honesty and a lot of hard work,” Flood explained, telling the press that the band set out to make a classic album by pushing themselves to a place they all knew wouldn’t be easy to go to. He added, “Those sorts of things I find very rewarding.” It was a process that began with Flood at the helm and concluded with the reins in Lillywhite’s hands. The duo succeeded in heightening the emotional power of the songs, revealing themes of faith, morality, vindication, freedom and resurrection in recording their most personal and politically charged project to date.



“Flood began this long journey with us and it was an unforgettable experience. He helped us on this quest to find out more of who we really are as a band and as individual

musicians,” says Shannon. “Steve helped us finish, which is often the most difficult part of the recording process. We went to war alongside each of them and came out with love and respect for both.”

In addition to Jared’s searing, no-holds-barred vocals, propulsive and melodious bass, guitar and keyboards, Shannon’s huge and inventive percussion, and Tomo’s searing six-string, *This Is War* buzzes with dozens of imaginative effects and indomitable layers of vintage synths. Authentic Tibetan monks chant to begin the album on “Escape” and close the album on “L490,” the voice of a French girl narrates “Night of the Hunter,” and the cry of a wild hawk screams to introduce the first single, “Kings and Queens,” which the band wrote in the same house in South Africa where they recorded their smash Modern Rock single “The Kill.” And that hawk scream is no studio trickery. “The hawk lived above the house,” explains Jared. “We spent hours waiting for him to appear so we could climb up on the roof and record him live.”

But perhaps the most stunning and profound instrument on the album is the euphoric sound of thousands of *Thirty Seconds to Mars* fans – a more-than-100,000-strong legion infamously dubbed The Echelon – singing in unison throughout the record. Initially a simple recording experiment, “The Summit” took place at Hollywood’s Avalon Club in April 2009 and was comprised of roughly 1,000 Echelon who traveled from around the world to lend their stomps, shouts, screams, claps and hums to the record. An unmistakable success, Buzznet called this 1000-piece human orchestra “field recordings of fandom” and “almost custom-built to play live.”

The success of the initial Summit quickly manifested into eight additional Summits held around the globe, resulting in tens of thousands of participants. Additionally, the band received a Twitter message from a fan in Iran who couldn’t get to any of the Summits, prompting Jared, Shannon and Tomo to open the experiment even broader. Embracing the digital culture that has for years buoyed the band’s global success, *Thirty Seconds to Mars* introduced the “Digital Summit” in August 2009 and invited anyone with a computer or mobile recording device and an Internet connection to record sounds and vocals and submit them through TwitVid. As a result, entries poured in from the U.S., Australia, Italy, Germany, France, Japan, Mexico, the U.K., Canada and Iran, giving *Thirty Seconds to Mars*’ biggest supporters around the world an opportunity to be a part of the new album.

“The Summit was an integral part of the making of this record,” Jared says. “It was an interactive recording experiment that succeeded far beyond our hopes and became a defining element to this album. It was an exciting and unique way for us to share the experience with our family around the world.”

“Kings & Queens,” which emerged as *This Is War*’s first single, has been called “epic rock at its most affecting” by *Billboard* and inspired a short film called “The Ride,” directed by *Thirty Seconds to Mars* video director alum, Bartholomew Cubbins (“The Kill,” “From Yesterday”). The film features a critical mass crank mob movement, founded with forward-thinking and eco-conscious intentions, and celebrates this amazing

community of riders on a nighttime journey from downtown L.A. to Santa Monica, a fitting love letter to the city of Los Angeles, an ever-present character in the band's history and certainly in the making of *This is War*. Soaring into Alternative Radio's top 3 barely a month after its impact, "Kings & Queens" has set the pace for the promise of things to come.