

Stryper: 25 Years of Music

Twenty-five years ago Christian rock band Stryper hit the  music scene and broke all types of boundaries. The band received airtime on MTV and VH1 and opened the doors for other faith-based artists to be considered for airplay. They were also featured in major publications, including the likes of Rolling Stone, Time, Spin and Newsweek. Since their debut in 1984, the band has sold more than 8 million albums or CDs worldwide. Now they are back with their 10th CD, Murder By Pride (Big 3 Records). The Buzz had a chance to talk to frontman Michael Sweet about the new release and the band's legendary career.

The Buzz: Stryper's latest release *Murder By Pride* is now in stores—and it marks 25 years for one of Christian music's most influential and groundbreaking bands. Did you ever think you would still be doing this after all these years?

Sweet: We never know what God holds for our future, nor have we ever really tried to predict it. We just try to live each day to the fullest. I don't really think of it in terms of "How long will I be doing this?" It's just what I do. It's who I am. Music has been a part of my life since day one, and I think it will be part of my life as long as I'm here.

The Buzz: Stryper was the first Christian band with certified double-platinum sales, and the first Christian band to get airplay on MTV. Do you expect any "firsts" with this record?

Sweet: We've already had one first with this record. We were the first band, that I'm aware of, who released one song from the album each week on iTunes until the full album was released. But we've never been a band that has said, "We've got to be the first to do this, or the first to do that." We've just sort of done what it is God has called us to do and trust that it works out for the best.

I'm excited about this record, no doubt. I spent a lot of time making it and of course I hope it does really well. I would love there to be a lot more firsts with Murder By Pride. I think any artist enjoys having their work recognized, but I try not to stay focused on that and just continue doing what it is I do best—making music.

The Buzz: In September you will head out on the road for a 50-city 25th anniversary tour, followed by an international tour in early 2010. Will we be seeing any yellow and black this time around?

Sweet: You will be seeing yellow and black. We've actually hired Ray Brown, the guy who designed the original yellow and black outfits, to design some newer, more modern yellow and black outfits for this tour. But yes, it will be a "yellow and black" tour.

The Buzz: You're doing double-duty these days, also singing lead vocals and playing guitar for the legendary band Boston. Have Boston's fans embraced Stryper?

Sweet: Boston fans are great. Many of them have gotten to know myself and Stryper through Boston, and I'm grateful for the encouraging words many of them have offered up. I'm happy to be a part of that family. I think it works both ways too. During the Boston tour I would see Stryper shirts out in the audience. I'm just really honored to be a part of Boston and still pinch myself. I don't really think of it in the sense of, "Will Boston fans become Stryper fans?" They are two different worlds and no doubt they have some crossover as a result of my membership in both, but I really don't think of it along the lines of one feeding off the other.

The Buzz: What would you like Stryper's musical legacy to be?

Sweet: I think it's inevitable that we will be known as one of

the first Christian rock bands to achieve mainstream success. But I hope it's more than that. I'd like to think it will be one of great musicianship and solid songwriting, but also one of touching lives. God called us to do this, and we are just doing the best we can to make great music and share our beliefs along the way. I'd hope our legacy involves touching lives through the message of our songs.

For more information about Stryper and the upcoming tour, visit [. To purchase *Murder By Pride* click here.](#)