

***PLANET ZERO***

MAIN BIO

Over the last two decades, Shinedown have cemented their status as one of the most vital and forward-thinking powerhouses in modern rock. In a rare feat for an artist of any genre, the record-breaking band have achieved astronomical success (including 10 million albums sold worldwide, 14 platinum and gold singles, over 6.5 billion global streams to date, and recently being named #1 on Billboard’s Greatest Of All Time Mainstream Rock Artists Chart) while fully embodying the kind of creative dynamism that defies expectation and transcends boundaries. Expanding on the unbridled imagination behind their groundbreaking 2018 album *ATTENTION ATTENTION* and its accompanying feature film, vocalist Brent Smith, guitarist Zach Myers, bassist/producer Eric Bass, and drummer Barry Kerch now elevate their artistry to unprecedented heights on their new full-length effort *Planet Zero*. As their most galvanizing body of work yet, *Planet Zero* firmly places Shinedown in the pantheon of artists capable of moving the culture forward on the strength of their singular vision, uncompromising honesty, and fierce commitment to constant evolution.

Formed in Florida in 2001, Shinedown first unveiled their combustible yet artfully crafted sound and penetrating lyrics on their platinum-certified 2003 debut *Leave A Whisper* (their first release for Atlantic Records, the band’s label home to this day). Through the years, they’ve accomplished such milestones as shattering the record for the most #1s ever in the 40-year history of Billboard’s Mainstream Rock Songs Chart (and landing each of their 27 consecutive singles on the Top 5 of that very same chart), earning platinum or gold certification for all their albums, selling out countless headlining arena tours, and even launching a premium apparel line called SD Limited—all while emerging as an essential cultural force, as evidenced by their major media acclaim and participation in the prestigious 92Y Talks series. A major creative breakthrough for the band, *ATTENTION ATTENTION* marked the start of Shinedown’s boldest chapter yet, presenting an intensely personal story-album that confronts such complex matters as mental health, addiction, and the indomitable nature of the human spirit. As proof of its powerful resonance for listeners around the world, *ATTENTION ATTENTION* debuted in the Top 5 on the Billboard 200, simultaneously hit #1 on Billboard's Alternative, Top Rock and Hard Rock Albums Charts, garnered five iHeart Radio Music Award nominations, and generated four #1 hits (including “GET UP,” a fan favorite that smashed the record for most Rock Airplay Top 10s in radio history). Meanwhile, the *ATTENTION ATTENTION* feature film found Shinedown joining forces with director Bill Yukich (Beyoncé, Metallica) and dreaming up a riveting visual counterpart to the album’s narrative, illuminating yet another dimension of their limitless creativity.

Their seventh studio album, *Planet Zero* marks Shinedown’s most ambitious and masterfully realized work to date. High-concept and hard-hitting, *Planet Zero* offers an incisive look at a strange and terrifying moment in history and its implications for the future of humankind, building a dystopian framework around its exploration of the issue at hand: the increasingly toxic division among those of differing opinions and ideologies, cancel culture, and the need for honesty in our public discourse. The result is an ultravivid and utterly absorbing saga, spliced with interludes featuring an insidious character called Cyren. “Cyren’s the robot welcoming you to Planet Zero, which could potentially be the future we all live in: a place with zero sense, zero accountability, zero tolerance for any opinion different from what you hear on Twitter or TV,” explains Bass, who produced both *Planet Zero* and *ATTENTION ATTENTION.* Recorded at his newly built Big Animal Studio in South Carolina, *Planet Zero* matches its immersive world-building and potent social commentary with a deliberately unvarnished sound. “Our intention was to make this record very direct and in-your-face, which meant leaving the scars on the music instead of cleaning it all up,” says Bass. “Perfection is what ruins rock-and-roll, and we wanted each song to have its own danger to it.”

Lead single “Planet Zero” – which became the band’s record-breaking 18th #1 hit at rock radio - is a chilling meditation on cancel culture and the dangerous dehumanizing consequences if we continue down the divisive path we are on. (*“Better pray for the soul of the citizen/Better pray that you’re not erased/On your knees for the life you’re living/On your knees or you’ll be replaced”).* “If we shut each other down and allow ourselves to be divided by the information we consume and the way we talk to each other, we lose our humanity. When you look outside of your phone, you’ll see there are so many people doing good things and trying to take care of each other. But we’re starting to see parts of society slip into an unknown. *Planet Zero* was written for all of us. The fact is that we’re all here on this planet no matter what, so it’s time to actually move forward together with empathy, perseverance and strength.”

While a raw ferocity fuels much of *Planet Zero*, Shinedown bring a stunning vulnerability to songs like second single, “Daylight,” that begins as a tender piano ballad and opens up into a soaring anthem that offers an assurance that you are never alone. The single’s meaningful portrait of a vital human connection reflects the importance of our relationships and the people in our lives whose support and empathy help get us through to the next day. *(“I was diagnosed with a fear of getting too close/Had to tell the ones I love, I was on the ropes/I’m not the only one who’s life’s been pulled apart/Spending one year and three months in the dark”*). “‘Daylight’ is about your savior, and I don’t mean in the religious sense,” says Smith. “It’s about the person who makes sure you make it to tomorrow—the one who keeps you alive. This is about the human condition. We’ve got to live, and we’ve got to live with one another. And that should be something that is celebrated and not tolerated. That's what ‘Daylight’ really represents. It's our humanity. It’s an understanding that we're all on this planet together, and we've got to figure out ways to take care of one another. A lot of times, it may just be asking someone 'are you okay?’ because you could potentially save someone's life just by asking. We can’t lose our empathy and courage towards each other, or our willingness to pick someone up if you see them on their knees, because there's gonna be a moment in time when you need someone to pick you up.”

Right from the very first seconds of opening track “No Sleep Tonight,” Shinedown bring pummeling rhythms and blistering riffs to their thrash-infused takedown of authoritarianism that is woven throughout the album. “Social media can be used in a very positive way, but it can also be used in an extremely devastating way—and the last few years have definitely shown that,” says Smith. “We’re starting to see society slip into an unknown, and this song asks the question: ‘How would you feel if your freedom of speech was completely taken away from you?’” Later on *Planet Zero*, Shinedown unleash the pure fury of “The Saints of Violence and Innuendo,” a frenetic yet wildly catchy track firing back at what Bass refers to as “all the tech companies that have taken it upon themselves to be the arbiters of the First Amendment and what you can and can’t say, what you can and can’t do.” Propelled by a particularly searing vocal performance from Smith, “The Saints of Violence and Innuendo” reaches a thrilling intensity at its chorus: “*Tell me the truth/Are you really surprised?/You live in a world where empathy goes to die*.”

On “Dysfunctional You,” Shinedown deliver an acoustic-guitar-laced reverie that drifts between dreamlike poetry and plainspoken candor in its confession of discontent. “We’ve been discussing mental health for the better part of 20 years; we were talking about it when it wasn’t something that was ever talked about,” says Smith. “With ‘Dysfunctional You,’ we wanted to send the message that we’re all dysfunctional in some way, and it’s okay to embrace that and to ask for help when you need it.” In that same spirit of defiant self-acceptance, “A Symptom of Being Human” unfolds in delicate piano melodies and soaring strings as Shinedown celebrate the inimitable beauty of true humanity and all its messiness *(“I’ve never been the favorite/Thought I’d seen it all/Till I got my invitation to the lunatic ball/And my friends are coming too/How ‘bout you?”*). “I love the unifying aspect of asking, ‘How about you?’” says Bass. “The idea is that we’re all just passengers on this ship of Planet Earth—we’re all here for a finite amount of time, and we’re just trying to be the best we can be.”

For Shinedown, an impassioned striving for unity deeply informed the making of *Planet Zero*. “The fact is that we’re all here on this planet no matter what, so it’s time to actually come together,” says Smith. Bass adds: “We want people to stop looking at each other as demographics or talking points and start seeing each other as people. I’ve had so many quality conversations with people I vastly disagree with, and I’ve come away with a wealth of understanding that I’d never have gained if I’d just written them off.” Not only a driving force for their songwriting, the band’s humanitarian outlook has also recently led to such endeavors as fundraising for Direct Relief (a non-profit organization that provides emergency medical assistance and disaster relief in the U.S. and abroad). One of the first artists to work with Direct Relief in the early days of the pandemic, Shinedown created a limited-edition

T-shirt for purchase which included an exclusive download of their song “Atlas Falls.” Thanks to the fundraiser’s massive success, the band raised over $400,000 for Direct Relief, with “Atlas Falls” marking another #1 on the Mediabase Active Rock Chart.

Shinedown will be touring all year behind *Planet Zero*. Known for their explosive live set, the band view each show as an invaluable opportunity to deepen their connection with their legions of diehard fans across the globe. “It’s such a vast and diverse group of people who come out to see us at shows and meet-and-greets. We’re in a unique place where we get to interact with people from all walks of life—all races, all genders—and have in-depth conversations about everything they’re going through,” says Bass. “It’s given us incredible insight into the human experience, and it’s amazing to see that they all find some kind of solace and comfort in what we’re doing.” And in bringing *Planet Zero* to life, Shinedown stayed profoundly focused on their sense of responsibility to those fans. “If you asked anyone in our audience to describe the band in one word, it would be *honest*,” says Smith. “The agreement between us and our fans is that we’ll do everything in our power to be honest with them 100 percent of the time—so if we tried to write a record like the last two years never happened, we’d be lying to them, and that’s not something we’re ever going to do. This is an album made by the people for the people, and it’s because of them that we feel confident enough to really push the envelope.”