

Boys to

Backstage on the set of *Conan*, gearing up to play their single "My Songs Know What You Did in the Dark (Light Em Up)," the members of Fall Out Boy are relaxed—this is far from their first television appearance. Bassist Pete Wentz ducks in and out, attending to his towheaded four-year-old son, Bronx. Guitarist Joe Trohman and drummer Andy Hurley take a seat across from singer Patrick Stump, whose wife, Elisa, quietly fiddles with her phone as the guys discuss how they plan to save rock 'n' roll.

The musical landscape has changed quite a bit since 2008, when Fall Out Boy's *Folie à Deux* came out on the crest of emo-pop's second wave. Needless to say, the band's re-emergence from a lengthy hiatus has come with a degree of culture shock. In late April, upon the release of their fifth studio album, *Save Rock and Roll* (the title is tongue-in-cheek, they insist), the band was "like Brendan Fraser in that movie with Christopher Walken," says Wentz,

referring to 1999's *Blast From the Past*, in which Fraser and Walken spend 35 years in a bomb shelter. "They come out, and they're like, 'Whoa, this is weird...!'" He continues, pointing out that for most of the band's career, the leveling effects of iTunes hadn't fully taken effect, "so it's weird to have an album jump into the top 10." But considering the legions of rabid FOB fans who've been chomping at the bit for new songs, it wasn't too weird when the band scored its second No. 1 Soundscan debut for *Save Rock and Roll*.

Now all in their late twenties and early thirties, the band agrees that the new album is a statement about where music is now. "We were always a band that wanted to be slightly genre-defying, like having Jay-Z on a song [the intro to "Car Crash Hearts" off *Infinity on High*, its first No. 1], or

Elvis Costello ["What a Catch, Donnie," off *Folie*]," says Wentz. "It was harder to do when people were like, 'You're *this* kind of band.' But kids just like songs, not even the artist—genres have gone away a little bit."

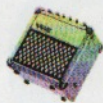
The new album's potpourri of appearances certainly spans genres, with cameos by Courtney Love, Big Sean, Foxes, and, yes, Sir Elton John. "Is it the most punk-rock record on the planet?" asks Wentz. "No, but it wasn't designed to be."

While they freely admit to having worn their influences (Green Day, The Descendents, Screeching Weasel) on their tattooed sleeves, their early material did precisely what good music always has done—open doors to discovering more music: "For me, if it hadn't been for *Dookie*, I wouldn't have ended up here. If *Save Rock and Roll* can be anything like that for any kid out there, then that's what it means to me." Plus, "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," adds Trohman. "Over time, you develop your own identity. The only thing that would link *Take This to Your Grave*

[the band's full-length label debut] to *Save Rock and Roll* is that it has the same excitement and the same newness to it."

When Wentz and Stump began working on demos last year, they opened new lines of communication. "We always wanted to be a band, and to be coming back," explains Stump. "There were a lot of things we weren't happy with when we left. For eight years, no one really discussed a lot of the concerns I had in terms of the way we conducted business. We were scared to talk to each other about stuff."

But a lot of growing up can happen in four years. "Sometimes when you're in a relationship, and it's going badly, you need to take a break," says Trohman. "Maybe you see your girlfriend with another dude, and you're like, 'Hmm...that's making me feel weird. Oh my god, she is really beautiful!' Seeing everybody in the band go beyond the small scope we all saw each other in was completely mind-blowing."



men

fall out boy is back,
and still trying to
break your heart.
by dan crane.
photographed by
chris shonting

