**BIO**

When everything falls apart, music puts it back together. Rock ‘n’ roll bridges the widest gaps and fills deepest fissures, giving us a reason to dance, sing, shout, and stand as one. No matter who we are, where we come from, or what we believe, it provides respite, reprieve, and relief as we escape. In this spirit, Rival Sons aren’t here to tell you exactly what to think or what to feel *(that’s up to you)*, but they’ll give you one hell of a ride if you let them. Once again, the Los Angeles quartet—Jay Buchanan [vocals, harmonica, rhythm guitar], Scott Holiday [lead guitar], Mike Miley [drums], and Dave Beste [bass]—find common ground for us to unite on their 2023 seventh full-length LP, *DARKFIGHTER* [Low Country Sound / Atlantic Records].

“With the world being so heavy, we recognized a responsibility to put a good word on people’s ears so there’s a good word coming back on their tongues too,” states Jay. “We missed the joy of the live show and that magical interaction. When it was taken from us, that made me want to sing about topics that were important. There are strong themes on this record of loss of identity, preservation of joy, and beholding light and shape again.”

“Records are a healthy form of escapism,” adds Scott. “I hope this one takes you as far away as possible. Our intent was to create a more cinematic body of work. As soon as the doors shut behind you, you’re enveloped on the ride. Maybe you get lost in it and gain whatever you might need from it.”

To that end, Rival Sons play rock ‘n’ roll in its purest form without apology or pretense. Instead, they simply plug in, turn up, and rip on a path of their own. Along the way, they’ve architected a critically acclaimed catalog, including *Pressure & Time* [2011], *Head Down* [2012], *Great Western Valkyrie* [2014], *Hollow Bones* [2016], and *FERAL ROOTS* [2019]. The latter represented a creative and critical high watermark, scoring a pair of GRAMMY® Award nominations in the categories of *“Best Rock Album”* and *“Best Rock Performance”* for the single “Too Bad.” Elevating the band to another level, “Do Your Worst” vaulted to #1 at Rock Radio as their biggest hit to date, tallying north of 60 million streams and counting. Speaking to their impact, *Rolling Stone* attested, *“Rival Sons have done their part to introduce new fans to rock*.*”* Beyond sharing stages with everyone from Black Sabbath, The Rolling Stones, and AC/DC to Guns N’ Roses and Lenny Kravitz, they’ve ignited television shows such as *The Late Late Show with James Corden*. During 2021, they launched their own label Sacred Tongue Recordings distributed by Thirty Tigers and celebrated the tenth anniversary of *Pressure & Time* by performing the album in its entirety for the first time on a successful tour.

Like the rest of us, they faced the Global Pandemic, societal upheaval, and changing tides in culture head-on. *DARKFIGHTER* materialized in the eye of this storm.

“I look at *DARKFIGHTER* over a long saga of two years,” notes Jay. “The album represents the cultural mitosis of isolation, the Pandemic, and the national fabric of the US getting looser and looser. It’s not that there is anything overtly speaking to the bullshit that went down though. When I say *‘Cultural Mitosis’*, there are lines being drawn constantly. I don’t think we’ve ever had this climate. What side do you fall on? We’re so divided, and you can’t step over the lines without offending someone. It certainly informed my writing.”

Throughout this season, Jay and Scott shared ideas back and forth remotely until it proved safe to collaborate in person. Countless home sessions followed in Southern California. In the midst of the extended songwriting process, they intermittently decamped to Nashville in order to record with longtime producer Dave Cobb, piecing the album together carefully.

“We spent more time on *DARKFIGHTER* than any other record we’ve made,” Scott continues. “There was more emotion, passion, thought, and heart infused into the songs.”

You can hear it loud and clear on the barnstorming lead single “Nobody Wants to Die.” A raucous riff encircles the head-nodding beat before Jay lunges into the verses with a bluesy motormouthed cadence and the vein-popping intensity of a river revival sermon. He warns, *“Whatever you do, it’s coming after you!”*

“You live your life knowing that the sword of Damocles is hanging over your head by a thread,” Jay elaborates. “You’re fully aware of the impermanence of your existence, but you can’t think about it all the time—or it’ll fuck your life up. I used to work in a mortuary as a service advisor for a few years, driving and opening the hearses. I’d attend three funerals per day. Sometimes, they would be filled over capacity. Other times, it would just be me, a priest, and a hole in the ground. It doesn’t matter who you are; the great equalizer is coming. I was thinking of this, because the music sounded like pursuit.”

Canvasing a vast thematic and sonic landscape, *DARKFIGHTER* twists and turns through a myriad of thoughts, emotions, and ponderances soundtracked by fits of uproariously triumphant bombast and delicate introspection. Glassy organs set the stage for “Mirrors,” kicking off the journey. “Bird In The Hand” seesaws atop a wild guitar groove only to take flight on a breezy melodic bridge laced with a heavenly harmony and hummable solo. “I don’t scream on *‘Bird In The Hand*,*’* but it has a heavy, throbbing energy,” Jay observes. “It’s special for me.”

Then, there’s “Rapture.” A thick wall of distortion trembles under the weight of a skyscraping vocal performance as the refrain affirms, *“Sing it loud, I do believe, I’m becoming what I’m meant to be*.*”*

The frontman goes on, “You try to live correctly. At different points, you have these revelations where you realize the way you approached situations made everything difficult.”

The haunting dirge of “Guillotine” drops into a moment of anxious recess as Jay wonders, *“Am I closer to heaven or am I closer to hell? The deeper I go, it’s harder to tell*,*”* only to explode into a cathartic wail. “The Horse’s Breath” tramples expectations as it slips into an ominously catchy chorus bookended with psychedelic flourishes. “Dark Side” trudges towards a fiery finale engulfed in the flames of feedback, soulful verses, and one last howl, *“Now that you’ve gone to the dark side*.*”*

“I didn’t know how I was going to get out of this jam,” Jay confesses. “How was I going to take care of my family without being able to work and going through a bunch of turmoil? I lost some real close ones who just couldn’t find their way out. Everything becomes about perseverance at that point.”

The title references a collective of individuals the band has met over the last decade. These people don’t know each other, and they don’t know they’re apart of this cohort—yet they mean a whole lot to the vocalist.

“I call them *‘Darkfighters’*, because they fight the darkness and work to lift the ones around them,” he says. “Looking around, there seems to be and endless supply of people propagating fear, trauma and unhappiness, but those *Darkfighters* are working in the opposite direction.”

In the end, Rival Sons do too.

“Rival Sons is a representation of struggle and compromise,” Jay leaves off. “All of the compromise and struggle sharpens you. When we put our heads together and create, we make something that’s greater than the sum of its parts. We’re unified in that.”

“This is the sound of us coming into our own,” Scott concludes. “We’re pulling less on our inspirations and looking to ourselves. We’ve gotten further from our influences and gotten closer to what we are. *DARKFIGHTER* sounds like the Rival Sons.

**BOILER**

Rival Sons play rock ‘n’ roll in its purest form without apology or pretense. Instead, they simply plug in, turn up, and rip on a path of their own. Along the way, they’ve architected a critically acclaimed catalog, including *Pressure & Time* [2011], *Head Down* [2012], *Great Western Valkyrie* [2014], *Hollow Bones* [2016], and *FERAL ROOTS* [2019]. The latter represented a creative and critical high watermark, scoring a pair of GRAMMY® Award nominations in the categories of *“Best Rock Album”* and *“Best Rock Performance”* for the single “Too Bad.” Elevating the band to another level, “Do Your Worst” vaulted to #1 at Rock Radio as their biggest hit to date, tallying north of 60 million streams and counting. Speaking to their impact, *Rolling Stone* attested, *“Rival Sons have done their part to introduce new fans to rock*.*”* Beyond sharing stages with everyone from Black Sabbath, The Rolling Stones, and AC/DC to Guns N’ Roses and Lenny Kravitz, they’ve ignited television shows such as *The Late Late Show with James Corden*. During 2021, they launched their own label Sacred Tongue Recordings distributed by Thirty Tigers and celebrated the tenth anniversary of *Pressure & Time* by performing the album in its entirety on tour. Ultimately, Rival Sons aren’t here to tell you exactly what to think or what to feel, but they’ll give you one hell of a ride if you let them. That ride twists and turns like never before on their 2023 seventh full-length LP, *DARKFIGHTER* [Low Country Sound / Atlantic Records] kickstarted by the single “Nobody Wants to Die.”