

MxPx

Mike Herrera (vocals, bass)
Tom Wisniewski (guitar)
Yuri Ruley (drums)

"We got together as a band when we were so young that we're still young and still having the time of our lives," declares frontman Mike Herrera.

That is precisely the status of MxPx, the Bremerton, WA trio, as they prepare to release their third album for A&M, *Before Everything and After*. More than ten years together — eight as a touring act — and a handful of indie records preceding their major label releases have left MxPx with a wealth of experience and a lot on the minds of guitarist Tom Wisniewski, drummer Yuri Ruley and singer/bassist and songwriter Mike Herrera. It is no surprise, then, that MxPx bring a rare combination of veteran savvy and youthful exuberance to *Before Everything And After*.

Never at a loss for infectious hooks, the trio refocuses their pop energy on its latest work, displaying a previously unheard range of sounds and depth of production on songs like "It's Alright," "Play It Loud" and the ballad "Quit Your Life." Though the band remains firmly rooted in the breakneck-paced skate-punk of predecessors like the Descendents, All and Lagwagon, MxPx show an eagerness to change the pace while exploring and developing the melodic possibilities of their fourteen newest tracks.

The first single, "Everything Sucks (When You're Gone)," wraps a poignant tale of longing and long-distance love around a bittersweet melody. The song strikes an emotional chord that is revisited not only on slower tracks like "Quit Your Life" but on the buoyant "Broken Hearted" as well. "Well Adjusted," meanwhile, turns that formula on its head with its fervently upbeat pace. Taking a playful stab at the notion of teetering on the brink of sanity, the song is built around a punchy, driving rhythm and an equally captivating chorus. "Well Adjusted" has already left crowds bouncing at recent live shows.

"It seems like anything could fit on the new record," says Herrera. "It's a rollercoaster. At first it starts climbing up, and then it takes off. That's what we wanted. We wanted to make a record that took you somewhere, that didn't just take you to the top and then level off."

Guiding the band through *Before Everything And After*'s slow climbs and rapid descents was acclaimed producer Dave Jerden (*Jane's Addiction*, *Alice In Chains*, *The Offspring*). Under Jerden's guidance, the band sorted through nearly fifty songs written for the album by Herrera.

In the studio, Jerden's patience and willingness to experiment with instruments and add layers of sound helped the band to achieve stunning results, particularly on harmony filled tracks like the ode to life-in-a-band "Play It Loud" and "Kings Of Hollywood" — which sounds like the Beach Boys masquerading as modern punk rockers.

Their experience with the album's mixers, Chris Lord-Alge and Grammy-winner Tom Lord-Alge, also played a big part in the overall sound of this record. "When we heard the first mix that Chris Lord-Alge did I told him, 'I surrender, man,'" says Ruley. "It was amazing."

At the core of even the densest tracks, though, are the simple pop songs penned by Herrera with acoustic guitar in hand. It shouldn't be a shock, then, that the band chose for the first time to leave one of those songs in its unplugged form. When Herrera first played "Quit Your Life" his band mates were in immediate agreement that the song would remain acoustic.

"I was thinking it was going to be just acoustic, with hardly anything to it," Herrera laughs. "It ended up being sort of a production, with the orchestra and all the vocals. It was cool to hear something I wrote so done up."

"We wanted to break some rules on this record," says Herrera, "maybe even all of them." With *Before Everything and After*, they may have done exactly that.