

Tonic

Six Top 10 singles. Over 4 million records sold. Grammy nominations, platinum albums, numerous awards and hit songs around the world, plus the #1 most-played rock song of 1998. Tonic was a musical powerhouse, merging the raw honesty of rock to unabashed melody...and ushering rock n roll into a new millennium.

Many bands would be content with that sort of history. Not Tonic. The band is back in the studio after a two-year break, working on a follow up to their last album, Grammy-nominated Head On Straight.

"When we play music together it feels like going home," explains singer and guitarist Emerson Hart. "Getting together, playing some rock-n-roll: it's the best feeling in the world."

Hart founded Tonic with guitarist Jeff Russo – a childhood friend – adding bassist Dan Lavery shortly after inception. After storming the charts with debut album Lemon Parade and its monster hit "If You Could Only See," the band released two additional studio albums (Sugar and Head On Straight) as well as a live EP, Live & Enhanced. They've been featured on a number of soundtracks, including the lead single from "American Pie" ("You Wanted More"). This summer the band will release a Greatest Hits CD/DVD package.

Tonic's well-earned reputation as a massive live act came at a price. After finding themselves on the road for the better part of a decade, the band was ready to take a breather. "We toured relentlessly," Lavery admits. "It was a whirlwind."

"We needed a break," Hart agrees. "We toured for so long – we were on the road for ten years – and everybody needed the room to do something else, work on other projects, and come back stronger."

In Hart's case, that meant releasing a critically-acclaimed solo album, 2007's Cigarettes & Gasoline. The album spawned two Top 20 singles. While Lavery built a recording studio and recorded/toured with a variety of acts including The Fray and the Revisionists, Russo was focused on composing for film and television (including "Crossing Jordan," "Bionic Woman," and "The Unusuals") and releasing an album with side project Low Stars.

All three acknowledge the break was a welcome respite. In addition to exploring other creative outlets, the trio focused on their favorite project to date: fatherhood.

"Now that I'm a father, I see the world a little differently," Hart says. "It affects my lyrics and my music; I'm inspired to work harder. We're all more mature now, and much stronger musicians for it."

"Of course," he adds with a laugh, "We're in a rock band, so that translates to 60% maturity and 40% nine-year-old."

But it wasn't long before the band was compelled to get back together and start recording. "Tonic is like my baby," Russo says. "I know Emerson and Dan feel the same way. My other projects are very important to me, but there's something both comfortable and exciting about playing together."

Writing songs for their album – scheduled for a Fall release – and planning a summer tour including dates with the Gin Blossoms (the Gin & Tonic Tour, naturally), the band is hitting their stride and energized by what the future holds.

"We've been doing this long enough – it feels like it's what we're meant to do," Lavery explains. "And once you find the people that you enjoying doing it with, everything just falls into place."