

OLP's Raine Maida wants you to save the world

Heather Adler

Dose

Friday, November 09, 2007

Our Lady Peace frontman Raine Maida took a long look in the mirror recently and saw a man who was fed up with the world's consumer-bred apathy, political corruption, forgotten victims and inability to find passion in the face of celebrity-obsessed culture and counterfeit smiles. He took a journey within himself, writing beat poetry and contemplating what it means to be a man on this little, spinning ball of dirt we call Earth and came up with his first solo album - *The Hunters Lullaby* (out Tuesday, Nov. 13).



"I think what's happened is since industrialization, we've become consumers and its coming down to where 12-year-old kids are consumers now and 8-year-old kids want their own iPod and cellphone," Maida explains. "Once that consumption becomes the motive, you kind of lose that rebelliousness and 'Fuck you' attitude. That's what 'Yellow Brick Road' [the first single from *The Hunters Lullaby*] is about - it's about holding onto that somehow. With all the responsibilities that you gain, how do you keep that? How do you keep that really passionate attitude that you can change the world? It's really difficult. It's such a fuckin' struggle."

Ditching the rock format that brought him fame in Our Lady Peace, Maida contemplates his feelings of turmoil over living in such a fractured, modern world via an interesting infusion of beat poetry, spoken word and sparse guitar and piano arrangements. The musical shift, Maida says, was vital to opening himself up as an artist more than ever before, and he even goes so far as to say many of the songs are like journal entries set to beats.

"All these songs were created late at night, so it was kind of self reflection," Maida explains. "Even [the title] *Hunters Lullaby*, it's really about me going on my own. When you think about a hunter, you really get to know yourself. My image of a hunter is in this Canadian North, going out with a shotgun by yourself in the wild. If you've ever done that, gone on a trek on your own, you'll really get to know yourself. That's what I felt this record was for me."

"It was me sitting down, saying, writing all these things down and then looking back at them on paper," he continues. "Because they're not some ambiguous stream-of-conscious thoughts like what OLP does, I was looking at myself in the mirror. It was like, 'OK this is what I feel. This is what I believe.'"

And while Maida candidly shares his beliefs on the world, never do his reflections on politics, media and apathy drift into preaching territory. He's not telling you how to

think, but rather opening a window to himself so you can see what he believes. Maida admits staying off the soap box in his music is a difficult challenge. An activist who works with several organizations, including War Child and Apathy is Boring, he struggles not to turn too preachy.

"Any time you talk about stuff like this, you're at risk of sounding like an asshole, so, yeah, I try really hard not to sound like an asshole," he laughs. "I'm not always successful."

Maida says he decided to get involved with Apathy is Boring - a non-profit organization that encourages youth to be more active in their communities and the democratic process - because he sees modern man's general indifference as the main cause of so many of society's problems. By failing to protest injustices, they continue to happen. By failing to vote and voice public opinions, politicians are not kept accountable. By bingeing on celebrity gossip, rather than being informed on conflicts, such as the situation in Darfur, we allow them to continue.

"I really see that as probably the underlying biggest problem with Western culture," Maida asserts. "It's probably our biggest challenge as a society to get that belief again that we can change things."

Maida's frustration with the problems of the world and people's general lack in interest in fixing them comes to a head on album closer "One Second Chance," in which he sings about trying to fight against a wall that's too high, about wanting to write his senator but knowing they won't make anything better, about bloody faces we hold in the fire and don't ask why. Maida says he doesn't know exactly what he hopes people take away from the song and the others like it on the record -- he just hopes that maybe people relate and take up the torch on demanding change.

"I'm so disenchanted with politicians these days and where we are. ... I don't know what the answer is. I think more people becoming active and more people voting is the one thing we could do that could maybe become infectious and get some sort of change going," he explains. "I think we're just sinking back into being a pawn. Harper is such a pawn to Bush. All those things become so part of your everyday life, you can't get away from it. When you start to harbour those feelings, they really effect what you do. [On] that song and a bunch of the other songs, it just kind of made it into the music."

CLOSE WINDOW