



Sum 41: Deryck Whibley's Real-Life Records

**"I've always
just written
about my life—
whatever comes
out, comes out."**

Deryck Whibley, the driving force behind Sum 41's catchy, melodic pop-punk, is taking a break from rehearsals for the band's fourth studio album. "This time, I'm co-producing," he says. "We start recording in about three weeks, so we're finishing the demos right now, just getting everything ready."

Fans can expect some changes from Sum 41's last release, 2004's *Chuck*, partly due to the departure of longtime guitarist Dave Baksh in early 2006. "If you listen to our three records back-to-back, they're all so different that they almost don't sound like the same band," says Whibley. "Our last record was really heavy, almost like a metal record. We went pretty far with that idea, but we just don't want to do that anymore."

So for the new album, Whibley took a new writing approach: "I started writing songs that sounded like Sum 41, something that the band could do, but that didn't sound like anything we had done. It's kind of a cross between the first two records, with elements of the last one. Taking the best of every record and making it into something that sounds like classic Sum 41."

Above all, Deryck says, it's essential to express himself honestly. "I've always just written about my life—whatever comes out, comes out. I try not to stop or block anything. Even in the early days, when some of the topics probably weren't even

worth mentioning, it was still real. It was who I was when I wrote that song. So I don't really have any songs that I'm embarrassed about."

Sum 41's commitment to keeping things real is commendable, but at one point it almost got them killed. In 2004, the band traveled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to film a documentary in conjunction with War Child Canada. "Being in this kind of career and having success, you do so much work for the benefit of yourself," Whibley says. "So we thought, let's do something more hands-on, where we're actually doing something for other people. We came up with this idea of going to a war-torn country and doing a documentary about it, and then try to get it played on MTV and all the music outlets. And it just turned into a disaster—it was a war zone, and we got caught in the middle of it. I think we were lucky to get out. In the end it actually made the documentary a lot better, but it was a crazy situation at the time."

Despite—or perhaps because of—the close shave, Deryck says the documentary had an impact: "I think with our Congo documentary, a lot of people got it. War Child said that a lot of our fans contacted them and asked how they could help, or how to donate money. It was a really good thing—a way bigger thing than we'd ever anticipated."

Whibley is primarily known as a vocalist and guitarist, but he plays other instruments as well. "I have to be playing the right instrument for the song," he notes. "I can't write a heavy song on an acoustic guitar—it has to be the way the song is going to be. In my little studio at home, I have a big guitar amp—I turn it up loud and play through that all the time. But when I want to write another kind of song, I'll go to an acoustic guitar or a piano."

In the studio, Deryck plays a Yamaha P250 Professional Stage Piano, and he just received the new CP300 model. "I'm excited about it!" he says. "I already think the P250 just sounds great. It's what I write on, and I use it on the road, too. I record with it all the time—it sounds like a great piano! It's the best keyboard I've ever played. I tried out a bunch of keyboards, and I didn't like any of them. But then I played this one, and it was great."

With a decade of chart-topping records behind him and a new album in the works, Whibley is in a unique position to reflect on the meaning of success. "Success is a very personal word," he says. "To me, it means the achievement of a goal you've set. I think people believe that musicians are way richer than they really are! I guess we've been successful on every record so far, from a financial standpoint, and also in the sense of achieving what we've tried to do. But the best thing about it is that I get to do what I love!"

