**SIMPLE PLAN (Interview with Chuck Comeau)**

First off congratulations on receiving one of the ‘Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medals’ for all of your guys work with the Simple Plan Foundation!

Well thank you, we appreciate it! It’s been a good year, with the band and the foundation, a lot of those awards, it’s great! We’re excited about it!

Last year you guys reached a total of $1 million donations to organizations that support youth globally. Since you all have a voice and an outlet to do so, what do you think the importance of giving back to the youth is?

Yeah, I think it’s been really great for us starting a foundation, it’s been probably, I would say, one of the coolest things we have done here as a band. I think it’s a part of how we were raised, we’ve always been told if things are going well, if you’re straight up in a good position you should always try to give back. That’s why for us it’s so important, it has become a part of who we are as people and we all have the same kind of background, same kind of family, and good family values. I think we all agreed pretty quickly that it was important to do something, but I don’t think we ever expected it to become as big as it has. We just wanted to see what we could do and I don’t think we had huge expectations, but it definitely has grown a lot and it’s exciting. I think the first inspiration for it definitely came from meeting our fans, reading their letters and hearing their stories, and seeing how music and lyrics can really help them a lot with the stuff that they were going through. It was, lots of times, pretty hard to hear and I was like “Wow, man I didn’t realize that people were going through such tough times.” So it became obvious that if we were going to do something in terms of having a charity it would have to be focused on young people, they are the bulk of all our fans that come to our shows. We wanted to go beyond just writing songs for them and actually trying to do something more direct to help them out. So that’s where the idea for the foundation came out.

**Canadian Music Week is coming up soon, what are you most looking forward to?**

I think it’s going to be a lot of fun! Actually last time we’ve done it was when we were first starting out, before we were even signed so we haven’t been back in a while. So I think it’s going to be cool to just check out the event have a chance to go hear people, smart people, being involved in music and hear their new ideas. It’s cool to bring so many talented people and so many people that are creative in the same spot and to all kind of talk about what we’re all passionate about, which is music, so it’s going to be really cool. Obviously, us getting the award is very special to us. Obviously, our work with the foundation, once again being recognized after the Juno’s last year was a huge honor, and it was great that our peers kind of recognized what we’ve been doing. We’re very proud of that, very excited by that.
So that’s going to be a special moment once again for us. I feel like, even for me, to be involved in the panels and having a chance to talk to young people that want to get into music and want to be in a band. It brings you back to how we were when we were like 19 or 20 and we were just dreaming of touring, making albums, making videos, being in the studio, being on a real record label and all that. It brings you back to that passion that you see in these young people. If I have the chance to do these events and panels, and share whatever we’ve learned along the way and try to pass it on in some way, it’s always exciting. I’m always happy to be a part of it.

One of the panels you will be speaking on, will be a case study on breaking borders with international touring, what has it been like for you being in a Canadian band that tours internationally?

It’s been, probably, one of my favorite parts about being in a band. With all the traveling we get to do and all the places that we get to see, it definitely makes you a smarter person, more opened minded. On a personal level you can grow a lot from it and it’s been really really cool to have that chance to get out of your country and learn and see the world. I think our band had always had that ambition and that vision that was important to obviously, we care a lot about playing shows in Canada and being big in Canada was really important the U.S. as well but we always had an intuition and ambition to go beyond that and really be a world wide band. I think since our first tour in 2002 we always made an effort to go to all kinds of places like Europe where a lot of bands go, but also country’s where a lot of bands don’t go. Like in 2002/2003 we played for the first time in South East Asia we went to Thailand, we went to Indonesia, we went to Malaysia, Singapore, all over the region and back then there weren’t any bands that were going there, it was new. Traveling was so important, I guess because we were experiencing it we were like ‘Hey if our music has traveled this far, people like it over there it’s kind of important for us to go play to those people, they should be able to see us live if they feel like it.” It’s been cool to see how far the music has traveled and seeing these fans from so far away, often many of them don’t speak English and they still know every word of every song. It’s been really cool. The one thing that we’ve realized too is that how loyal the audiences are overseas. When you show them the respect of traveling and playing a show for them they stay fans for forever, that’s been really cool and really great. As a band it’s been really awesome to build a fan base around the world.

For the Simple Plan book you all were very involved in it, but it seems like this book especially means something to you. How did the idea come up to create the book?

It was censored around the fact that we’ve been the same lineup, same guys in the band for twelve years and marking the ten year anniversary of our first album felt like a special landmark, felt like a special milestone for a band. We wanted to have a look back and celebrate that and just for our own sake go back and revisit the history a little bit and maybe have the chance to take a step back and appreciate the journey we’ve been on. It’s crazy, most bands don’t last that long so we’re very proud of the fact that we’re still hear and still doing well. We wanted to share the story for people who might have not known about it or our fans that wanted to know more and dig deeper and go back until we first
started out when we were 13/14 years old all the way to now. We wanted to create the ultimate fan
document that they could go back and be like “Man, I didn’t know this” or “Oh really, that’s how it went
down?.” Beyond that just on a personal level, just to have something, it’s like the perfect scrapbook
with the stories we can show our kids one day and be like “Hey, this is what we’ve done.” So that was
the idea and I think our fans have been really stoked on it and we put a lot, a lot, a lot of effort into it to
make sure it was complete and that it was as awesome as it could be. I’m really proud at how it came
out.

Being a fan myself, what I found really fascinating was the story of Pierre’s and yours pervious band
Reset (formed in 1993). How was it digging inside those past memories, some of which weren’t very
pleasant, and releasing them into the public?

Well, some parts were definitely blurry because it was so long ago so we had to go back and try to
reconstruct the timeline and what exactly happened. Obviously it’s all distant memories but we had
kept a lot of the artifacts and we had kept a lot of the archives, I’m not sure why we kept all that stuff.
Every time you’re in a band and you do something there’s no job security or there’s no insurance, so you
always feel like “Hey this might be the last time we do something.” Obviously, you hope it’s going to last
for a long time and you hope that you’ll keep going but deep inside there might be some insecurity I
guess and it makes you always question “Hey is this going to happen again?” or “Is this the last time?.”
For me, even when we started out, I was like “Oh, this might be the last time we open for Face to Face”
or “This may be the last time we play with Lagwagon, so let’s save all this, let’s keep all this stuff as
memories” so one day I can look back on it. We always had that in mind, like we should save everything,
one day I might be happy that I saved that or that I have it. When it came time to sit down and work on
the book we had all these boxes in my parent’s basement I had to go through it took me the whole
summer to sort everything out, but I’m so happy and so glad I did. It’s part of your life, those little stupid
things that at the moment don’t feel that important, but ten years down the road when there’s a story
and there’s a history of what you accomplished they have more meaning, it makes the book way
more interesting. It was cool for us to tell the story because a lot of times people assume “Oh, they were
a band that was put together by a label” or “They haven’t paid their dues” or something like that, it’s
cool to show a different side of that. Every story, every band, there’s a lot of hard work behind the
scenes that people don’t see it doesn’t just happen easily, there’s always a struggle there’s always lots
of commitment. We wanted to show that to young people who are starting bands or any kind of
projects really, they can see it takes patience it takes hard work and lots of commitment.
I remember watching the “I’d Do Anything” music video and thinking “who is this random band that Mark Hoppus has collaborated with?” but you all and Blink 182 had history even before that song. Reading the SP book, Mark Hoppus was a huge factor in Simple Plan’s starting out success, for people who haven’t read the book can you tell them the history behind the collaboration?

It’s funny we met when we were in our first band Reset, we played some shows with Blink (back in the day they were called Blink not Blink 182). We played on a festival with them, we didn’t become best friends in the whole world with them we just knew of each other, we liked them I think they liked us. We saw each other again a few years down the road when we were starting this new band and Blink were just about to explode and become one of the biggest bands in the world at the time. We played them some of our demos and Mark was super cool and super supportive of the new project and was like “Whatever I can do to help out, let me know” it was amazing to see that, to see someone that didn’t have a lot of reasons to be like that but that’s just the kind of guy that he is. When we were almost done with the record we called him up and I asked him if he wanted to be involved in “I’d Do Anything” (a song that he really, really liked when we played the demos) and he was like “Yeah, come down to San Diego” and we did. For us as huge Blink 182 fans and being a band with our first album to have that help and to have him on the album was truly a gift, it helped us a lot with MTV and getting our first airplay. He was very instrumental in giving us a little launch with our career so we owe him a lot and he’s a really cool guy, he still follows the band and this career and still very proud we’ve been involved with him.

After Enema Of The State was released you met up with the guys of Blink 182 when they were in Montreal doing some press related stuff. When they gave you a copy of their album to listen to, you instantly knew that “All The Small Things” should be their next single, and you told that to Tom DeLonge. What did he say?

(Laughing) He was like “Oh yeah, I know man, this song’s great! We’re not sure yet, we’re kind of debating it but thanks for telling me that!” I think they knew it was a special song, but I think that when you put out a record you love so many songs you have so many different options. Even for us when we finish an album we’re like “Oh this can be a single, this can be a second single” and you have all these scenarios. When you have people around you that didn’t write the songs or were not involved in the studio or anything and they’re from the outside and you have one, two, ten, twenty people telling you that “This song is special” I think it reinforces what you already think. I think he probably heard it from two hundred people telling him that “You got to put out this song, it’s so good.” I was just stoked I got a chance to hear it before the whole world; I just knew it was going to be such a big record. I was like “This is the kind of record I wish our band could make.” So I was really, really happy for them when all the success came, they are just good guys.
One of the many popular reasons of the album title “Still Not Getting Any...” was because you guys were still not getting any respect or good reviews. Has that fact ever had any impact on the band to maybe calling it quits?

I don’t think we ever really felt like that to be honest with you. There’s been moments that have been tougher than others, there’s been moments were your like “Ah man, I’m not sure what we should do” or “This tour is really, really long, I just kind of what to be home” and we talk about it in the book and everything but I don’t think there has ever been a moment where we were seriously considering “Ok this is it.” I think that our passion for music and our love for music I know it sounds corny, but it’s true it never really went away it’s always there. It’s normal that in ten/ twelve years being a full time band there’s bound to be some moments where it’s a little harder, but the one thing that we always remember is how much we wanted this and how hard we worked to get there. So it makes you appreciate what you build even more, it makes you treasure it a lot more. You don’t want to mess it up, you don’t want to get rid of it, and you don’t want to throw it away. We spent half of our lives working on this, trying to be in a band and everything, so I think that everyone in the band has a lot of respect for each other and for what we have built together, so I don’t think there was ever a moment where it was considered.

You and Pierre recently had a writing session. How’d that go?

It went good, it was the first time we started writing since the last album so there’s obviously a little bit of rust. You have to get the rough patches out, but it was a lot of fun. It went a lot better than expected, because the first few songs you usually it’s like “Oh boy, ok here we go again- we’re going to have to work hard at this” but it’s all good, we got some good songs. We’ll probably start writing again soon, it was just a good start to the writing process and hopefully they will come out. We’re trying to figure out how we’re trying to release new music to the fans, but there will definitely be new songs before the next album comes out, that’s the plan right now, that’s the project; some kind of mini album or EP before the full length comes to make sure the fans are happy and that the get new music.

What are some of the brainstorming ideas/influences for this next EP/album?

I don’t know if there’s necessarily one influence, there’s just so many, it’s just whatever you hear whatever excites you at the time. If you hear a new song or even if you watch a new movie and there’s a cool story line; inspiration can come from anything, mostly it comes from our lives and what we’re going through and everything. We haven’t really discussed one specific them yet, we might like when we started writing again for the album, but in general we just sit down and start writing every day and try to write something new and something better than the day before, something diverse. With all of our albums we always have different styles, we always make an effort that it’s not just one thing. The last record we went back to our roots and we really enjoyed having the fast up tempo pop songs; that was really cool to write those, to have a modern twist on those. At the same time we had songs like
“Summer Paradise” which was completely different than anything we’ve done before and it ended up being on of the most successful songs we’ve ever had. It’s wide open right now, we can do whatever we feel like and I’m not exactly sure what that’s going to be yet.

**For the EP are you going to use the unreleased songs on it or the newer songs?**

I think it’s going to be a mix, some songs that didn’t make the ‘Get Your Heart On’ album are really, really good and it was really heartbreaking to not put them on so we definitely want to share some of them with the fans and maybe a few new songs as well. It’s going to be a mix, we just have to sit down and start recording them that’s it! So that should probably happen in the next few months.

**Pierre also said that you all had a guy doing a lot of video stuff that you weren’t putting on your website, so you could make it more special than a 5 minute vlog. Are there any plans of making another DVD like A Big Package For You?**

I mean there’s so many projects, it’s funny, it’s hard to give precise detail because we’re figuring out exactly what we want to do. We’ve been filming for the last eight years, pretty much since 2003/2004, like where A Big Package For You kind of left off, we’ve been filming everything we have so much footage; we just have to go through it and try to figure out what the format is going to be- is it going to be like A Big Package For You, is it going to be something different I’m not sure yet. We’re definitely not going to let this all go to waste; I know the fans really want something like that. I would say at this point maybe around the next album, we could probably do something. We have this live DVD that we shot in Melbourne, Australia that we want to put out as well, so we’re just trying to figure out what is the best format to do all that. It’s going to take a minute, but we’re definitely excited about it!