

IGNITE

In 2019, Orange County, California Punk and Hardcore institution, IGNITE were a band at a crossroads. Over 25 years, IGNITE had taken their hardcore foundations and not merely turned them into the sound of a band that has refused to be categorized but had become a worldwide force in their own right. With five albums behind them including 2006's breakout, *Our Darkest Days* and 2016's *A War Against You* (which entered the German album charts at #6) as well as countless tours through Europe, North America, Australia, South America and the Far East, the core of the band: bassist Brett Rasmussen, guitarists Nik Hill and Kevin Kilkenny and drummer Craig Anderson found themselves in search of a new voice. They found themselves without a singer.

"There was never any question about whether we would continue," says Brett. "It was more a question of where do we go next. How does IGNITE continue to grow as a band?" Against a backdrop of a Covid-shuttered world and a nation embroiled in the fire of riots, apocryphal politics and cultural sea changes, the four members of IGNITE not merely looked for a new vocalist but also penned their most expansive set of songs to date. "We went back to our earliest days and pulled from our hardcore influences," says Brett. "We also looked beyond where we left off on the last record and really worked to push ourselves musically, lyrically. We were inspired."

Cut to almost two years later. IGNITE's self-titled album is the moment where they reconcile themselves with their history. "It never felt like a struggle or an effort," says guitarist Kevin Kilkenny "It felt like the five of us pulling in the same direction." The album not only encapsulates their determination to redefine themselves but also stands as one of the strongest efforts to date. That sense of inspiration and abandon literally explodes from the speakers on opening track, "Anti-Complicity-Anthem". It's IGNITE firing on all cylinders. Melodic, political, poignant and most importantly - driven. "That track is a mantra for me," says Nik. "It's about having a voice in the face of the trials and tribulations we all face working through the shame, the indignity and the loss of life that have become part of our experience as individuals and as a country." At the center of it all is the new vocalist Eli Santana, an unexpected choice for the band, but a perfect example of IGNITE's willingness to step beyond expectations.

“Eli was a surprise, no question,” says Brett. In fact, IGNITE’s new vocalist is largely known as a guitarist in Los Angeles-based metal bands Holy Grail and Huntress. However, after culling through a number of potential frontmen, Santana proved himself the clear-cut choice. “He had the enthusiasm, the talent, the voice and the same sort of excitement for the band that we do,” says Brett. “My first or second Hardcore show ever was IGNITE at The Showcase Theater in Corona,” says Eli. “Growing up in Southern California, bands like Suicidal Tendencies or Bad Religion were just as much an influence for me as Metallica.”

Reconnecting with long-time producer Cameron Webb (Motorhead, Pennywise), who has worked with the band since 2000’s *A Place Called Home*, the sessions for the new album were, “Probably the easiest time we’ve ever had in the studio,” says Rasmussen. “Three weeks to record, another week to mix – normal and not over-thought.” The results are IGNITE, at one minute introspective and the next, their sing-along-galvanizing best.

Even though IGNITE hails from Southern California, they’ve spent most of their career distinguishing themselves as a band without borders or boundaries. Recent years have seen them co-headlining touring packages like Europe’s Persistence tour with the likes of Hatebreed or hitting festival stages with the likes of Motorhead or Rise Against. Each time, winning over the most varied of crowds. “We’ve always tried to play with the most diverse crowds we can,” says Brett. We’ve toured with Punk and Hardcore mainstays like Bad Religion, Misfits and Suicidal Tendencies, but we’ve also played with bands like The Used or Flogging Molly and of course, in Europe we play with tons of Metal bands like In Flames or Machine Head.” In fact, Machine Head has covered “Bleeding” to fan and critical acclaim.”

With a new vocalist up front and a new album in hand, IGNITE are ready to get back to work. Already, tours in Europe and the U.S. are on the books and the band couldn’t be happier about it. “It’s a new chapter for IGNITE,” reaffirms Brett. “But there’s a lot of looking back to some of our earliest records like *Call on My Brothers* and having the same feeling writing these songs with a new singer.” In fact, the band has re-recorded one of their earliest songs “Turn” as a B-side. In these Southern California stalwarts’ minds, the more things change, the more they stay the same. “This is what we love doing – as it was in 1993 and as it is now.