



GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES CROSSING TOGO

WORDS JACK FRINK

Of Love, Scorn and Insecurity, the debut album from Houston's urbane, eclectic rock duo Crossing Togo, may sound a little wordy on first listen. That's precisely what lyricist/singer Ko and guitarist Scott Spencer want.

"Ko is a poet, a wordsmith," says Spencer. Born in Japan, Ko emigrated to Kentucky at the age of 8. He is fascinated by the emotional and structural power of linguistics. "I think in words, while Scott does symbols," Ko says. "We're working from different contexts, with lots of cultural and generational differences."

They work much like the legendary Morrissey and Johnny Marr of The Smiths. "I'm coming from a more musical vernacular," says Spencer. "I'll put down the music or the riff and shoot it over to Ko with a song title or a certain feeling I'm going for. It's organic."

For Ko, the work was "creatively effortless. I don't remember not liking something that came up in the studio; it all pretty much fell together for me. [Producer] Eric Jarvis expands it sonically; he's got this great creative ear." Crossing Togo is a bit of a standout in the local Houston scene, which is dominated by hip-hop acts. Most rock groups focus on covering other artists' music. Nonetheless, both members say they are "firmly planted" in H-Town.

"There's a great artistic community that is underestimated and marginalized," Spencer reveals. "But it's a burgeoning underground, and it's an honor to bring this other part of the Houston scene to the front."

"We're not competing with hip hop," Ko concedes. "The two scenes are complementary. Mike Frost, who did our cover art, works with rap artists all the time."

"The industry is changing," Spencer continues. "The album was a labor of love, and we're evolving to a point where we all can do this on our own."

The excellent *Of Love, Scorn and Insecurity* is available now.

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GO LIVE GET OUT OF THE NEST

WORDS RAFAEL RIVAS

Much like eggnog and whiskey, it goes without saying that music and December were made for each other. While some artists will be busy promoting their new album releases, others will be heading to a Houston stage near you. From hip hop to rock, we've compiled the list of some of the hottest acts taking the stage this month. No worries—there are no remnants of season jingles here.

As one of Jamaica's greatest exports, The Wailers continue to bring reggae music to the world. The group, whose introduction was in akimbo with Bob Marley, continues to tour places like Greece and Brazil. A fusion of ska and rocksteady, The Wailers will rock Houston one more time. *December 9, House of Blues.*

This Brooklynite was part of the NYC hip-hop airwaves domination in the early 2000s. Rapper Fabolous never lost his New York City swagger and his style for catchy hooks. The Grammy nominee's hits include, "Can't Deny It," "Breath" and "Young's (Holla Back)." *December 9, House of Blues.*

LMFAO is one of those acts that came out of left field. Rocking the '80s gear, pimped-out fros and run-a-muck party music, this nephew-uncle duo is taking over the dance floor. Blending dance music with electronic crunkcore, Redfoo and Sky Blu, better known as LMFAO came to prominence through their club hit, "I'm in Miami Bitch" and their follow up hit, "La La La." *December 17, House of Blues.*

Think All-American Rejects, Cobra Starship and Jay Sean all on one stage. The Rejects should just buy a house here since this is about their third Houston pit stop this year. Hits like "Gives You Hell" and "It Ends Tonight" have made them a Houston favorite. Cobra Starship made our "Good Girls Go Bad" this summer and Jay Sean's hit "Down" is on auto play on our local radio stations. *December 18, Verizon Wireless Theater.*

What's Texas without a little country? The Eli Young Band will be ringing in 2010, starting the year with songs from their latest album, *Jet Black & Jealous*. Hailing from Denton, Texas, this four-man band has hit country music with their mega-hit "When it Rains" and continue to be a Houston favorite. *December 31, Verizon Wireless Theater.*