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Brad Avery Of Third Day



In 1996, Nashville based Reunion Records signed a band out of Atlanta, Georgia to a multi-album contract. Ten years later Third Day is still going strong and has defined what a successful Christian rock band looks like. With eight gold albums, one platinum album, two Grammy Awards and twenty-four Dove Awards (Gospel music's highest honor) the band has reached just about every goal they could have imagined and continue to be a driving force in their genre. Epiphone's Don Mitchell recently spoke with Third Day guitarist Brad Avery from his home in Atlanta about touring, recording and living life as part of the hottest rock band in Christian music.

EPI: So tell me what's going on with you and the band right now?

BRAD: We're nearing the end of the summer festival season and getting ready to launch into our fall tour. The lighter summer schedule has been nice but now I'm looking forward to being on the road for the next few months. We'll probably

do forty-five cities before Christmas.

EPI: Is your schedule this year heavier than normal?

BRAD: We're on an eighteen month cycle when it comes to making records. The year we do a record is a year when we're light on shows with maybe sixty or seventy on the schedule. Then the next year we'll tour the record. This is one of those years where we are supporting a record so we'll probably do 120 shows this year.

EPI: This year you have been supporting your tenth album "Wherever You Are". How is the record doing?



BRAD: It's doing great, in fact it has sold better to this point than any record we've ever done. It's just kind of rocking up the charts. The first single was "Cry Out To Jesus" which is a real powerful song. It was number one for quite a while and now the second single, "Mountain Of God" has been number one for two or three weeks.

EPI: Do you think it's your best work.

BRAD: Well, the cool thing about this record is that it came from a real personal place and because of that I think it connects with people. It deals with struggles and hurts and pains, which everybody can relate to.

EPI: I heard that you were able to record this project in your hometown of Atlanta.

BRAD: Yes we were. As a matter of fact we recorded it in Mac's house. (Lead singer Mac Powell) He has a studio in his basement and we did a lot of the record right there. Some of it was recorded in Nashville but a lot of it was done at Mac's place.

EPI: That's nice!

BRAD: It was great. Well, maybe not for his family (Laughs) but it was nice because we could work at our own pace. It was easier to be creative just because of the atmosphere. We never had the feeling of being “on the clock” so we were a little more free to try some things and kind of do whatever.

EPI: Any recording tricks that you’d like to share with the thousands of guitarists reading this interview?

BRAD: No big secrets really. (Laughter) More times than not I just use a couple of mics and blend them together. I may use an SM57 close and then something with a diaphragm in the room to get kind of the best of both worlds. I do like to mix speakers a bit however. Maybe something vintage in one cabinet and something a little brighter in another. It’s fun to experiment with that kind of thing.

EPI: Tell me about your current live rig.

BRAD: I’ve used Custom Audio rigs for the last five years or so. A couple of years ago I had them build me a switcher for the Wire tour and that’s when I had a wall of Epiphone Galaxy 25’s.

EPI: Those are pictured in [the ad](#) we did with you back then.

BRAD: Yes, that wall of amps was really cool and I still use those Galaxy’s. In fact we were just in the studio for a couple of days and I was using a couple of them. They’re awesome. Epiphone also just sent me a [Blues Custom 30](#) and I’m really digging that amp. I run it through a [Triggerman 412](#) cabinet.

EPI: I know you have been playing your antique white [Epiphone Les Paul Custom](#) for several years now. Is that still your main guitar?

BRAD: Yeah, I would have to say that it’s still my main guitar. If I had to go on the road on a fly show and could only take one guitar, that one is definitely going. That and probably my back up which is an [Epiphone Les Paul Custom Plus](#). With those two guitars I can cover just about anything



EPI: Any other guitars that have you excited these days?

BRAD: Yes, the last one I got is an [Epiphone Elitist Country Deluxe](#) in the Sunrise Orange color. I've been using it a lot lately and I am loving that thing. I used it on the new record on both singles and I've been using it live as well. It's kind of my new favorite. It's great for the power ballads. It's awesome. I get so many compliments on that guitar, not just because it's obviously visually very pretty but because it sounds great too. I also still use my Epiphone Firebird and pull out my [Epiphone G-400](#) when I just need to flat out rock and bark a little bit.

EPI: Tell me about the new Third Day Christmas Album.

BRAD: It's called Christmas Offerings and should come out in October. It's in the vein of our other Offerings projects and includes four live cuts, four original Christmas songs that we wrote and five traditional Christmas studio cuts. The live cuts were pretty cool because we recorded them in front of a live studio audience of about one hundred people.

EPI: And how is the personal life going?

BRAD: Couldn't be better. I've got three little girls now that are seven, four and two and my wife and I are also in the process of adopting a baby from China so



we're excited about that. It's been a long process but hopefully we will be able to finalize things over the Holidays or shortly after the new year.

EPI: I hate to say it but since I met you ten years ago you have become an old man! (Laughter) I'm just kidding!

BRAD: No really. I turned thirty-five two days ago but I have almost twenty years of touring under my belt and you count those like dog years. I'm really like 180 years old! (Laughter) But it's been great. I've been able to do something I love and in the process hopefully help some people along the way.

EPI: I have been impressed with the fact that you guys have stayed loyal to your faith and seem to be trying to give back. Compassion for your audience

and the world in general seems to be a priority for you.

BRAD: To be honest with you I would kind of feel empty doing this for any other reason. I love playing guitar and anybody who has seen me play knows that I'm pretty passionate about music but the reality is that playing guitar is only a small percentage of what I do with my life. I feel like I have a tremendous opportunity as a follower of Christ to use the platform that He's given me to shed some light on things. I feel like I have a responsibility to do so and it's important to us as a band, especially where we are right now. Hopefully we can point our audience to people that are doing great work out there. Organizations like [World Vision](#) which is a hunger and relief organization and [Habitat for Humanity](#) who provide housing for low income families and [Invisible Children](#) which is an organization I have become involved with. Those are the things that are important to us.

EPI: Thanks Brad for your time and we are proud to be associated with you and Third Day. Keep up the good work and we look forward to seeing what's in store of you and Third Day this year.

BRAD: Thank you.

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