

## The Maine

### I Love You But... I Chose The Maine

The Maine are a thrilling aberration in the unruly world of modern rock music: a band whose following has organically grown to unprecedented heights nearly 20 years into their career, thanks to the raw emotional power of their cathartic breed of alt-rock.

In a bold new pinnacle for the Arizona-bred five-piece—vocalist John O’Callaghan, guitarists Jared Monaco and Kennedy Brock, bassist Garrett Nickelsen, drummer Pat Kirch—their tenth studio album *Joy Next Door* arrives as their most high-concept work yet while doubling down on The Maine’s singular balance of sonic ferocity and unflinching sincerity. Completed just before embarking on their biggest tour to date (the 2026 headline run I Love You But...I Chose The Maine), the result is a glorious testament to a band whose unbridled passion only burns brighter with time.

With its title inspired by O’Callaghan’s recent move back to his childhood neighborhood, *Joy Next Door* intimately chronicles the chaotic beauty of the human condition. “The title refers to being reminded of a more carefree time in your life, but it’s also about acknowledging that joy can coexist with fear and worry and doubt, and all the other complicated feelings we all struggle with and maybe try to suppress,” says O’Callaghan. “For me it’s the most difficult record we’ve ever done as far as the lyrical element—mainly because I wanted every single song to tell the truth about what was happening with me internally, with an openness that I haven’t always fully embraced.”

To amplify the impact of that viscerally personal storytelling, The Maine recorded *Joy Next Door* in the exact sequence of its tracklist. “We’d never worked that way before, but it really helped us to capture all the emotional peaks and valleys that are such a huge part of this album,” says Kirch. Co-produced by O’Callaghan and Beach Weather’s Sean Silverman at The Maine’s own studio, *Joy Next Door* ultimately embodies a relentless intensity and reveals a band transformed into an unstoppable force through their expansive live experience—including, in the past few years alone, performing at major festivals like Boston Calling and When We Were Young, embarking on an arena tour with Fall Out Boy, and headlining the fourth biannual iteration of their massively successful 8123 Fest.

After opening on the acoustic-guitar-led confession of “Green,” *Joy Next Door* tears through wildly combustible songs like “Half a Spark”: a frenzied meditation on longing to return to the recklessness of youth. Next, on “Palms,” the album turns triumphant as the band offers up a galvanizing anthem for claiming authorship over your own life. “If ‘Half A Spark’ is an attempt to escape or deny your current reality, then the sentiment behind ‘Palms’ is more like, ‘Fuck fate, I get to decide,’” says O’Callaghan. Later,

on the exhilarating lead single "Die To Fall," *Joy Next Door* takes on a breakneck momentum and delivers a full-tilt burst of life-affirming energy. "That song came from feeling like I'm watching life from the sidelines, and being envious of those with the ability to live in the moment," says O'Callaghan. "I wanted the song itself to sound like completely letting go—almost like you're being shot out of a rocket."

True to The Maine's ethos of perpetual evolution, *Joy Next Door* radiates a potent urgency partly born from their refusal to retread well-worn terrain. "We've done a ton of exploration over the last 20 years, and doing the opposite of what feels familiar is usually the best way to get to a place we haven't gone yet," says O'Callaghan. "With this record in particular, I remember telling Sean, 'I'm 37 and don't want to make an album that sounds like I'm trying to be 23.' The important thing was to create something that we all loved, with the level of authenticity that people have come to expect from us." Since the arrival of 2008's *Can't Stop Won't Stop* (the first of five LPs to chart on the Billboard 200), that authenticity has earned The Maine one of the most devoted fanbases in American rock—a close-knit contingent called the 8123 Family, named for a parking garage where the band members often hung out in their early years. Known for cultivating an extraordinarily deep connection with their fans (including committing to meeting all audience members in admission-free post-show gatherings and phoning fans as thanks for pre-ordering their albums), The Maine have watched their following expand exponentially and extend to younger generations in recent years. "It's crazy to be two decades in and going out on our biggest tour ever, and in some cities playing venues with double the capacity of places we've played before," says Kirch. "There isn't anything in particular we can identify to explain why that's happened, but it feels really great to keep building an audience that's beyond so passionate. It feels like a Grateful Dead type of thing, where we have fans who've been to hundreds of shows and still travel all over to see us live."

Looking back on their journey so far, The Maine express an immense gratitude for what O'Callaghan sums up as the "symbiotic relationship between us and our fans." "There are so many people who've grown up with us and have become familiar faces at this point," he notes. "They're the ones who've given us the ability to be a band for so long, so we're always thinking about how we can nurture that connection as much as possible." "One of the most common things we hear from fans is that we've brought them a sense of community," Kirch adds. "I always loving hearing that, because that's exactly what the band did for me. It's incredible that we have these amazing fans who are all in on our music, all the way down to the deep cuts—but the best part is knowing we've helped them find a place where they belong."