

All Time Low

By fully tapping into the power of their lifelong union as friends and bandmates, All Time Low ignite a new spark on their 2020 eighth full-length studio album, *Wake Up, Sunshine* [Fueled By Ramen]. These four lifelong friends—Alex Gaskarth [lead vocals, guitar], Jack Barakat [lead guitar, backing vocals], Zack Merrick [bass, backing vocals], and Rian Dawson [drums]—walked into a tiny room, plugged in, and turned up with the same spirit, but a little more wisdom, a lot more experience, and proficiency gained by performing to millions worldwide. As a result, they delivered a dynamic body of work at the apex of pop punk prowess, rock energy, and genre-busting adventurousness.

“We really tapped into the chemistry between us,” affirms Alex. Everybody brought something to the table. A lot of what you’re hearing came from those magic moments together.”

Throughout a catalog streamed nearly half-a-billion times and highlighted by two gold albums, two gold singles, and a platinum single, All Time Low perennially raised the bar for both pop and punk. Since 2003, the group notched five straight Top 10 entries on the *Billboard* Top 200, spanning the gold-certified *Nothing Personal* [2009], *Dirty Work* [2011], *Don’t Panic* [2012], *Future Hearts* [2015], and *Last Young Renegade* [2017]. The latter attracted tastemaker acclaim from the likes of *Rolling Stone*, *Paste*, and more as the band canvased the world, headlining arenas on three continents. 2019 saw them celebrate *Nothing Personal* with a string of sold-out shows and a re-recorded live performance of the album at RedBull Studios. The record’s influence remained prevalent with *Rock Sound* citing its impact on Fall Out Boy, 5 Seconds of Summer, and more. Along the way, they achieved honors such as “Album of the Year” at both the Alternative Press Music Awards for *Dirty Work* and Rock Sound Awards for *Last Young Renegade*. For their next chapter, they spent January of 2019 in Rian’s studio in Nashville joined by co-writer, producer, and collaborator Zakk Cervini. Without time constraints or restrictions, ideas flowed freely. As such, they harnessed unbridled energy under one roof.

“It was just good friends hanging out in a room,” smiles Rian. “The vibe was comfortable. Without any real direction or goal, we allowed ideas to pour out. Studios can be intimidating. A bunch of strangers are listening for you to fuck up, so they can fix it. To have a studio like mine in an old converted house changed the vibe. Instead of recording in the vocal booth, Alex even did vocals in the control room. After day one, we knew we were on to something.”

They carried this vibe over to a rental house in the Palm Desert during the summer. The boys moved in and split their time between writing, barbecuing, and swimming in the pool. “Rian and I would be inside working on a song, and Jack and Zack would be floating in the pool—then we’d switch off,” recalls Alex. “The creative juices were unrestricted. We had a lot of moments of clarity. We didn’t need to force anything. By the end of it, we had 25 songs. We whittled those down to 15. It’s got to be the longest we’ve ever gone, because we were so happy with everything.”

This feeling courses through the first single and opener “Some Kind of Disaster.” Clean guitars glisten, and a propulsive beat drives towards the acapella crescendo—“*And it’s all my fault that I’m still the one you want*”—as waves of distortion kick up.

“It was one of the first tunes we wrote in Nashville,” recalls Alex. “I scribbled the words down in a notebook. I liked the vulnerability of confessing your sins. It’s an ode to the band, to the fanbase, and to starting over again. It’s an opening statement that references things I’ve said over the years as well. We wanted to write something big and anthemic and present All Time Low to the world again. This was it.”

Meanwhile, the follow-up “Sleeping In” hinges on a snappy palm-muted riff underneath cheeky lyrical come-ons such as, “If I said I want your body, would you hold it against me? Seven in the morning while I listen to Britney.”

“It’s dedicated to the person who you want to stay in bed all day with,” the frontman goes on. “You picture the best moments of your best relationships. You had a cute night, look at the clock, and go, ‘Holy shit, it’s 6AM! Where did the night go?’”

An off-kilter time signature pulsates through “Trouble Is” as the song vaults from vivid images of a “a drop of bleach, favorite tee,” to a hook about “people that are stuck on you from past experience,” according to Alex.

The title track “Wake Up, Sunshine” encapsulates an overarching theme for the boys. Robust riffs pave the way for dynamic verses. It culminates on an engaging and empowering refrain, “Wake up, Sunshine. Somebody loves you for yourself.” It spirals out on a dreamy bridge underscored by ethereal crooning and clean strumming. At the same time, it picks up a thread from earlier in the All Time Low story...

“It’s about self-validation, being okay with yourself, and not having to worry about being cool,” explains Alex. “We’re all seeking validation and will go to insane lengths to feel loved and wanted. In doing so, you create an unnecessary mental prison. It discusses the realization there are people out there who care for you. It felt like an awakening. It even applies to the story on *Last Young Renegade*. If you treat the last record like a dream, this is All Time Low waking up back in the real world. There are several little Easter Egg moments in the record,” he smiles.

On the other end of the spectrum, “Monsters” [feat. blackbear] illuminates the group’s progression as it marries hummable guitar and a nimbly rapped cameo by blackbear. Empowered prior by writing for his other project WhoHurtYou, the song holds a special significance for Jack.

“It’s one of the more emotional, dark cuts on the record,” adds Jack. “Being able to create such a special All Time Low song and have my DNA on that one in particular was unexplainable. That one just stood out. At the time, WhoHurtYou helped me feel more comfortable and gave me the confidence to contribute. I haven’t felt that way since the *Dear Maria, Count Me In*’ days.”

Elsewhere, “Pretty Venom (Interlude)” offers an acoustic reprieve awash in airy keys, while the guys join forces with The Band CAMINO on the upbeat “Favorite Place.”

“Clumsy” surveys the group’s career as it delivers a timeless display of everything they do best. Zack elaborates, “That song is basically everything All Time Low has been for the last 14 years, but it’s just a more mature version of it in terms of the lyrics, musicianship, and vibes.”

The record climaxes on the sunny finale “Basement Noise.” It conjures blissful nostalgia with a glitchy bounce and faint distortion.

“It’s a really special one Alex and I wrote about the beginning of All Time Low,” grins Jack. “We would walk home from school to Rian’s parents’ basement and have our first practices. The memories are so real.”

They make even more memories on *Wake Up, Sunshine* though.

“This is an amalgam of all of our albums,” Alex leaves off. “It has pieces of every record we’ve ever done sprinkled throughout. It speaks volumes to who All Time Low has always been. The four of us know each other better than ever.”

“This is the record we all wanted to make,” Zack asserts. “We wanted to show you how we feel. We also wanted to make songs that will shine in the live setting. The goal is for you to want to watch us jump around on stage and play them.”

“When you hear it, I hope you feel what we felt,” Rian concludes. “Hopefully, it’s like you’re in the room with us.”

BOILER

Throughout a catalog streamed nearly half-a-billion times and highlighted by two gold albums, two gold singles, and a platinum single, All Time Low perennially raised the bar for both pop and punk. Since 2003, the group notched five straight Top 10 entries on the *Billboard* Top 200, spanning the gold-certified *Nothing Personal* [2009], *Dirty Work* [2011], *Future Hearts* [2015], and *Last Young Renegade* [2017]. The latter attracted tastemaker acclaim from the likes of *Rolling Stone*, *Paste*, and more as the band canvased the world, headlining arenas on three continents. 2019 saw them celebrate *Nothing Personal* with a string of sold-out shows and a re-recorded live performance of the album at RedBull Studios. The record's influence remained prevalent with *Rock Sound* citing its impact on Fall Out Boy, 5 Seconds of Summer, and more. Along the way, they achieved honors such as "Album of the Year" at both the Alternative Press Music Awards for *Dirty Work* and Rock Sound Awards for *Last Young Renegade*. After nearly two decades together, All Time Low rekindled the spark they first ignited in a Baltimore basement on their 2020 eighth full-length studio album, *Wake Up, Sunshine* [Fueled By Ramen]. These four lifelong friends—Alex Gaskarth [lead vocals, guitar], Jack Barakat [lead guitar, backing vocals], Zack Merrick [bass, backing vocals], and Rian Dawson [drums]—walked into a tiny room, plugged in, and turned up with the same spirit, but a little more wisdom, a lot more experience, and proficiency gained by performing to millions worldwide. As a result, they delivered a dynamic body of work at the apex of pop punk prowess, rock energy, and genre-busting adventurousness.