

## *Little By Little... On the DL*

**Why we're releasing our latest album for free on the Internet.**

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In preparing to self-release our new album, we thought long and hard about how best to use the internet. Given our unusual history, and a long-held sense that the practice now being demonized by the music biz as “illegal” file sharing can be a friend to the independent musician, we have decided to embrace the indisputable fact of music in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, put our money where our mouth is, and make our record, *Little By Little...*, available for download via Bittorrent, and at <http://www.harveydanger.com>. We're not streaming, or offering 30-second song samples, or annoying you with digital rights management software; we're putting up the whole record, for free, forever. Full stop. Please help yourself; if you like it, please share with friends.

Of course, the CD will also be for sale on the site, as well as in fine independent record stores across the country, in a deluxe package that includes a 30-minute bonus disc that serves as a companion piece to the record proper (retail price for the package is \$11.99).

We embark on this experiment with both enthusiasm and curiosity—and, ok, maybe a twinge of anxiety. Why are we doing this? The short answer is simply that we want a lot of people to hear the record.

However, it's important that people understand the free download concept isn't a frivolous act. It's a key part of our promotional campaign, along with radio and press promotion, live shows, and videos. It's a bet that the resources of the Internet can make possible a new way for musicians to find their audience – and forge a meaningful artistic career built on support from cooperative, not adversarial, relationships.

We realize that digital files are the primary means by which a huge segment of the population is exposed to new music; we also believe that plenty of music lovers in the world will buy a record once they've heard it – whether via radio or computer.

We also believe there's an inherent qualitative difference at work—not only between MP3s and CDs, but between clicking a mouse and finding a record on the shelves of a good record store. These experiences are not mutually

exclusive – they're interdependent facets of music fandom, and equally important considerations for a band in our position.

Even with the proliferation of websites and magazines paying attention to independent music these days, it remains difficult for bands—especially rock bands—to get exposure, regardless of how good they may be (or how successful they once were). Making the record freely downloadable removes the main barrier that exists between an artist and the world of potential listeners. And we do mean world; the web's reach is everywhere.

Whether or not people will buy something they can get for free is obviously a big question, and there are facts and figures to support both sides of the argument. We think it's not only possible, but likely. The more fundamental challenge is ensuring people have access to your work to begin with.

At the risk of sounding Pollyanna-ish, making records has never been about making money for this band. If the worst thing that happens is a whole bunch of people hear *Little By Little...* and no one buys it, we'll know our experiment was costly. But that won't make it a failure.

This is by no means a manifesto. We don't pretend to be the first band to spin a variation of the shareware distribution model. We love record labels and record stores. We buy lots of CDs and are committed to supporting independent music. We're not a bunch of fake Marxists. We're just trying to be smart capitalists so we can sustain our lives as musicians. This is an experiment. We'll let you know how it goes.

Meanwhile, please enjoy the record. Everything else is secondary.