

Chaos & Frenzy

THE KILLS' JAMIE HINCE EXPLAINS HOW LIFE DIDN'T GET IN THE WAY ON HIS LATEST RECORD — IT LED THE WAY THERE.



Since **The Kills'** last album, 2011's *Blood Pressures*, guitarist Jamie Hince has lived many lives. He got divorced, took a trip through the barren landscape of far east Russia, and underwent multiple hand surgeries that for a time left him unsure if he'd ever be able to play guitar again.

"I had to find ways of working without being able to play guitar," says Hince, who used his rehabilitation time to build himself a studio. There he began working intently with drum programs and sampling and found a renewed interest in the lyrical side of his songwriting process. "I suppose because I had so much time on my hands — with just one hand — I really delved into lyric writing. I wanted to write something that I could look back on and (have it) mean everything."

Before his time in the studio, Hince had already subverted his standard approach to songwriting by booking a trip on the storied Trans-Siberian Railway. Armed only with blank notebooks, he says the trip came out of a desire to create a "paranoid, romantic, icy record. I thought it would be a good way to reset everything," he says.

Perhaps the change of venue was contagious. When Hince met up with Alison Mosshart, **The Kills'** other half, the two decided not to make their new album in Benton Harbor, Mich., where all their previous albums had been crafted, noting that working in there was an isolating experience.

"I felt like the way we were living our lives was quite fulfilling

and exciting, but the way we were recording was the opposite of that," explains Hince.

The two rented house in Los Angeles, and it was there they created *Ash & Ice*, which perhaps their most challenging endeavor to date. While Mosshart brought in ideas created on acoustic guitar, **The Kills'** usual method for demos, Hince came with drum programming, samples, and bass ideas, a product of his forced convalescence from the guitar. "More than ever, there was a massive gap between our approaches," says Hince. "There's this moment of fascism at the start where you should just not take anybody's feelings into account," he says. "You just make the song you want to make, but then obviously you have to come together and be communist about it afterwards."

Hince and Mosshart found their common ground in Los Angeles, a locale that Hince once wrote off but has now come around to appreciate. "It's become a sort of cultural magnet," says Hince of Los Angeles. "I know things are different when Alex Turner [of the Arctic Monkeys] has moved here."

Thus *Ash & Ice* has become more than a collection of songs for Hince — it's a testament to the frenzied and profound changes he and Mosshart have undergone in the five years since they last released an album.

"We're both really excited and proud of it, and there's nothing in there that I don't feel like we meant. For my little journey, my musical life, it's vitally important that it's happened." x

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