

# hoobastank



*“Analyzing what went wrong/instead of celebrating what’s right” “Push Pull”*

Sometimes even a multi-platinum band with three GRAMMY nominations under their belt needs the kind of pop talk which helped inspire Hoobastank’s sixth studio album, *Push Pull*, their first since 2012’s *Fight or Flight*, and debut for noted rock independent label Napalm Records.

“We never stopped exchanging musical ideas,” says vocalist/guitarist Doug Robb, who co-founded the band with high school classmates, Dan Estrin and Chris Hesse, almost 20 years ago in Agoura Hills, CA, a suburb of Los Angeles he still calls home. “We waited until we had enough material to start recording an album. We love creating music, even if no one else ever hears it.”

*Push Pull*, so named for the power struggles and codependency that goes on within any long-term relationship—including, but not only, marriage and a rock band—was produced by longtime pal (but first-time collaborator) Matt Wallace at his Studio Deluxe facility in the heart of the band’s San Fernando Valley turf. Sifting through the musical demos provided by both Estrin and bassist Jesse Charland (a band member since 2009), then Robb’s lyrical and melodic ideas, Wallace provided not just the requisite encouragement, but the creative midwifery, which set the wheels in motion for the album. The result nails a bull’s-eye to the underappreciated ‘Stank’s sweet spot—the large-scale, muscular ‘80s-‘90s alternative rock of U2, Duran Duran, INXS and even Tears for Fears, whose “Heads Over Heels” gets a brawny, Bowiesque take on the new collection.

“There were always plenty of demos floating back and forth; some of them I played for Matt even before the rest of the band heard them,” says Dan about the record’s conception, which took place over a two-year period

Freed from the pressures of a hovering major label, listening to critical jibes or even the expectations of their fans, Hoobastank approached *Push Pull* with the swagger and confidence

of a band whose first three albums all went either gold, platinum or multi-platinum, "The Reason" garnering GRAMMY nominations for "Song of the Year," "Best Rock Album" and "Best Pop Performance" for a Duo or Group. Of course, about that name, which means, exactly what?...

"Sometimes you make dumb decisions when you're young, and that might have been one of them," laughs Robb about being the punchline to *SNL* jokes and snooty rock critic snipes. "It's too late trying to peel that off and start something else at this point."

As for the formidable bar-setting success of "The Reason," Doug is similarly sanguine.

"We finally stopped attempting to recreate any formula," he says. "Instead of trying to be trendy or anticipating how people will react, we did what made us happy. We played to our strengths. Take it or leave it."

That go-for-broke theme is best expressed in "Just Let Go (Who Cares if We Fall)," which sums up Hoobastank's attitude. "At least we get to fly," sings Robb. "Learning to swim/Is more than just learning how not to drown."

In the title track and "More Beautiful," Doug unleashes his falsetto, while the funky R&B feel is a tribute to Dan's early, late-'90s penchant for Chic and "groove-based" dance music. "When we first met, he didn't even own a distortion pedal," laughs Doug about his guitarist's love of soul and R&B.

Comparing the requirements of keeping both a marriage and a rock band thriving (it has to do with communication), *Push Pull* songs like "True Believer" and "Buzzkill (Before You Say Goodbye)" show Hoobastank maturing from adolescent to adult relationships, often examining the difficulty of keeping alive the sexuality that fuels them. "We Don't Need the World" and "There Will Never Be Another" explore the protective bubble and the memories which also bind two people together. Doug's lyrics to the headphones-worthy "Fallen Star" were inspired by a memory of him watching television one night and seeing a military family of a soldier who had died in combat. It made him think of the brave men and women who serve and even more so now the parents of those who serve. Being a parent now it clicked, the unbelievable sacrifice made by both soldier and their families. "I wanted to say thank you" says Doug.

"I usually work best with personal experiences, what's going on with my wife, kids, the band and our fans," says Robb. "Those are my family."

With *Push Pull*, Hoobastank look back to the future, combining the best of what brought them here and establishing their presence in the current pop-rock spectrum. When Dan's asked whether the simple act of recording and releasing these songs provided its own reward, he notes, "That's what the voice in my head tells me. But then there's the voice inside the voice that says, 'You dumb mother\*\*\*ker. Of course you want this thing to be huge.'"

Estrin grows serious. "We've been doing this from day one because we love it," he says. "We didn't do it for money or fame. It was our drug. Didn't need anything more than that. This is still like summer camp for adults. But these days, even my mom asks if there's a hit on the new record."

Check out *Push Pull* and make Dan's mom proud.

## **Line-Up**

Doug Robb: Lead vocals/rhythm guitar

Dan Estrin: Lead guitar/keyboards

Chris Hesse: Drums/percussion/backing vocals

Jesse Charland: bassist/keyboardist/backing vocals

## **Discography**

Hoobastank 2001

The Reason 2003

Every Man for Himself 2006

For(N)ever 2009

Fight or Flight 2010

Push Pull 2018