

# A new video production offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse into Zander Schloss' sophomore album: CALIFORNIA'S BURNING

*The set of studio performances shows that being authentic is the most punk-rock thing you can be.*

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, February 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Multi-instrumentalist Zander Schloss (Joe Strummer, Circle Jerks) released his second solo album *California's Burning* in 2023, representing a new page in the artist's musical evolution. Even in the album's starker, naturalistic moments, *California's Burning* does not spare the listener of its arsenal of background singers, string players, and variety of other instruments, and it is in this new visual documentation where the listener is offered a glimpse into its creation.

In regards to how the video project for *California's Burning* came about, Schloss recalls, "I was trying to replicate, in a more organic way, the sophistication of the arrangements I did for the album. [...] The whole intention of doing it in a live setting was to get a more natural feel; there's some slight flaws and imperfections that make it sound natural, and that's what I was going for."

If one was unaware of Schloss' musical background and watched the video recordings of *California's Burning*, Schloss appears as an introspective singer-songwriter, putting words to the ambiguities of love and spirituality, backed with the proverbial acoustic guitar. The somber, melodic strings and gentle voices of the background singers are even reminiscent of Leonard



Schloss and backup singers/string players in "All the Bells Are Ringing"



The string quartet during "Crawling Under the Ocean"

Cohen's You Want It Darker or Bob Dylan's Time Out of Mind. But Schloss is not the stereotypical singer-songwriter. He is the bassist for Circle Jerks, a hardcore punk band formed in 1979, and has worked closely alongside The Clash's Joe Strummer.

"I've always had an interest in doing more classical arrangements," Schloss says. The string quartet and concert harp—which Schloss himself composed the arrangements for—shine in several performances, including "100 Years", "Crawling Under the Ocean" and the titular "California's Burning". Schloss' core members are also seen in these videos, and he is often accompanied by drummer/percussionist Beth Goodfellow and bassist Brandon Rauch.



Schloss during the performance of "Straight to Hell"

"My solo work is the polar opposite of what I'm known for with Circle Jerks, which is a loud, fast, and aggressive punk rock band. So rather than starting another fast, loud, aggressive punk rock band, and doing something that I'm known for, I'm doing the exact opposite, which I think is the most punk rock thing you can do."

The authenticity of the singer-songwriter can be seen in Schloss's solo career, a stark contrast to the boisterous boom of Circle Jerks. However, the authenticity that comes along with California's Burning has never been more crucial. "Right now, there's this kind of toughness that is killing the world. I can see it all around." Schloss says. "So my message is to become authentic; to expose the truth and how we really feel. I think that one of the only ways to develop courage is to say "Hey I'm scared." When you say it out loud, someone else might go, Wow. I can't believe he just said that because I feel the same way—but I'd never admit it out loud. That's the chance that I'm taking; to say some of these things out loud that people think but never dare to say, because they're afraid to be exposed as weak. But the only way to develop strength is to admit that you're weak."

His favorite track on the album? "All The Bells Are Ringing," Schloss says. "Originally, I wrote the song about the spiritual nature of why bells ring. It's a very holy song, and I didn't really intend it to be; it was an exercise in writing a song about bells, and the different reasons why bells ring. And then it became obvious to me that it was about God." In the video for "All The Bells Are Ringing", the sound of a church organ simmers lowly in the background. "I can hear them ringing and there's God in what they say," Schloss sings. Within the confines of the studio, the musicians conjure a vivid and enigmatic sound; a sound that we often only hear but rarely see.

It's hard to ignore the incredibly relevant title of It's hard to ignore the incredibly relevant title of the album, and though the video recordings of the tracks were filmed before the latest wildfire in

the Pacific Palisades, one can still sense that “beautiful and melancholy” feeling in the room; the same kind that songs like “Straight to Hell” inspire in the listener. “I’m not claiming to be the Nostradamus of songwriting,” Schloss says. Even the titular song, “California’s Burning”, was not written about fire in its literal sense. ““California’s Burning” was originally written about heartache, and the resilience of coming out of such a devastating feeling and being stronger.”

As a Los Angeles native, Schloss says it’s impossible to not feel affected by the fire. “LA is a huge city, but you can’t help but be affected [...] I do feel the overwhelming suffering of souls here.” There is a phoenix-like quality, though, to the songs on Schloss’ album. Much of the lyrical subject matter can be tied to the theme of resilience, rising from the ashes, and burgeoning from the flames a stronger and wiser person. In the video recording of “California’s Burning”, Schloss can be seen singing the words “You were made of stone / And when the fires cooled / You turned into jewels”.

The definition of what is punk is prone to change, but the songs and performances from California’s Burning demonstrate a common sentiment that remains static through the ever-changing definition of the word. The message of the songs? “To do what’s in your heart and stand up and be an individual, especially in this world where everybody is striving for sameness,” Schloss explains. “I don’t strive for that. I’m literally trying to individuate in this world and be an example of somebody who is free and authentic and brave enough to express that authenticity regardless of what the public results are.” It is in these newly released videos where this sentiment can be seen and felt too, rather than simply heard.

The video project for Zander Schloss’ California’s Burning is available today. Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/4-YAbL3N1VE>

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