



## DOWNSET

*Maintain*

*Release Date: June 10, 2022*

### Line up:

Rey Oropeza | Vocals  
Rogelio Lozano | Guitar  
Phillip Gonzalez | Bass  
Bobby Blood | Drums

### CARCASS online:

<https://twitter.com/downsetla>  
<https://www.facebook.com/DownsetLA>  
<https://www.instagram.com/downsetofficial>

The word **MAINTAIN** is defined as 'a condition or state of affairs; to provide with the necessities for life or existence.' To have the ability to maintain is to be able to hold fast to the unpredictable balance that is life, and to find a way to prosper through the most fluctuating of circumstances. LA hardcore natives **DOWNSET** are no stranger to this concept, going on to use life's checks and balances as the inspiration for their first new album in almost 8 years: **MAINTAIN**.

Recently signed to world-renowned heavy metal label **Nuclear Blast Records**, and having recently released reissued throwbacks of their original demos, **DOWNSET** have reawakened the passion of old-school hardcore within themselves, and have tapped back into the energy that fueled them from the beginning: life, death, love, hate, injustice... and the streets.

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“From the beginning, I’ve had concerns about the problematic nature of society,” explains founder and vocalist **Rey Oropeza**. “I reflect on the experiences of my life. There are concepts that should be challenged and thought about. Everyone is going to come to their own conclusions on how they feel about inequality, misogyny, political topics, etc. but all of these things have kept me critically focused on my activism over the years. My abilities as a vocalist revolve a lot around what I’m feeling, going through, or witnessing at the time; pretty practical.”

“During pre-production, **MAINTAIN** was the first song that we plucked out of the air,” describes founder and guitarist **Rogelio “Roy” Lozano**. “Going through hard times you’ve got to hang in there, hang on, **MAINTAIN** and hold it down. During the first wave of the pandemic, we had a lot of fear.

Everyone was getting sick, people were dying like our manager Scott Koenig (RIP). It was amazing that we were able to pull all the work off that we did for this album through lockdown.”

The album artwork for **MAINTAIN** is a mutation of inspiration drawn from **Oropeza’s** street art, and a throwback to fan-familiar **DOWNSET** artwork of the past. Italian artist Simone Sut took a photograph of **Lozano** taken by Mike Hartsfield (Outspoken), and morphed it into a modern take on a classic image of a satirized basketball card.

The first single, ‘Place to be’, will be dropping on April 29th; a date that holds some major significance for the band. “A lot of times when people think of April 29th, they think of the **[DOWNSET]** song *Anger because of the lyrics ‘April 29th, Florence to Normandie;’* old school fans will recognize that, so we decided to make the 29th a sort of ‘**DOWNSET** holiday,’ and we’re going to drop our new single and music video for *Place to Be* (directed by drummer **Bobby Blood**) on that date,” explains **Lozano**.

“With the title track, **Rey** has a way of hitting different subjects within the song. On this one he goes into different storylines, and they’re all open to interpretation. Throughout the whole album, these songs connect with each other. He talks about his friends, his crew, the dedication to his union work; he’s really involved in a lot of different things and he’s very serious about them. What he writes about is usually about what’s going on in the moment; things that are happening to him or happening to those around him.”

These songs also took a return to **DOWNSET’s** past sound, being that they were recorded in drop C. “From the demos, to songs on the first album - that sound was there, but from then on we ended up with a step up in tone by recording in C sharp, so with these two songs being

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*in drop C, it's just a little heavier, a little more like original **DOWNSET**. That was our true sound."*

Meanwhile, a track like 'New Respect' is in drop C sharp, *"I also wanted to give the record a lot of flavor. **Rey** gives flavor with the lyrics, and I wanted to do the same thing with the tone, with the sound... to give it a different taste, and so we have three different tunings on this album. New Respect is a bit more up-tempo. Our sound is usually thought of as slow, heavy, groovy, sometimes some hardcore beats, but we never really have these up-tempo songs. I wanted to pick up the tempo and then **Rey** had some clever lyrics on this one too. Most of his songs have dual meanings."*

*"The lyrics are about a friend of mine," explains **Oropeza**. "He got out after 25 years and started screwing up again. I told him he had to go prioritize finding work and make money for his kids and the woman he cared about. I saw the way he was struggling and I just sat down, talked to him, and started writing down notes. It was so moving to me to see how he was teetering. Those are the kinds of experiences that move me; I'm moved by life."*

With **Lozano** producing and working in a variety of recording studios alongside the likes of successful engineers and artists (Jerry Finn, Greg Fiddlemin; Cypress Hill, Powerflo, etc.) for many years, it was only natural for him to take the helm of the recording process for **MAINTAIN**. *"I was lucky to have full responsibility for this album. It was kind of like a graduation; I was finally able to produce my own album in a big studio. I was really happy and confident and with the help of Nick Jett from **TERROR** we had the perfect combination for **DOWNSET** and for the sound of this album. Jett made it really easy for us to go through pre-production and the writing process."* The album was then mastered to perfection by **Howie Weinberg** in Los Angeles, California.

Breathing life back into something that's not only old school, but that actually stands for something is meaningful work, and meaningful art: *"We had a good time and we're really happy with the way this record turned out," says **Lozano**. "I'm happy with the tones, and with the maturity we show in our writing and recording this time around. Regardless of what kind of responses we get, we genuinely love the album, and that's what really matters for us. Just like **Rey's** lyrics to the final song on the album, Ready For It, I'm ready for it, bring it on."*

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