

**TOOL**  
By Paul Gargano **NATIONAL**

Maynard James Keenan doesn't want Tool to change the way you think, he wants *you* to change the way you think. To that end, new release "10,000 Days" is as profound as any statement in Tool's five album catalog, sculpting a grisly and garish sonic landscape of a world run astray. Never ones to paint an explicit picture, Tool -- frontman Keenan, guitarist Adam Jones, drummer Danny Carey and bassist Justin Chancellor -- paint in broad strokes, blurring acute angles with more obtuse symmetry, and making their music a truly interactive experience. It's about asking the questions that aren't supposed to be asked, and finding the answers that aren't supposed to be found. It's about finding inspiration where others may see desolation. It's about opening a third eye and making the pieces fit. It was in that spirit of self-discovery and realization that *Maximum Ink* sat down with Maynard James Keenan for this exclusive interview...

**MAXIMUM INK:** There's such a sense of mystery and mysticism surrounding Tool. Do you find your fans delving into that world, or do they seem content to just listen to the music?

**MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN:** I'm not really concerned about it whatsoever, honestly. If they get it, they get it -- If they don't, they don't. Not that there's anything to get, really, it's just my version of a story.

**MAX INK:** A lot of people look to your "version" because they hope to find answers and/or understanding...

**MAYNARD:** Which I find very interesting, seeing as I'm not a college graduate, or a doctor, lawyer or debate team captain. I have no degree whatsoever. I rarely ever had a job that was nine-to-five that I held for very long. That seems kind of, umm, not great.

**MAX INK:** Do you think those things are all important factors in being able to trust someone?

**MAYNARD:** I think that it displays an element of discipline, focus and consciousness.

**MAX INK:** You think you lack that?

**MAYNARD:** I don't know... I think, in general, people looking to rock bands as voices of reason or logic... [Laughing] It's all kind of funny to me.

**MAX INK:** Which is interesting when you consider Tool, because most of your lyrics tackle subjects that seem to defy logic. Perhaps that makes it easier for you approach those topics that someone else might view scientifically and pragmatically.

**MAYNARD:** Yeah, I definitely have one toe in the esoteric world.

**MAX INK:** As a band, you go to such lengths to express a voice. Take the alternate track listing for "Lateralus," for example. Is that something you hope to see people explore, that second layer of meaning in the songs?

**MAYNARD:** Are you familiar with the movie "Life of Brian"? I would hope that people wouldn't be standing there holding a sandal, thinking it's a sign. I would hope that they would just see us doing something, then go off on their own and do something. Be inspired by it. I love the idea of a kitchen full of cooks coming up with a new recipe because they were listening to the album and doing their own thing. They're not worried about meeting us, or tripping on what we had for lunch or where we're going on vacation, or what we meant here or there. They were just inspired by the music and made an incredible dish.

**MAX INK:** There's obviously an element to your music that you'd love for people to explore, or you wouldn't go through the efforts you go through to lay the groundwork for further investigation, as you do on your website. Do you feel that seeking that deeper understanding of Tool affects the appreciation of your music?

**MAYNARD:** I think it's simply right brain/left brain. Reading is a very analytical process, it takes you out of a creative space. Just listening to music without words attached to it takes you to a much more creative headspace, and a much more ambiguous 'go where your mind might take you' kind of space. If the words are in front of you, you're no longer listening and feeling the music, you're thinking it. Then you're focusing on the map that's laid out in front of you rather than stumbling around the countryside. That's better to me, rather than having hard lines.

**MAX INK:** On your website [www.toolband.com] the August newsletter does an excellent job of casting "Roseta Stoned" in a thematic light...

**MAYNARD:** Yeah, that was a good one... At that point it's almost a film, you can see it in your head. It's like watching "Being John Malkovich" -- There are hard lines to it, but there's some weird story structure that makes some semblance of sense.

**MAX INK:** Do you hope to inspire people to look into your lyrics further?

**MAYNARD:** If they want to dig into it, that's fine. If they want to take it that far, that's fine. I would much prefer someone dig into it so far that they went and made a film, you know what I mean? Inspiring that much, but not even focusing on us -- A spark that sent somebody into a different direction.

**MAX INK:** To that end, what are some of the things you look to for creativity? If

someone wanted that same spark, where would they turn?

**MAYNARD:** I have no idea. It has more to do with being in tune with what you like and what you respond to, like flavors, or scents, or visual stimulation. It's about 'know thyself,' sound mind, sound body. Be aware of who you are, what your place in the world is and what your strengths are and, more importantly, what your weaknesses are.

**MAX INK:** Shifting gears a little bit, the last time you played Madison, WI, was four days before 9/11. Now you're returning five years later, nearly to the day. Everyone felt the impact of that day, but did it have any affect on Tool as a band?

**MAYNARD:** I think it affected everyone deeply. It was definitely a shift in, "Oh, shit, we can be gotten, too." I don't want get into the politics of it, but I was, personally... I was the guy fighting, "Fuck it, let's play the show." What else are these people going to do? My brain works in a very strange, logical manner in those instances. [Laughing] Terrorists are not targeting this barn in the middle of Indianapolis. This is not a target for terrorists. *The World Trade Center*. That is who run things. If you just sit down for a second and walk yourself through it, the Punch Bowl in Boise is not a target. It just isn't.

**MAX INK:** As a band, did it affect the way you approached "10,000 Days"? I don't want to say we've entered a new world order, because that's overplayed...

**MAYNARD:** We are, though. They've taken that event and -- once again, we're getting into politics and I don't want to go down that path, but -- with the Patriot Act being shoved through... The whole way we set up our government to begin with was so that if things went weird we could pull the plug on those guys and set up a new system. Right now, if you wanted to do that, you couldn't. And if you tried to do it by force, you couldn't, because you're standing there in your bare feet at the airport, having your butt x-rayed. There's no way to retaliate, they've taken away all our weapons. It's gotten pretty ridiculous.

**MAX INK:** Do you think that makes a band like Tool -- or any band, for that matter, but Tool are decidedly more intelligent than most -- more important, and more vital?

**MAYNARD:** I don't know about that, but as an individual I feel a little more frustrated. When it comes around to it, you've explained all you can explain as far as the way things are working. You try and show people, historically, what happens when these kinds of events come around. You try and show people, historically, when a particular government is set up, or a culture of people, their evolution in time comes to a head, then deteriorates. We're way beyond the point where if we were Rome,

we'd be over by now.

**MAX INK:** We've become everything we fought not to be when we founded this country.

**MAYNARD:** Everybody goes through these weird growing pains, and it ends up falling apart at some point. If we just had better school systems, and people just studied history properly, they could prepare for what's coming -- just by having an idea of where we've been and where we're heading, and using other people as examples. The thing that most people don't understand is, you don't fully learn by experience. As an intelligent person, you have to learn by other people's experiences, otherwise you have to keep trying shit. Well, I don't need to put a gun to my head and pull the trigger to know that it's going to blow my head off. Somebody else did that I've learned, as an intelligent person, from somebody else's experience. There's historical precedent set about the way things go, the way men in power struggle for more power, and what they'll do to keep it. You can read about it. We've done our best in the past 20-30 years to make sure that the schools can't teach anything.

**MAX INK:** To go full circle, back to where we started, you said that people shouldn't look to you because you didn't go to college and get a degree, you weren't that disciplined. The irony is, most of the people that are making these mistakes, over and over again, are the people that are getting the "best" educations. Yet they're making the same mistakes as the people before them, and you're the one pointing it out. To me, that's the strength of Tool: Somebody needs to explain the truths that aren't getting explained anywhere else.

**MAYNARD:** Yeah, I guess I was wrong.

*Tool perform Sept. 16 at the Target Center in Minneapolis, Sept. 18 at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont, IL, and Sept. 19 at the Kohl Center in Madison.*

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