



biography · target and the arrow

biography

"Twenty-five years after their last album of original material, PFR is back with a brand-new collection of songs. Target and the Arrow, out digitally September 22nd, is the sound of three friends from Minneapolis picking up a conversation they never really finished."

BIOGRAPHY

history

quick facts

FORMED

1989, Minneapolis, Minnesota

GENRE

Rock

SOUNDS LIKE

Crowded House, Jellyfish, The Police

HONORS

Grammy nomination- Best Christian Rock Album
1993 Dove Award - Rock Album of the Year

CURRENTLY

New album **Target and the Arrow**, out digitally September 22nd

MEMBERS

Joel Hanson (guitar, vocals) · Patrick Andrew (bass, vocals) · Mark Nash (drums)

Joel Hanson and Mark Nash go back to a church camp in Northern Minnesota, where the two had been playing music together for over a year by the fall of 1988. That's when Patrick Andrew showed up to a Wednesday night youth group in Brainerd and mentioned, almost offhand, that he played bass. "He told me he played bass and offered to bring it and play with me the next Wednesday," Hanson remembers. "I heard him play and Patrick picked up songs really fast... I think I asked him that night if he wanted to come play with Mark and I at the camp retreat. The three of us gelled immediately and it was super fun." Andrew felt it differently from the inside. "I hadn't played with other people other than my brother before, so it was very foreign to me to play with strangers," he says. "All I remember was being incredibly nervous." Whatever the nerves, something clicked.



PATRICK ANDREW · MARK NASH · JOEL
HANSON

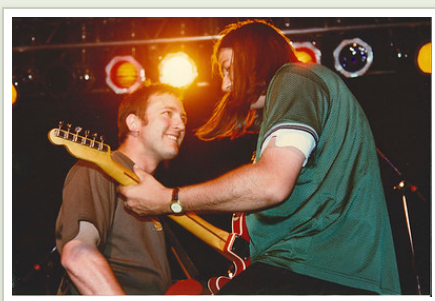
Hanson and Andrew were both raised in and around Brainerd, a small town roughly two and a half hours north. "I spent my formative years in Brainerd so I wasn't that aware of the Minneapolis music scene," Hanson says. "I knew of Prince and the Revolution but that was about it." Andrew's read on it was much the same: "I am from Brainerd, so I had no idea there was a music scene," he says. "I was incredibly sheltered from the world, growing up 10 miles from the town of Brainerd, population 10,000." It was Nash, based in the

Twin Cities himself, who plugged into that world firsthand. "The cool thing about the Minnesota/Minneapolis music scene is there's so much going on in every style of music," says

drummer Mark Nash. “There’s a great rock scene, there’s a great R&B scene, there’s a great jazz scene... you’re exposed to all of these different musical styles and they’re being played at the highest ability.”

Individually, their influences pulled from different directions before converging into something singular. Hanson leaned toward the era’s polished songwriters — Kenny Loggins, Journey, Loverboy — alongside The Beatles, Squeeze, Jellyfish, The Rembrandts, and Toy Matinee. Andrew’s ear was shaped closer to home: stacking wood in the basement with his brother Mike every other Saturday, listening to Casey Kasem’s Top 40, then graduating to Mötley Crüe and Ratt. “Ratt covered a song by Aerosmith who covered ‘Come Together’ by the Beatles, and that was it for us for the rest of high school,” Andrew says — a rabbit hole into ‘60s British Invasion pop that still shapes his songwriting today. Nash, meanwhile, cut his teeth on the Minneapolis punk and thrash scene — Hüsker Dü, The Replacements — while playing jazz during the day. “The three of us have such different musical origin stories, but there’s something about those styles & stories that make sense when we get in a room together,” Nash says.

Signed in 1991 to producer Brown Bannister’s newly founded Vireo Records, the trio had spent its first two years, 1989 to 1991, performing as Inside Out before taking the name Pray For Rain. Their debut album, *Pray for Rain*, arrived in 1992 and announced them as something out of the ordinary: a CCM rock band writing hook-first, harmony-heavy pop songs that sounded like they belonged on the same shelf as Crowded House, Jellyfish, and The Police. Singles like “Do You Want to Know Love?” and “Let Go” caught on fast, and the album earned a Grammy nomination for Best Christian Rock Album and the 1993 Dove Award for Rock Album of the Year. The Grammy nomination brought an unwelcome surprise along with it: not long after it was announced in early January 1993, the band received a cease-and-desist over the Pray For Rain name. They officially became PFR that spring, fully launching the new name later in 1993 with the release of *Goldie’s Last Day*.



NOW YOU SEE THEM NOW YOU DON'T
TOUR

Two more records followed in quick succession — *Goldie’s Last Day* (1993) and *Great Lengths* (1994) — before the band closed out the decade with *Them* in 1996, their best-selling album at roughly 120,000 copies. They toured it hard, twelve cities under the banner “Now You See Them, Now You Don’t,” and then walked away at the height of it. The final show was played in their hometown of Minneapolis on September 28, 1996. A greatest hits set, *The Late, Great PFR*, arrived the following year to close the book.

It didn't stay closed. In 2001, the three reunited to record *Disappear* — a record that never found the audience it deserved. “Disappear didn't get the chance it deserved when it was released because the record company folded at almost the same time,” Hanson says. The masters sat unused for nearly a decade until Steve Taylor, whose label Squint Entertainment had originally released the album, gave the rights back to PFR around 2010. “We have complete ownership,” says Nash. “We've just been sitting on it.” Hanson and Andrew kept making music on their own in the years that followed — Hanson released *Broken* (2001), *Captured* (2002), *What If It Is* (2009), and, most recently, *Let Me Tell You Everything*; Andrew fronted the band Eager before releasing his solo album *There and Then It's Gone* (2004) — and PFR resurfaced only briefly, for a 2006 compilation, *Very Best of PFR*.



LIVE • 1996

The real return came later, and it came from the fans. In 2022, PFR reunited for hometown shows in Minneapolis, followed by a Nashville performance in March 2023. On February 10, 2024, they played a comeback show at First Avenue's Fine Line in Minneapolis, and the response made clear the audience for this band had never really left.

That renewed momentum turned first toward unfinished business. A GoFundMe campaign funded a new studio album, and late in 2024 a Kickstarter campaign to remaster and reissue *Disappear* was funded successfully — this time with legendary mastering engineer Ted Jensen behind the board. Andrew is characteristically blunt about why it mattered: “I just think it's a great record, I never thought it sounded great,” he says. “He realized the album to be what it should have been.” Hanson heard something similar. “Hearing Ted Jensen's remastering brought out so much more of what was happening sonically with each song,” he says. “There were little layers I forgot were even there on some songs. Ted made this album sound absolutely perfect.” “All kinds of things came out,” Andrew adds, “BGVs, percussion, guitars.” With ownership of the masters and the timing finally right, the band gave *Disappear* its first proper release — its first time on streaming platforms at all — rescuing the “lost” record from obscurity more than two decades after it was made.

 NEW ALBUM

target and the arrow

That same spirit carried into new material. “I think *Target and the Arrow* wanted us to make it, if that makes sense,” Hanson says. “After being apart and then rekindling our friendships with each other back in 2022, our only goal was to make sure that we got together at least once a year. Friendship was all that mattered to us at that point. But slowly songs started coming out of us again and pretty soon we had more than an album’s worth of songs we loved. It was almost like the music had just been patiently waiting for us to find each other again.” For Andrew, the calculus was simpler still: “Target was an excuse to spend time with Mark and Joel.”

The title traces back to a weekend at Andrew’s house, where a rabbi friend of Hanson’s came to visit. Conversation turned to the trajectory of their lives — how being just slightly off course can mean missing the mark entirely. Patrick jotted the phrase down as a possible song title. Hanson remembers the moment it became something bigger: “It was a phrase Patrick had written down in his phone. He read it to Mark and I while we were writing in Minneapolis back in 2023. Mark and I looked at each other and then told Patrick, ‘that is the name of this album.’”



PATRICK ANDREW, IN SESSION • PFR

The writing process itself broke from everything that came before. Where earlier albums were pieced together on the road, this one started with a deliberate week of writing together in Minneapolis, followed by long stretches apart. “Many of the songs were written long distance,” Hanson says. “Someone would have an idea and we would send it out and each of us would add what we were hearing. This has been my favorite version of writing we’ve ever done.” Andrew points to what three decades add to that exchange. “There was both individual writing, but we came together to write, which were fundamental to creating the sound of the album — also to blow out the cobwebs,” he says. “When you are in your early 20s, you don’t have the experience of life to draw from that you do at 55, and there are 75 years between us of experiences both life and musical to add to the sauce.” The band walked into the studio with about 15 songs and, for the first time, the luxury of choosing. “We were able to put everything under the microscope,” Nash says. Songs the band loved didn’t always survive the cut.

Both Hanson and Andrew describe the record less as a comeback than as a self-portrait. “This album is the fruit of our friendship,” Hanson says. “We have more questions than answers at this point and that feels healthy, self-aware, and right on time.” Andrew hears it the same way, filtered through what the last twenty years have actually held. “I think this album is both an



JOEL HANSON, IN SESSION · PFR

exploration of our collaboration together, and what has been happening in our lives over the past 20 years,” he says. “For me, that presents as songs about choosing healing from the past and contemplation about what I want for the next phase of my life. It is asking more questions than providing answers.”

Ask which song captures the album, and the two songwriters answer in character. Hanson points to specifics: “That’s a hard question to answer but the opening track, ‘Find Our Way,’ or the song ‘Change,’ speak to where we are now and how we see humanity and ourselves.” Andrew won’t pick one at all. “I think it is a true album that requires the experience of listening as a whole,” he says.

Three decades in, the three still come back to what the band has given them, not what it’s cost. “PFR changed my life,” Hanson says. “It has brought me great friends and great joy.” He credits his bandmates with something more specific, too: “I think Mark and Patrick have helped me not take myself so seriously.” Andrew, for his part, is still a little amazed to be here at all. “I am surprised that I get to keep making music with Mark and Joel,” he says. “I am surprised at how influential and special our music has been to so many people. I am surprised that so many of our fans have found themselves in similar stations in life as we are and can relate to our life experiences — many of them disappointed by the church, experiencing divorce, getting beat up a little or a lot by life and walking through a process of healing.” Ask him what he’d do without Hanson and Nash, and he doesn’t hesitate: “Without any one of us, there is no PFR. We are unashamedly personality driven in every sense. You can tell when any one of us is playing by our style, which is unique in itself. I’ve played with lots of players through the years — we simply have a different chemistry.”

Early response has been strongly positive. Hunter Fraser, who had the chance to hear *Target and the Arrow* ahead of its release, hears a record about time itself: “You’re revisiting and revitalizing parts of your story together, as young men and now old men — not just the lyrics, but the music is saying that same thing... I don’t think there’s a better thing you could achieve,” he says. He was equally struck by how the record holds together end to end: “I think about this album now as a complete unit of music, like a complete work of art.” A longtime friend of the band, Lorna, had a similarly emotional reaction after an early listen of her own:



MARK NASH, IN SESSION · PFR HQ ARCHIVE

“How can I have so many memories of songs I've never heard?!! This is PFR! My all time favorite band! So so proud of you guys!”

— LORNA, FRIEND OF THE BAND

Reviewing the album, Jon Heffer heard something similarly affecting — and drew a comparison to one of rock's classic emotional records:

“The more I listen to Target and the Arrow, I realize it is an emotional journey (kin to an early U2 project) that draws you in. There are emotional highs and lows that tackle external and internal issues of disappoint, love, dependence and coming to terms with the realities of life and seeing it for what it is. It's thoughtful, joyous... It's beautiful. It's PFR.”

— JON HEFFER

PFR is widely regarded as one of the most influential rock acts of the 1990s. Three decades on, with a catalog still finding new listeners and a new chapter finally written, that reputation looks less like a peak they once reached and more like a foundation they're still building on. Nash puts it simply:

“There's the chemistry of our friendship that's had its ups and downs over 35-plus years, but we're still here, and we feel like we are now connected stronger than ever.”



SLOAS, ANDREW, NASH, BANNISTER,
HANSON

PFR is Joel Hanson (guitar, vocals), Patrick Andrew (bass, vocals), and Mark Nash (drums). For press inquiries, contact hello@pfrhq.com. For booking, contact booking@pfrhq.com.



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