*We’re All In This Together* bio

In the course of popular music history, the breakthrough albums for several legendary artists were live recordings, most famously *At Fillmore East* by The Allman Brothers Band, *Frampton Comes Alive* by Peter Frampton, and *Alive* by KISS. Now four decades later, history seems poised to repeat itself with the release of *We’re All In This Together*, the powerful, new live album by Hard Working Americans.

Hard Working Americans is the rock sextet some journalists dubbed a “jam band supergroup” because of it’s high-profile lineup: bassist Dave Schools and drummer Duane Trucks of Widespread Panic, guitarist Neal Casal of Chris Robinson Brotherhood, keyboardist Chad Staehly of Great American Taxi, and celebrated singer-songwriter Todd Snider on lead vocals. Shortly after the release of their first album, HWA added Tulsa guitarist Jesse Aycock to the fold.

“For the kind of band we are, I think this is a definitive statement for us,” Snider says of *We’re All In This Together*. “It captures a collective spirit, a collective muse being shared by a thousand-plus people.”

The album was recorded by monitor engineer Colin Cargile during the band’s 2016 tour in support of their second album, *Rest In Chaos*. Schools served as producer, as he has on all of the band’s recordings, while John Keane, the legendary producer who mixed the band’s first record, handled the mix. “He’s done a lot of live Widespread Panic mixing,” Schools says of the choice to work again with Keane. “I picked the versions of the songs, then I turned it over to him.”

Most of the 13 tracks Schools selected are from a show at Iron City in Birmingham, Alabama, but the album also includes performances from concerts at El Rey Theater in Los Angeles (“Ascending Into Madness”), The Buckhead Theater in Atlanta (“Something Else”), and Lockn’ Music Festival in Arrington, Virginia (Chuck Berry’s “School Days”).

Trucks, who has an encyclopedic appreciation for great live albums, says he is “stoked” about *We’re All In This Together*. “I think we captured what the band is trying to do live,” the drummer says. “We have the power of the songs in a live setting and have a good picture of the exploratory nature of the band. That’s what you hope for.”

According to Staehly, HWA “caught fire” at the Birmingham show that yielded the bulk of the material on the album. “It was one of those nights when everything we had been working on as a band came together,” he says.

“Unhinged” is how Schools recalls their performance that evening before a capacity crowd of 1,300 people. “It’s a great little place,” he says. “The crowd’s right up in your face, and the sound is really good.”

Aycock remembers the “great vibe” in the room at that show. “From the get-go, you could just feel the energy radiating from the crowd,” he says. “And everyone was just so locked in. It was one of those gigs where everyone walked away from it and said, ‘That’s where it’s at.’ ”

Four of the songs on the record appeared on the band’s eponymous debut, while five are from *Rest In Chaos*. Two of the tracks are reworked versions of songs from Snider’s solo album, *Peace Queer*, which the band perform regularly, and there also is the aforementioned Chuck Berry cover. In addition, the album includes one brand new number, the title track, which grew out of one of Snider’s spoken word bits on which he transforms into some sort of rock & roll evangelist while the band vamps behind him.

“Todd puts a whole lot of thought into what we call the invocations, two of which are on the record,” Schools says. “One is the sort of introduction to ‘Stomp and Holler,’ and the other one, we call ‘We’re All In This Together.’ We decided to make it into a whole song because he really worked hard on that story.”

Snider’s story that became the album’s title track is a metaphorical tale of how he and the band found one another, as well as an expression of the band’s philosophy of inclusion. “The moral of the story is Todd being lost at sea, and this band coming together behind him and teaching him we’re all in this together and that we’re stronger together,” Schools continues. “I think that message resonates really loudly in this day and age, where people are so divided. The whole reason of Hard Working Americans, and everything we’ve discovered as a band, is that we’re stronger together.

“We’re trying to convey that message, and I think the album artwork — the cover of the festival crowd — and the chanting of ‘we’re all in this together,’ it’s vital. It’s a message that needs to be heard and remembered.”