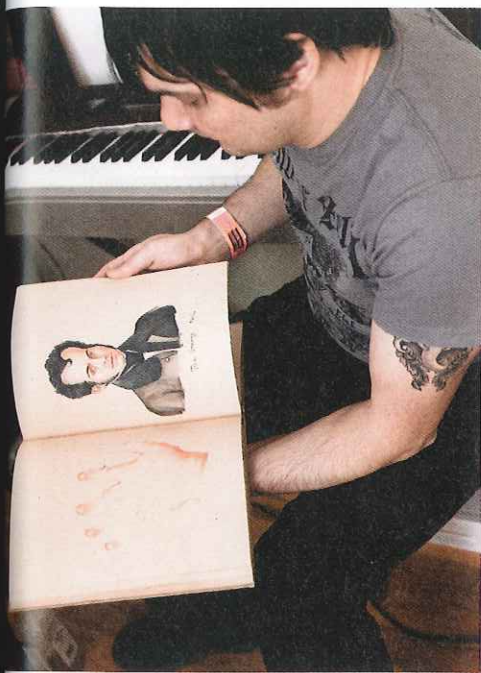


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Though this is arguably their most ambitious project, the band worked more quickly than ever. "Unlike previous records, we always seemed to know what needed to come next, what had to be done," Reece says. "This is the first record we finished ahead of schedule and under budget. It just flowed." Part of this they have been due to the lone book to be found in the upstate New York recording studio where the band is encamped. "Usually control rooms will have a stack of *Tape Op* magazines and poetry books, but in the house Studio only had the *Tao Te Ching*," says Keely. The ancient Chinese text dating from the 6th century B.C., it's basically a philosophical manual for living, and provided lyrical inspiration for many songs. "I gravitated towards a passage about accepting darkness, silence, and emptiness in order to achieve balance," says Reece. As if to exemplify this balance, the band countered the Eastern wisdom with an obsession with South African rap group Die Antwoord, watching their videos every day. "I even tried to hang out with them in the states, as our friend is their publicist," Keely admits. "But apparently they don't party or anything; all they do backstage is practice their ninja moves."

# IT'S ABOUT TIME

FINALLY NEW YORK ROCKERS **FIVE O'CLOCK HEROES** ARE GETTING SOME HOMETOWN ATTENTION. BY LIZA DARWIN. PHOTOGRAPHED BY COLUMBINE GOLDSMITH

FOR THEIR THIRD ALBUM, New York City rock band Five O'Clock Heroes picked a title that perfectly reflects their current situation: *Different Times*. Though they've recorded two previous albums—and gained a following in the U.K. with their high-energy shows—this is the band's first stateside release, and frontman Antony Ellis is more than ready to make their American debut. "We want to have a good little run around the country," says Ellis over coffee at a café in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. "I want to tour colleges more than anything. I think it would be a straightforward, organic way to start."

Five O'Clock Heroes came together in 2003 and had their first brush with fame when Agyness Deyn sang on their single "Who" from their 2008 album, *Speak Your Language*. (The collaboration didn't prove to be fruitful: "When there's a photo with Aggy and the band, quite often they'll just focus on her and chop our heads off—even though she's only recorded one song with us," Ellis told Contactmusic.com in 2008.) Over the years, the band has seen members come and go; Ellis, who grew up in England, is the only original Hero left. Before guitarist Teddy Griffith, bassist Adam Morse, and drummer Tom Smith joined the group to form the current lineup, Ellis says the band's focus—and work schedule—were unstable. "Right after our first album, we toured Amsterdam for a couple months, which was the worst idea ever," he remembers, laughing. "We were like, 'So...are we going to rehearse today? Probably not.' It wasn't very productive."

Though Ellis says their work ethic has improved, they still like to keep things spontaneous. They recorded *Different Times*—a collection of infectious, hook-laden pop-rock tracks in the vein of the Jam and the La's—in just five days and only rehearsed the songs a couple of times immediately beforehand. "Songs stay fresh for a very short time in the studio, so we have to do it fast to keep them sounding new," he says. In general, Ellis just wants to give fans a good time. "People need an outlet," he says, with a smile. "We'd like to be that outlet."

FROM LEFT: adam morse, antony ellis, and teddy griffith.

