

Interview by Tim Board

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Photo credit: Shervin Lainez

Music by Four Trips Ahead
"Remnants"

Hailing out of New York City, the rock band Four Trips Ahead was formed in 2003. Eight albums and 18 years later, the group is still entertaining fans around the world. It is great to see a band that has been together with the same lineup for such a long period of time, especially an indie band. Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, more united and focused than ever before, as their bio states, Four Trips Ahead released their five-track EP "Remnants" in September. Peter Wilson, lead vocalist of Four Trips Ahead and producer of the EP, was kind enough to talk about the EP and the band in the following interview.

Tim Board: How did the band get started?

Four Trips Ahead: Brian, Dan, and I have known each other for quite some time as we played in different bands on the NYC scene. When my old band broke up, they invited me to get together to see what would happen as they had wanted to work with a different singer. Without sounding cliché, there was an immediate chemistry as we liked much of the same music and shared many of the same influences. We also began writing new music almost immediately, which is always a great sign. Ken joined us about six years ago and brought a ferocious new vibe to our rhythm section -- a perfect fit. Coming from NYC, we grew up loving hard rock, prog, and metal, but we listen to many different genres of music. As a result, I think those diverse elements naturally creep into our music more often than many of the current hard rock and metal bands that I hear.

TB: How did you come about with the name Four Trips Ahead? What were other names considered?

FTA: Brian, our guitar player, thought of the name early on in rehearsals as we were initially playing under different strange names to get our live performance legs together, so to speak. The name is suggestive of our four distinct personalities going on literal and figurative journeys together. It also signifies the different musical and artistic directions we take individually and together as a group. We hope listeners will travel with us on our musical adventures. The songs eventually helped shape the band name and identity relatively quickly.



TB: The band has been together for 18 years. What do you attribute to your success and longevity together?

FTA: Four Trips Ahead has become a tight, almost-family unit with a shared vision. I think we've grown naturally as songwriters, musicians, and performers. There is an immense respect and trust we have in each other's abilities, which allows us to step on stage with confidence and share ideas freely in rehearsals and in the studio. We always welcome challenges and have tried not to play it too safe -- organic artistic exploration is key to our musical fulfillment. I also think everyone plays an important role in the band and recognizing that fact has made our music unique and memorable as well. Having a good sense of humor and keeping our egos in check has also been invaluable.

TB: You released the EP 'Remnants' this past September where you once again worked with Nick Cipriano as your engineer. What is it like working with Nick?

FTA: Working with Nick Cipriano is like hanging with family. He has been involved with FTA recordings for some time and played drums and recorded with us for a time when we lost our original drummer. There is a great amount of mutual respect and trust, which makes a big difference when you are pouring your heart and soul into the music you have created, trying to capture lightning in a bottle, so to speak. He shares many of the same influences and is a terrific musician himself with a great ear. He pays remarkable attention to detail without losing the intensity of our songs when he mixes. As usual, we tracked the album at Spin Recording Studios in Long Island City in Queens, New York, with Nik Chinboukas, a brilliant musician and incredible producer/engineer in his own right who we've worked with for some time as well at Spin. We are really comfortable there -- the staff is warm and has been supportive of our music for some time now. Spin also has a killer live room and an amazing 68-channel SSL board, which lends itself for big, fat rock sounds. The actual tracking process really didn't take very long...one long weekend for the basic tracking and then another two months in and out of the studio recording guitars, bass, and all of the vocals. We worked with many days off to allow us time to listen to what we'd done and to make sure we had everything we needed. Nothing was too labored over however -- we knew when we had what we needed most of the time.



TB: Having worked with him before, is it more comfortable working him this time around?

FTA: Most definitely. Moreover, Nick knows what we are going after in our recordings and really allows us to shine in dynamic ways, capturing the immediacy of the music. We trust him completely and has helped develop our recorded sound immensely over the years.

TB: The lead single off the EP is the title track 'Remnants.' What is the story behind this song?

FTA: 'Remnants' captures the anger, frustration, and social unrest that we were all witnessing and feeling. It's a reflection of our failings as a society and questions why we repeatedly ignore our history and continue down paths that hurt us and our planet.



TB: The EP is comprised of five songs. How long had you been working on the songs for the EP?

FTA: Before the pandemic hit, we had intended on recording a full album. Normally, we track songs in waves that have a similar theme and are fully realized. We had been playing many of these new songs live for a few months and were excited to capture the energy. We went into Spin with these five songs, intending to come in at a later date to track another five or so when they were ready. Thankfully, we were so happy with the vibe that we got carried away and decided to finish tracking the original five songs fully. And literally, three weeks later, the world turned upside down.

TB: As you look back over the 8 albums the band has released since 2005 and the 18 years the band has been together, what is one accomplishment the band is most proud of?

FTA: Staying together and not compromising our musical integrity. When we began in NYC and on the East Coast in general, the kind of music we were playing was not popular at all. We earned our stripes, developed our sound through rehearsing and performing, released music independently, and gained a following. I am super proud that we have kept evolving as artists and musicians and followed our hearts rather than chasing trends.

TB: As we head into 2022, what is up next for the band in the new year?

FTA: We are currently promoting our new EP, 'Remnants' and the first two singles, 'Remnants,' and 'It's Alright.' We intend to release a third single in the coming weeks as well as start our U.S. promotional and radio campaign as our label is doing promotion primarily in Europe where they are based. As the pandemic hopefully gets under control, we hope to start performing live in the coming months and perhaps make it out to Europe next summer. We want as many people as possible to hear 'Remnants.' In the meantime, we are rehearsing and finishing up exciting new material that we plan to record in the late summer or fall of 2022.

Fans of hard rock music should be giving the EP "Remnants" a listen. You will not be disappointed! As the group states in their press release for the EP, "Remnants is rock like it's meant to be played." With more music in 2022 and possibly a tour, Four Trips Ahead fans should have a great new year. You can learn more about the band, watch their videos and more, by visiting the group's website or social media sites.

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