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# How ONEmpire Moved On From Being The Other People

Watch the Mumbai rock band's feel-good video for 'Shine a Light,' off their upcoming EP 'Humanity'

Rolling Stone India - Dec 08, 2017



Mumbai pop-rock band ONEmpire. Photo: Siddhi Patel/The Orange Booth

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Everyone knows that name changes aren't exactly easy. And when you're one of the most reliable pop-rock bands in the country, like Mumbai outfit **The Other People** were, it's almost like starting over. Early this year they re-branded themselves ONEmpire, and frontman Zarir Warden says they liked that they were starting over.

He says, "For the first time in my life, we're uber-confident with the music we're releasing and its potential. If there ever was a good time to revamp, this was it." Of course, ONEmpire will still play a covers set when called upon to do so—it's a reputation they've built since 2004 and even after releasing an album of their own songs in 2015—but the focus now is on their four-track EP *Humanity*. "Our mantra has been giving the audience what they want—that's the stuff we enjoy. We want the same reaction to our own music."

In the process of becoming ONEmpire, the band is now a five-member group—Warden on vocals, keyboardist Garth D'Mello, guitarist Gavin Cason, drummer Atish Thomas and bassist Loy Henriques—and also includes emphasis on visuals, with a lighting designer and visual artist on board. "If you want to take over the world, you need to be loud. That's stadium rock," says Warden. Taking a cue from some of the biggest bands in the business—Coldplay, Muse, Imagine Dragons and more—ONEmpire want to create something "gripping" when it comes to their live shows as well as their studio material.

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That explains why *Humanity*, along with its lead single "Shine A Light," has all the makings of a sing-along pop rock number that can take over stadiums. Mentored by keyboardist, composer and producer Loy Mendonsa, the band worked at Ribbit Studios in Bandra and even had Toronto producer-duo Steve Raiman and Benjamin Pelchat overlook the recording sessions via video conferencing. The "concept" EP ties together emotions around the virtue of humanity, something to bring everyone together, which is also pretty much what any good pop-rock band aims for. Warden says, "We wrote songs in the major key to bring out the goodness and used big choruses. Loy guided us with where to use a certain chord or inversion. It made such a big difference."

The emphatic, encouraging sound and words of ONEmpire certainly cements their place as a good-vibes rock band, but they aren't just going to settle for that. Warden says the aim of creating a larger-than-life sound for a record is to match up to their live shows and put their name out to the world. He says, "I want to compete with the big runners in the world. Even if it doesn't happen, that's the goal."

Watch the video for "Shine a Light"



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