

# Squeezing Into Social D

Classic songs from a classic band

**O**n a recent trip to Goodwill, I found one of those rare treasures that makes the three hours of searching through racks worth it – a Social Distortion tank top, the classic dancing skeleton emblazoned across the front. It was in perfect condition. I didn't even check the size before whisking it away to the dressing room.

I could barely squeeze Thelma and Louise into the tiny tee, and the dancing skeleton now looked like an overweight man with a drug problem. No longer the punk rock band groupie with the waif-like figure that I once was, what stared back at me from the mirror was more Goldie Hawn in the cheesy over-the-hill flick *The Banger Sisters* than her daughter Kate Hudson in *Almost Famous*. Nevertheless, I bought the shirt. There is only a 10 percent chance I will ever wear it out in public, but there is a good chance that if you knock on my door right now, I'll answer wearing the tank top and skivvies, with Social Distortion blaring in the background.

My love affair with Mike Ness and the rest of the gang from SD began in high school, where many love affairs begin. I was 15, and at that time I hearted punk rock and ska music. I was already into The Ramones and the Sex Pistols when one of my friends introduced me to SD. Here was a group that embodied my two favorite bands: They had the badass good looks and punk rock style of the Sex Pistols and the rockabilly sound of the Ramones.

With songs about rebellion, damning the man, drugs and heartache, SD had me hooked. Now, more than 10 years later, as I sit listening to Social Distortion's *Greatest Hits* (released June 26), I am still hooked. The CD has all the classic heart-wrenching, fist-pounding songs you would expect to find on their greatest hits as well as a new single recorded just for this album.

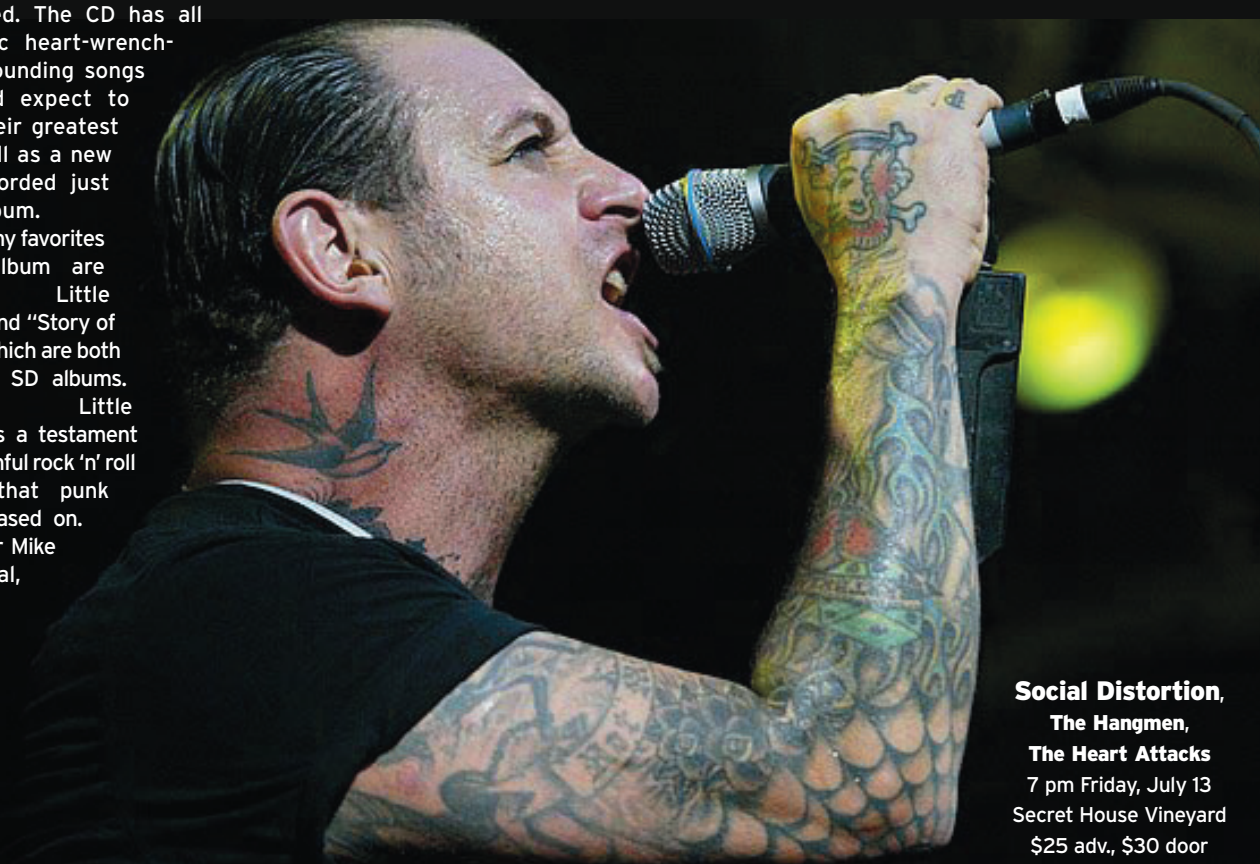
Two of my favorites on the album are "Mommy's Little Monster" and "Story of My Life," which are both from older SD albums. "Mommy's Little Monster" is a testament to the youthful rock 'n' roll rebellion that punk music is based on. Lead singer Mike Ness' nasal, British-

sounding voice makes my lips pucker into a snarl and my fist pound in the air. "Story of My Life" is a song dear to my heart; when I hear it I can't help but think of *Reality Bites* and my huge crush on a much grungier Ethan Hawke and his love interest Winona Ryder.

The new single, "Far Behind," doesn't disappoint. Lyrics like "You shake my hand while you're pissing on my leg / I'm cuttin'

you lose, I don't need this misery / Your soul is toxic, you ain't no friend of mine" prove that SD has not lost its edge. Ness is the only original member left, but the new material shows that Ness has always been the one true heart and soul of Social Distortion. As for the show? You have a 10 percent chance of seeing me there in my child sized tee.

CW



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